

Dissertation:

Sex and Motivation in the American Morale Campaigns of the First World War



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This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of History

## **Declaration**

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

## **Sex and Motivation in the American Morale Campaigns of the First World War**

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### **Abstract**

During the First World War, the United States War Department assiduously regulated the sexuality of soldiers and many citizens residing in the vicinity of training camps—a task that it accomplished largely through an organization called the Commission on Training Camp Activities (CTCA). Historians have generally focused on the repressive aspects of this agency’s sexual control programs, and argued that their primary goal was to instill sexual morality among the soldiers and wider society. In a departure from this interpretation, this dissertation shows that while sexual morality rhetoric was certainly an important part of the War Department’s strategy for combatting what they deemed to be wayward sexual activity, it was, for the agency’s top leaders, less decisive than motivating soldiers to fight, which involved remaking the overall sexual environment of training camps in such a way that drafted men would be compelled to lean into their wartime roles. Drawing on the relatively neglected archival records of the Military Morale Section and the Morale Branch of the army’s General Staff—which exercised control over the CTCA during the decisive final months of the war—as well as the publications of a number of morale strategists who formulated the CTCA’s motivational strategy, this dissertation demonstrates that the War Department did not just repress sexuality, but actively sought to arouse, control and channel the soldiers’ desire for it in order to build up their “vigor” and get them to fight and to endure. The dissertation traces the trajectory of the military’s morale apparatus from mobilization through demobilization, and demonstrates the enduring significance of the agency’s “parasexual” motivational strategy—from the centrality of sexual scarcity, frustration and manipulation, to the encouragement of women to be sexual gatekeepers, to the widespread advancement of racialized and classed sexual hierarchies and sexual racism more broadly.

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**Introduction:**  
**Morale, Motivation and Parasexuality in the First World War**

In his memoir about being a low-ranking American soldier during World War I, Joseph N. Rizzi repeatedly stated that his participation in the war—from enlistment to training to battlefield engagement—was motivated by women. The first-generation son of Italian immigrants initially enlisted because his sweetheart explicitly told him that she would not marry him unless he went and fought. Throughout training and his brief deployment in France (where he took part in the decisive Meuse–Argonne offensive), Rizzi derived meaning and motivation from his connection to his sweetheart, as well as to his mother. He testified to the encouraging influences of their letters, and confessed that the thought of their opprobrium prevented him deserting his unit or committing any other offense that could lead to court martial or dishonor. One night in France, he recalled, he had a strong desire to “enjoy the comradeship of the opposite sex and to indulge in the physical emotion of love,” but was dissuaded from doing so partially by the knowledge that the military police guarded the entrances to the brothels in the town in which he was stationed, preventing American soldiers from entering. In his frustration, he recalled, “I took out my mother’s and sweetheart’s pictures to look at.” Upon looking at their faces, he explained, “[t]he will to conquer became strong.”<sup>1</sup>

Rizzi’s feelings and experiences were not unique. The chivalric sentiments that compelled him to “conquer” were explicitly encouraged by War Department propagandists and social control strategists, who sought to motivate soldiers by controlling the sexual ecology of their social environments. Social historians generally view World War I and its immediate aftermath as a turning point in the history of sexuality in the United States. During the brief American involvement in the conflict, the federal government effectively eliminated out-in-the-open prostitution by placing pressures on municipal governments to eradicate red light districts and establish a greater degree of “moral order” in cities and towns. The War Department policed the sexual behavior of its soldiers and of the women and girls residing near military training camps, and, at the same time, launched a massive “social hygiene” campaign to educate soldiers, their families, and the public at large, about sexual morality and sexual health, using venereal disease prevention as both a rhetorical strategy and as a justification for expanding state power at the federal, state and municipal levels. Using the threat of venereal disease—particularly the threat posed to soldiers—as their impetus, the federal, state, and local governments succeeded in diminishing many of the practices and environmental conditions that

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph N. Rizzi, *Joe’s War: Memoirs of a Doughboy*, ed. Richard A. Baumgartner (Huntington, WV.: Der Angriff Publications, 1983), 32, 64-65, 140.

moral reformers had tried in relative vain to eliminate for decades, shuttering red light districts across the country and banning the sale of alcohol to men in military uniforms. The government's success in eliminating of red light districts, enforcing chastity among soldiers and women in surrounding towns and cities, and, to a lesser degree, the various initiatives to educate the public about "proper" attitudes toward sex were, on the whole, quite consistent with the demands of moral reformers—many of whom found a place within the civic organizations enlisted by the War Department to secure these conditions. Yet the ultimate rationale behind these policies was not primarily moral, but strategic.<sup>2</sup>

Whereas most scholarship on the American military's interventions into the sex lives of soldiers and civilians during World War I exclusively highlights the coercive aspects of the War Department's programs, this dissertation examines the more affirmative relationship between sex and motivation within the military's social control campaigns. At the center of the American social and sexual history of World War I is an organization called the Commission on Training Camp Activities (CTCA)—a War Department-directed umbrella agency tasked with controlling the social environment of soldiers in order to curb drunkenness and sexual activity. Scholarship on the agency has argued that the reformers and military leaders who directed the CTCA were moved to control the sexual lives of soldiers and civilians for two essential reasons: they sought to prevent venereal infection among the soldiers, and, more importantly, they sought to instill in these men a puritan sexual morality. In this literature, the CTCA is portrayed as being one of the last stands of an older generation of Progressive moral reformers against the onrush of a liberalizing sexual culture.<sup>3</sup>

In contrast, this dissertation shows that World War I social and sexual regulation programs were vectors of modern motivational discourses, rather than a simple continuation of earlier moral reform tendencies. The war was, as one historian has described it, "the first

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<sup>2</sup> Raymond Fosdick insisted as much in his autobiography, explaining that, in setting up the Commission on Training Camp Activities, "[o]ur argument had been not primarily one of morals, but of military necessity." There, Fosdick highlighted the centrality of sexual health as a factor impeding military efficiency, but, as I show below, military efficiency had other factors contributing to its composition—factors that became increasingly important as the venereal infection rates among soldiers dropped. See Raymond B. Fosdick, *Chronicle of a Generation: An Autobiography* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), 147.

<sup>3</sup> Allan M. Brandt, *No Magic Bullet: A Social History of Venereal Disease in the United States Since 1880* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 52-121; Jessica R. Pliley, *Policing Sexuality: The Mann Act and the Making of the FBI* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2014), 119-130; Nancy K. Bristow, *Making Men Moral: Social Engineering During the Great War* (New York: New York University Press, 1996); Scott W. Stern, *The Trials of Nina McCall: Sex, Surveillance, and the Decades-Long Government Plan to Imprison "Promiscuous" Women* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018), 42-80; David J. Pivar, "Cleansing the Nation: The War on Prostitution, 1917-1920," *Prologue*, Vol. 12 (Spring, 1980), 29-40; Mark Thomas Connelly, *The Response to Prostitution in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Courtney Q. Shah, "'Against Their Own Weakness': Policing Sexuality and Women in San Antonio, Texas, during World War I," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (September, 2010), 458-482; P. C. Kemeny, "Protestant Moral Reformers and the Campaign to Suppress Prostitution during World War I," *The Journal of Presbyterian History*, Vol. 92, No. 2 (Fall/Winter 2014), 52-72; Andrew Byers, *The Sexual Economy of War: Discipline and Desire in the U.S. Army* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2019), 93-162; Kimberley A. Reilly, "'A Perilous Venture for Democracy': Soldiers, Sexual Purity, and American Citizenship in the First World War," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (April, 2014), 226-228.

modern war: modern in its mass slaughter, its use of transportation networks across Europe (in trains, cars, and planes), its communications networks (radio, telegraphs, telephones), and its technological development of new weapons (machine guns, hand grenades, chemical warfare).<sup>4</sup> Why would the war's motivational techniques not also be modern? Drawing on the relatively neglected records of the War Department's Morale Branch and the writings of the military's leading theorists and strategists of morale, this dissertation demonstrates that the fundamental concept orienting the men in charge of the wartime sexual control programs—especially within the CTCA's programs—was morale, not morality. While sexual morality rhetoric and the specter of venereal disease were certainly important parts of the CTCA's strategy for combatting what they deemed to be wayward sexual activity, these were, for the agency's top leaders, less decisive than motivating soldiers to fight, which involved remaking the overall sexual environment of training camps in such a way that drafted men would be compelled to lean into their wartime roles.

To make sense of the seeming contradiction between repressive and stimulating aims within the War Department's policies, one needs conceptual tools that can untangle and illuminate the American military's simultaneous encouragement of sexual stimulation and suppression of sexual activity. This dissertation therefore pays careful attention to the strategic ways that the War Department's motivational programs cultivated a synergistic relationship between the suppression of sexual activity and the active courting of sexual desire. Military leaders and the civic organizations and civilian reformers who they deputized relied on sexuality—both the denial of opportunities for sex with women, and the simultaneous ever-present allure of sex—to motivate men to do difficult, risky, and unpleasant tasks, including dying and killing on the battlefields of Europe.<sup>5</sup> This was a key component of the motivational aspect of the CTCA's work, which involved using enforced sexual abstinence and the exposure of soldiers to innocuous forms of sexual stimulation simultaneously, as interlocking parts within a “parasexual” social strategy, where, to borrow the sociologist Peter Bailey's definition of the term, “sexuality [was] deployed but contained, carefully channelled rather than fully discharged,” relying on simultaneous enticement and enforced distance to motivate a particular kind of action.<sup>6</sup> Where some historians, following Michel Foucault's critique of the so-called “repressive hypothesis” in

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<sup>4</sup> Joel Dinerstein, “Modernism,” in Karen Halttunen, ed., *A Companion to American Cultural History* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 203.

<sup>5</sup> The scars of war cut in multiple directions, and, in addition to the risk of injury or death, killing is a major contributing factor to wartime trauma. This is demonstrated in the recent literature on so-called “moral injury.” See, for example, Brett T. Litz, Nathan Stein, Eileen Delaney, Leslie Lebowitz, William P. Nash, Caroline Silva, and Shira Maguen, “Moral Injury and Moral Repair in War Veterans: A Preliminary Model and Intervention Strategy,” *Clinical Psychology Review*, Vol. 29 (2009), 695-706.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Bailey, “Parasexuality and Glamour: the Victorian Barmaid as Cultural Prototype,” *Gender & History*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Summer, 1990), 148, 152.

the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, have been wary of the concept of repression, the conceptual importance of parosexuality is that it makes space for both the social repression of sex and the affirmative cultivation of desire within the same conceptual framework.<sup>7</sup>

In this endeavor, the concept of morale offers a key to understanding the military's interventions into soldiers' and civilians' sexual lives. The army's evolving definition of morale referred to a mental state that entailed much more than mood, with the concept also encompassing a soldier's broader conception of himself, his status *vis-a-vis* women, and his drive to fight and conquer—in essence, an amalgamation of mood, social standing, and motivation, all of which the theorists and strategists of military morale pegged and cross-indexed to one another.

Historians of the French and British experiences of World War I have readily acknowledged the link between sex and military morale, and their accounts are illuminating—both for the insight they lend concerning the central place of women's encouragement in military motivation, and for the contrasts that can be observed concerning the role of sex in the European versus the American efforts to instill morale. French and British civic and military leaders were more inclined to tolerate—and perhaps even encourage—sexual activity among their soldiers. Susan R. Grayzel has examined the way in which the French military ambivalently embraced the sexual motivation of its troops through the figure of the *marraine de guerre*, or 'wartime god-mother,' assigned by the charitable organization Famille du Soldat to write letters to, and encourage French troops during the war, giving "women a role to play and men a personal reason to fight on." And, as Grayzel shows, this distant relationship brought a paradoxical blend of maternal and sexual affect to the French war effort, with the officially sanctioned maternal role of the *marraine* frequently evolving into a sexual one.<sup>8</sup>

Across the Channel, Great Britain never had the kind of sweeping controls that the United States had with respect to men's opportunities for sex.<sup>9</sup> Recruitment posters—especially before the passage of the Military Service Act in January 1916, which replaced voluntarism with conscription—offer an obvious example of women's (both real and simulated) pressure on men to become soldiers. Michele J. Shover demonstrates how, in this context, "postermakers directly addressed women as controllers of the men needed to become soldiers," with posters "blatantly appeal[ing] to women's sense of personal pride and also to their insecurities," and seeking to

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<sup>7</sup> For a breakdown of these theoretical debates, and how they have impacted histories of sexuality, see Jeffrey Weeks, *Sexuality and Its Discontents: Meanings, Myths and Modern Sexualities* (London: Routledge, 1985), 157-181; Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800* (New York: Longman, 1981), 1-18.

<sup>8</sup> Susan R. Grayzel, "Morale, Morality and Sexuality," in *Women and the First World War* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 62-82.

<sup>9</sup> Suzann Buckley, "The Failure to Resolve the Problem of VD among the Troops During World War I," in Brian Bond and Ian Roy, eds., *War and Society: A Yearbook of Military History*, Vol. 2 (London: Routledge, 2015 [1977]), 65-85.

use shame in order to motivate men to enlist. Demonstrating an ambiguity analogous to that embodied in the French *marraine*, the relation of the women to the prospective enlistee in British propaganda was unclear (was she his wife, girlfriend, sister, or mother?)—likely a deliberate move to ensure that these posters would channel, in his mind, the voice of whichever woman was closest to him, making him wonder if she was questioning, in Shover’s words, “the strengths of [his] commitments to them.” The posters also targeted women, deliberately seeding these expectations. As one poster asked: “If he does not think that you and your country are worth fighting for—do you think he is WORTHY of you? . . . ask him to JOIN THE ARMY TODAY.”<sup>10</sup> As Nicoletta F. Gullace’s exposition of “the Order of the White Feather” demonstrates, the British government’s efforts to leverage women’s appeals in order to compel men to enlist was effective, as brigades of women would comb public spaces handing out white feathers to unenlisted men they deemed to be “slackers,” in what Gullace refers to as a highly visible “shaming ritual” that “carried the sexual power of women into the public sphere” by “stripp[ing] the epaulets of masculinity from their unlucky foe.”<sup>11</sup> As we shall see, the American approach to motivating men placed a similar emphasis on the role of women, but did so in ways that were distinct from the British and the French approaches—namely in its use of specifically parasexual manipulation.

Whereas morale has not commanded much attention among American social historians, the affect theorist and cultural-political geographer Ben Anderson has taken up the concept, arguing that morale becomes especially important within a condition of “total war,” with its diminished “distance between home front and frontline,” and also where the scale of mobilization demands the active participation of entire national populations and their resources, blurring the boundaries between civilian and soldier.<sup>12</sup> With entire populations mobilized for war, Anderson theorizes, the affective disposition of the population becomes vital for maintaining effort and enthusiasm—a fact that the general staffs of the belligerent countries involved in the conflict make into an explicit part of their war strategies. In the total war conditions of the world wars, hostilities became a “war of nerves,” as “governments invented ways of targeting and destroying morale and ways of protecting and harnessing it” among their own soldiers and

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<sup>10</sup> Michele J. Shover, “Roles and Images of Women in World War I Propaganda,” *Politics and Society*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (December, 1975), 472, 474-475, 482.

<sup>11</sup> Nicoletta F. Gullace, *“The Blood of Our Sons”: Men, Women, and the Renegotiation of British Citizenship During the Great War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 74.

<sup>12</sup> While there has been no proper study of the relationship between wartime social programs and morale during the First World War, there has been some broader institutional analysis of the American morale programs during that conflict. See Thomas Camfield, “‘Will to Win’—The U.S. Army Troop Morale Program of World War I,” *Military Affairs*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (October, 1977), 125-28; Jennifer D. Keene, “Intelligence and Morale in the Army of a Democracy: The Genesis of Military Psychology During the First World War,” *Military Psychology* Vol. 6, No. 4 (1994), 235-54; Jennifer D. Keene, *Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 75-81; Monica J. Cronin, “U.S. Combat Morale in the World Wars: the European Theater of Operations,” (Undergraduate Honors Thesis, William & Mary, 2017).

civilians. This affective dimension of war called for new forms of power that would encourage and motivate soldiers and civilians to mobilize by creating shared, embodied, and affective urges to become intimately invested in the impersonal demands of war. Morale, in Anderson's framing, describes an aspirational form of power—a process whereby an individual may become invested with a personal sense of obligation, hope, honor, fraternity, and valor, animated affectively to subordinate their personal will to that of the group or nation, coaxed to endure and persevere through an intolerable set of wartime conditions in the present by the alluring promise of something better in the future.<sup>13</sup> As another affect theorist, Teresa Brennan, points out in a chapter about the “Education of the Senses,” organisms will choose certain feelings over pleasure sometimes—especially when there is a looming threat that the pursuit of pleasure will result in social opprobrium. “Thus a man gives into social pressure and chooses vanity (the need not to be ridiculous in the eyes of others) over happiness.” This, as the dissertation will demonstrate, is precisely what the leaders of the military's morale agency sought to leverage in motivating the soldiers to risk making the ultimate sacrifice.<sup>14</sup>

The military relied heavily upon gender and sexuality to mobilize morale during World War I. The military's morale theorists and strategists embraced the temporality of “a perpetually deferred promise” when they mitigated against the instant gratification of sexual pleasure, and imagined that the resulting state of sexual tension could be harnessed as the basis for motivating soldiers. The concept of morale was largely introduced into the U.S. military's lexicon by two “morale agencies” (the Military Morale Section and the Morale Branch of the General Staff of the army) quite late in the war, and the term was used by War Department officials and the chairman of the CTCA to retroactively describe the ultimate mission of the CTCA (over which the morale agencies were granted a degree of control, beginning in October, 1918). Crucially, the leadership of the morale agencies and the CTCA saw motivation as being intrinsically tied to men's “energy” levels, which could be depleted through sexual activity, but also aroused through stimulating experiences that did not conclude with sexual gratification. The morale strategists who developed the War Department's approach to morale work claimed that chaste soldiers were much more suggestible and driven than sexually “dissipated” men—especially if the former could be plied, in their state of enforced restraint, with real and/or fictional encouraging appeals of women. Correspondingly, a key goal of these agencies was preventing sexual *satiation* among the soldiers, rather than eradicating sexual *stimulation* per se. Here, sexual deprivation would help to make soldiers more intimately invested in the war and motivated to perform within it. This outlook explains a variety of policies and practices—

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<sup>13</sup> Ben Anderson, “Modulating the Excess of Affect: Morale in a State of ‘Total War,’” in Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, eds., *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 161-77.

<sup>14</sup> Teresa Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2004), 116.

both on the part of the morale agencies, and on the part of the CTCA—that were either superfluous or contrary to the demands of sexual purity and sexual health, such as the CTCA's deliberate employment of conventionally attractive women as canteen workers and nurses, the constant suggestion that men write letters to women back at home, the agency's hosting of co-ed dances as a means of facilitating supervised contact between soldiers and civilian women, and the use of alluring female imagery and narrativized voices in military publications and propaganda.

Some prior scholarship has attempted to explain American men's ardent participation in the war as stemming from the fact that the conflict offered opportunities for men who had been emasculated by urban, industrial life to re-assert their masculinity.<sup>15</sup> In contrast, this dissertation shows that the masculine quest for valor was not a pre-existing force, but something that the military's leaders sought to produce through sexual manipulation.<sup>16</sup> The War Department intentionally tried to cultivate a frustrated sexual allure, alongside a baseline of sexual scarcity in order to generate American militant masculine striving during the war. What this suggests is that men's pugnacious militancy was not reliably present prior to their being sexually deprived and manipulated. This quest was intrinsically bound up, within the designs of military morale planners, with a blockage of men's opportunities for sex with women, and their constant exposure to propaganda and controlled social conditions orchestrated by military leaders and propagandists, who sought to use the promise of women's conditional approval, within this state of sexual deprivation, to convince the soldiers to train, fight, and sacrifice. In the War Department's designs for cultivating wartime motivation, gender roles and gender identity were instrumentalized within what Andrew Byers calls the "sexual economy of war"—the overall, transpersonal, aggregating interplay, within a social/sexual ecosystem, of institutional interventions into the environments (both social and spatial) inhabited by soldiers, and the individual sexual choices of the soldiers and their would-be partners.<sup>17</sup>

Sexual hierarchy and sexual stratification were important products and means of the motivational approach of the military's morale apparatus. In her recent book on sexual consent, the philosopher Amia Srinivasan has sought to examine how men's and women's sexual preferences produce and maintain sexual hierarchies, which tend to be based in racial, class,

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<sup>15</sup> See, for example, Peter G. Filene, *Him/Her/Self: Gender Identities in Modern America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 100-120.

<sup>16</sup> This compliments arguments like John Pettegrew's, who claims, against evolutionary psychology, that "the psychological state of aggressive masculinity" should not be seen "as an animal instinct or an adaptation from the Stone Age but as a modern strategy for power taking." John Pettegrew, *Brutes in Suits: Male Sensibility in America, 1890-1920* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 3.

<sup>17</sup> Byers, *The Sexual Economy of War*, 3-4. In not assuming the fixed preexistence of a masculinity that was in the process of being defined, the present dissertation takes methodological cues from Gail Bederman. See Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 6-7.

and other exclusionary hierarchies.<sup>18</sup> The chapters (especially Chapter 4) explore the role that racialized and classed sexual stratification played in the morale campaigns. In the first place, military leaders justified the racial segregation of the military by claiming that Black soldiers could not be motivated because they lacked sexual self-restraint. In addition to this blatant form of exclusion, morale strategists and CTCA reformers implored White men, and especially White women, supposedly for their own self-preservation, to weigh sexual decisions heavily, and to assert militarily-productive criteria in their process of evaluating partners and granting them intimate access to themselves—effectively urging them to install what the sociologist Eva Illouz describes as an “architecture of choice,” wherein a social regime urges “modes of self-consultation”; “ways in which a person consults his or her emotions, knowledge, and formal reasoning to reach a decision” about whether and how to proceed with a sexual connection.<sup>19</sup> This sexual economy relied upon several axes of pre-existing hierarchies and forms of exclusion: classed and racialized desirability hierarchies among women that associated attractiveness with Whiteness, respectability, and sexual self-restraint; desirability hierarchies among men that exalted enlistment and upright, chivalrous valor; and racialized eligibility criteria that determined which men could even hope to have the opportunity to prove their desirability on the battlefield—something that Black enlistees were almost entirely deprived of. These desirability hierarchies worked in tandem with the military’s efforts to drastically reduce the overall availability of sex within the soldiers’ social environments in order to capture sexual desire and make it productive. Within these conditions, the War Department selectively exposed White soldiers to the appeals of alluring, self-restrained women who would pressure and/or encourage them to fight. The men who founded and ran the military’s morale agencies referred to the importance of leveraging the “girl behind the man behind the gun” in order to drive the men’s motivation to fight. These men sought to depict women’s desires and expectations in media, using posters, newspaper editorials, and films to convey a sense to the soldiers that women’s expectations aligned with the goals of the military, so that men, in striving for their approval, would perform their military duties enthusiastically and without complaint, fight harder, and risk their lives in a faraway war whose geopolitical significance was not widely understood. In this sense, one way to interpret the militant masculinity of soldiers is as a product of pervasive sexual denial and status anxiety, paired with a perceived pressure coming from women. The cadre of male military officers and civilian morale planners that intentionally

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<sup>18</sup> Amia Srinivasan, *The Right to Sex* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), xiii.

<sup>19</sup> Eva Illouz, *Why Love Hurts: A Sociological Explanation* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), 18-21.

designed and created environmental conditions surrounding soldiers to have this effect can therefore be described as the men behind the girl behind the man behind the gun.<sup>20</sup>

### Morale and the CTCA

This is not the first study of military morale, nor is it the first time that scholarship analyzing sex, gender and war—or even the CTCA—has mentioned morale or the Morale Branch. There have been several disparate studies of military morale during World War I, but none have fully explored the gendered or sexual dimensions of morale work. A number of studies that have analyzed gender and sexuality have touched upon morale work, but not offered any sustained analysis of its role in World War I, or made full utilization of the range of sources of the Morale Branch, its predecessor the Military Morale Section, or any of the background literature on morale.<sup>21</sup>

By centering its analysis upon morale, rather than upon social hygiene or sexual morality, the following chapters seek to offer a more adequate explanation for the War Department's seemingly contradictory policies of enforced sexual restraint and the social stimulation of men with young women. The War Department's efforts to instill "good morale"—as opposed to securing sexual morality or sexual health—explains why and how many of the policies and programs of the CTCA and the various service organizations whose activities it directed, regularly used sexual desire to their advantage. The kind of morale that the military's leaders envisaged, as the chapters argue, was reliant on both the repressive and stimulating aspects of these policies and programs. At its heart was not merely a puritan impulse to remove

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<sup>20</sup> See Edward L. Munson, *The Management of Men: A Handbook on the Systematic Development of Morale and the Control of Human Behavior* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921), 50. The idea that women were important motivators of military men is encapsulated in a chapter by Sarah Parry Myers, in "The Women Behind the Men Behind the Gun": Gendered Identities and Militarization in the Second World War," in Kara Dixon Vuic, ed., *The Routledge History of Gender, War, and the U.S. Military* (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 87-102.

<sup>21</sup> The literature that centers upon morale includes: John Baynes, *Morale: A Study of Men and Courage* (Garden City Park, NY: Avery, 1988); Camfield, "Will to Win"; Cronin, "U.S. Combat Morale in the World Wars: the European Theater of Operations." None of these studies highlight the importance of sexual control within the military's conception of what constitutes an effective morale program, with the exception of Baynes, who touches on the relationship of sex to morale in the British military during World War I, but does not explore the significantly different relationship between sex and morale in the American armed forces. The scholarship that does mention morale within its studies of gender and sex dynamics during the war includes Grayzel, "Morale, Morality and Sexuality," 62-78; Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 183-85; Kara Dixon Vuic, *The Girls Next Door: Bringing the Home Front to the Front Lines* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019), 6, 7-57; Andrew J. Huebner, *Love and Death in the Great War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 137, 156. Grayzel, despite the name of her chapter, does not explore the morale agencies within the US military, or examine the intellectual arguments made about morale or its ideal conditions. Bristow only briefly touches upon morale work, but does not explore its relationship to sexuality, or explain the mechanism that morale was thought to depend on—namely, the simultaneous repression of sex and controlled stimulation of sexual desire. The two that come closest to examining this relationship between morale and sex are Andrew Huebner and Kara Dixon Vuic, both of whom explore the deep interconnections between soldiers' willingness to fight and their relationships with women—both at home and, as Vuic studies at length, in the YMCA huts and Red Cross medical facilities abroad.

temptation, but a hydraulic belief in thwarting sexual release, while simultaneously stimulating sexual “energy,” and channeling (or sublimating) this “energy” into the war effort.

This dissertation builds upon the existing scholarship on the CTCA, yet expands the investigation to include other organizations, including the Committee on Public Information (CPI) and the Morale Branch and its predecessor, the Military Morale Section. The concept of morale connects the propaganda work of the CPI, the sexual policing and entertainment programs of the CTCA, and the broader strategic objectives of the War Department—both during the conflict and after the armistice. By shifting the frame of analysis from morality and/or health to morale, and by analyzing the military’s less-explored morale agencies, the dissertation casts new light on familiar organizations such as the CTCA and the CPI, as their activities were, beginning in mid-1918, brought partially under the control of these morale agencies. Analysis of the War Department’s evolving position with respect to morale—and especially the role that sexuality played in the military and civic leaders’ plans for effectuating “good” morale within the ranks of the armed forces—offers insight into the broader ways in which elites turned to heterosexual courtship and desire in order to shore up and modernize social authority and motivation between the first and second quarters of the twentieth century. By using media to precisely define the desirability criteria and gendered expectations of participants in heterosexual courtship and relationships, they hoped that they could steer men and women’s behaviors and choices through their hearts.

The fact that they did not address homosexual desire or relationship expectations (it was not until the Second World War that the military began to take the “problem” of so-called “perversion” seriously) reveals some of the vulnerabilities of their approach.<sup>22</sup> Yet, as George Mosse demonstrates, other wartime state formations—namely, the Nazi regime—have been far more intentional about sublimating homosexual desire into male comradeship and military morale. The German *Männerbund* (the all-male fraternal organizations that provided a backbone for the Party), in its exaltation of male beauty and virility, and its emphasis on comradesly love and all-male activities, was, according to Mosse, “filled with a homoeroticism” that was only “thinly veiled.” Yet, as Mosse points out, most nationalisms utilize homoeroticism in order to build up masculine cooperation and aspiration—relying on both the mandate for sexual respectability and the erotic charge produced by pent-up and stifled sexual desire. “Nationalism,” he argues, “helped control sexuality, yet also provided the means through which

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<sup>22</sup> Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 57.

changing sexual attitudes could be absorbed and tamed into respectability.”<sup>23</sup> Among the American soldiers of the First World War, no doubt, some men’s homoerotic desire would have been refactored into innocent, respectable homosocial recreation and comradeship. But there is also evidence that some soldiers had sexual relations with each other—a practice that likely occurred much more than the evidence available to historians today can confirm.<sup>24</sup> While the American military leaders could have chosen to deal explicitly with homosexuality, and to simultaneously leverage homoeroticism in order to further their cause, those in charge of the military’s morale apparatus, with their focus exclusively on controlling the heterosexual economy of desire, did not bother to make similar interventions into homosexual desire or activities. Acknowledging homosexuality would have involved admitting that there was a fatal flaw in their strategy of relying on the separation of men from women as the solution to preventing sex. It also would have complicated their commitment to sharpening sexual dimorphism through gender expression—a key aspect of their plan for motivating the men. Manly men and feminine women would be better motivators of one another, the morale theorists thought, because their gendered otherness would be more compelling to their counterparts. Homosexual sex could not be prevented by gendered segregation, nor could homoerotic desire be driven by increasing sexual dimorphism.

It is unsurprising that morale has not commanded a more central place in the scholarship about sexual control during the war. Even though morale work was extensively performed by various civic and military agencies throughout the duration of American involvement in the conflict, it was rarely referred to by this term until the establishment of the Military Morale Section nearly halfway through 1918—an agency that only really performed its work in the closing months of the conflict and during the period of demobilization that followed the armistice in November, 1918. This has made it easier for scholars to focus on the CTCA independently of morale work and morale discourses, since the CTCA persisted through the entire period of American belligerency. The CTCA was highly visible, and its activities were widely publicized and discussed, whereas the Military Morale Section, and its later incarnation, the Morale Branch, actively sought to obscure their activities and to conceal their involvement in various other agencies and interventions. Morale work, the staff of this agency thought, worked best when those who it targeted did not know they were being nudged as part of such an effort.

## The Chapters

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<sup>23</sup> George L. Mosse, *Nationalism and Sexuality: Middle-Class Morality and Sexual Norms in Modern Europe* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 11, 54. On the homoeroticism of the *Männerbund* and the Nazi regime more broadly, see Harry Oosterhuis, “Medicine, Male Bonding and Homosexuality in Nazi Germany,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Apr., 1997), 187-205.

<sup>24</sup> Canaday, *The Straight State*, 77-81.

Understanding the reason for the sexualized motivation campaigns of the American wartime state during the First World War requires an explanation of how morale was conceived by academics, psychologists, social reformers and military leaders, and how they thought it could best be improved. To provide context for a revisiting of the CTCA and its activities as a morale agency, the first chapter investigates the literature about morale that was published by those who were part of these programs—the morale theorists who designed the military’s approach to morale. As that chapter demonstrates, sex—specifically the elimination of sexual “dissipation” and the sublimation of pent-up sexual “energy” into heroic effort, guided and motivated by “wholesome” contact and relations with women—was at the core of how these theorists thought that the immaterial quality of morale could be attained and improved among the soldiers. These theorists, therefore, offer a fresh picture of the way that military leaders pressed sexual morality into the service of the war effort.

The American military carried out its morale work during World War I in three distinct phases. In the first phase, stretching from April, 1917, when the United States formally entered into the global conflict, until May of 1918, when the Military Morale Section was established, the term “morale” was not yet used to refer to the overall institutional apparatus that was responsible for engaging in what would later become called “morale work.” The United States had not yet transported many soldiers to fight in the European Theater of Operations, and most enlisted men remained in training camps scattered throughout the United States. During this time, most morale work was carried out by the CTCA. The second chapter explores the relationship between the CTCA and morale, and argues that morale, rather than morality or sexual health, was the primary mission of that agency.

The second phase of morale work commenced with the founding, in May, 1918, of the Military Morale Section, which would be expanded and renamed the Morale Branch in October, 1918. This agency was specifically dedicated to overseeing the maintenance of troop morale, and its operations followed the deployment of the American Expeditionary Forces across the Atlantic and into their various war positions. During this time, the CTCA continued to operate, and its organizations—especially the YMCA, American Red Cross, the Knights of Columbus and the Jewish Welfare Board—shifted into a new phase of their own morale work overseas, now increasingly under the direction of the Morale Branch. This new morale agency focused largely on instilling a sense of purpose and dedication among the deployed troops, and sought to strategically foster a connection between the men abroad and their communities back in the United States, through correspondence and news articles in camp newspapers. Throughout this phase, the Morale Branch collaborated closely with the Committee on Public Information to produce campaigns that would cultivate morale among both soldiers and civilians. The third

chapter traces the founding of the military's morale agency, and analyzes the way that the agency, in collaboration with the CPI and the CTCA, propagandized soldiers. The fourth chapter looks at the way that the military's morale efforts relied upon racialized exclusion, and reconsiders the reason why most African American soldiers were prevented from playing combat roles during the war. What this chapter argues is that the War Department considered Black soldiers to be sexually unrestrained, and posited that they therefore could not be motivated in the same ways that the military's morale agencies motivated White soldiers.

This phase of morale work came to an end with the armistice of November 11, 1918, which inaugurated a third phase that was designed around the needs of demobilization. By this point, nearly two million soldiers had been deployed to Europe, and the military suddenly faced the enormous task of shipping them back to the United States and discharging them to their various places of origin. During this process, the Morale Branch had to contend with the expectations of many men who urgently desired to be discharged right away, and who felt restless and frustrated with the slowness of the process for doing so. Under these circumstances, the War Department relied upon the Morale Branch as a means of preventing unrest among the soldiers—a mission that the agency sought to accomplish by shifting their propaganda campaigns from encouraging men to be brave and heroic fighters to encouraging men to return home as honorably-discharged veterans and good citizens. The fifth chapter follows the way in which the morale agencies sought to prevent unrest during demobilization, while the sixth chapter analyzes how the morale agencies (and the theories they were founded upon) attempted to shape men as citizens after the war.

In each phase, the simultaneous containment of sexual activity and the channeling of sexual desires played a central role in the War Department's motivational strategy. During both conflict and demobilization, CTCA collaborated with various law enforcement agencies to clear the soldiers' environments of opportunities to engage in heterosexual sex, while at the same time, the morale agencies used propaganda to appeal to men's sense of heroic duty and responsibility, frequently employing the image and/or fictional voice of women as an approving observer of the men's discipline and heroic feats.

### **Interventions and Methodology**

This research makes interventions in the subfields of new military history, the history of progressivism, the history of gender and sexuality, and intellectual history. The subfield of "new military history" has increasingly emphasized the links between gender, sex and motivation in the Second World War, but historians have only begun to consider the affirmative role of

sexuality in the American mobilization during the First World War.<sup>25</sup> This project represents a major step in that direction, and its analysis of the military's morale apparatus expands scholarly knowledge about the institutional landscape of the war effort, while simultaneously recasting familiar agencies such as the Commission on Training Camp Activities and the Committee on Public Information.

As part of a wave of new military history, this dissertation brings the methodologies and research foci of social and cultural history to its investigation of the First World War. According to George Lipsitz, cultural historians typically do not have the same clearcut sources as political, economic and military historians do. Nor do they so readily arrive at a consensus about how to interpret their sources. For the cultural historian, the investigation of subjective and ephemeral phenomena and experiences, such as beliefs, personal practices, acts of creative expression and wells of feelings and emotions requires an investigation of evidence that, unlike official reports, published materials, and government documents, "did not intend to become sources," and "evidence that does not announce itself as important." As Lipsitz explains, because "[t]hese sources do not speak *for* themselves or even *about* themselves," they are both difficult to find and difficult to make sense of. In order to discern which sources are important, and what is important about them, the cultural historian must, according to Lipsitz, be "theoretically informed." Theory offers a lens for the investigation, and a schema for sifting through and organizing the data obtained.<sup>26</sup> The research upon which this dissertation is based takes this insight and applies it back upon the official sources of the National Archives and the various CTCA organizations, using affect theory, queer theory, and literary and sociological concepts about sexual frustration to sort and sift through these massive repositories in order to tell a new story about a neglected aspect of the way that military leaders waged the war.<sup>27</sup> While the chapters bring in the actual experiences of soldiers, as captured in memoirs, letters, and in the

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<sup>25</sup> Examples of "new military history" documenting the affirmative leveraging of sex during the Second World War includes: Marilyn E. Hegarty, *Victory Girls, Khaki-Wackies, and Patriotutes: The Regulation of Female Sexuality during World War II* (New York: New York University Press, 2008); Robert B. Westbrook, "I Want a Girl, Just Like the Girl that Married Harry James': American Women and the Problem of Political Obligation in World War II," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (Dec., 1990), 587-614; Meghan K. Winchell, *Good Girls, Good Food, Good Fun: The Story of the USO Hostess During World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Mary Louise Roberts, *What Soldiers Do: Sex and the American G.I. in World War Two France, 1944-1946* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Beth L. Bailey and David Farber, *The First Strange Place: Race and Sex in World War II Hawaii* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994); Melissa A. McEuen, *Making War, Making Women: Femininity and Duty on the American Home Front, 1941-1945* (Athens, GA.: Georgia University Press, 2010).

<sup>26</sup> George Lipsitz, "Cultural Theory, Dialogue, and American Cultural History," in Halittunen, *A Companion to American Cultural History*, 266-68.

<sup>27</sup> As has already been mentioned, a core concept that has informed the investigation and analysis is Peter Bailey's notion of parasexuality. Another is Michel Houellebecq's concept of "priapism," which, according to Benjamin Boysen, refers to a condition of being compelled by desires that are "ordered from outside the subject," usually by sources that have no intention or ability to actually fulfill these desires. Benjamin Boysen, "Houellebecq's Priapism: The Failure of Sexual Liberation in Michel Houellebecq's Novels and Essays," *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (Sept. 2016), 477, 481, 485. The insights of affect theory and queer theory are scattered throughout this introduction and the ensuing chapters.

work of other historians, this dissertation mostly utilizes prescriptive and official sources, such as military reports, memoranda, letters between military officers and other leaders, agency publications, newspaper articles and editorials, posters, illustrations, and the books and other writings of the men who advised and led the military's morale agencies. Many of these sources have either been glossed over, or read differently by historians who had other agendas, theoretical dispositions and schemas.

This dissertation is part of a long wave of scholarship that uses social history, and the history of gender in particular, to rethink the boundaries and lasting significance of progressivism.<sup>28</sup> According to Lynn Dumenil, social historians have been at the forefront of this wave because their insights into the private lives and sentiments of everyday people demonstrate that many attitudes and behavioral patterns that have been attributed to the 1920s actually had much earlier origins. Such insights challenge any periodization that represents a clear break between the pre-war and wartime culture of the Progressive era and the culture of the 1920s.<sup>29</sup> This dissertation further blurs that periodization by demonstrating that the social engineering of wartime officials had much in common with postwar commercial and sexual cultures. The parasexuality of the American morale apparatus demonstrates a hybridity between progressive appeals to discipline and the kinds of appeals to desire that historians generally associate with postwar commercialism. At the high water mark of progressivism, officials in the military's morale apparatus sought to leverage desire as a means of mobilizing the country for war. This finding invites scholars to reconsider the idea, recently argued by Michael McGerr, that the war was a "death knell" for Progressivism. If the state abandoned certain regulatory

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<sup>28</sup> As Elisabeth Israels Perry argues, considering women's central role in Progressive-era politics and activism—particularly their involvement in moral reform—demands that historians be more fluid in the way that they periodize that era. She also argues that women's history invites historians to rethink the idea that the 1920s were "a blanket reaction against progressivism." Elisabeth Israels Perry, "Men Are from the Gilded Age, Women Are from the Progressive Era," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Jan., 2002), 43-45. For women's historians whose work traces progressive reform well into the 1920s and beyond, see, for example, Seth Koven and Sonya Michael, eds., *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Peggy Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue: The Search for Female Moral Authority in the American West, 1874-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Robin Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1992); Anastasia Sims, *The Power of Femininity in the New South: Women's Organizations and Politics in North Carolina, 1880-1930* (Columbia, SC.: University of South Carolina Press, 1997). A number of scholars—not all of them recent—trace the continuities of progressivism into the 1920s. For older examples, see Arthur S. Link, "What Happened to the Progressive Movement in the 1920's?" *American Historical Review*, Vol. 64 (July, 1959), 833-51; Clarke A. Chambers, *Seedtime of Reform: American Social Service and Social Action, 1918-1933* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1963); J. Stanley Lemons, *The Woman Citizen: Social Feminism in the 1920s* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975); Otis L. Graham, Jr., *The Great Campaigns: Reform and War in America, 1900-1928* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: R. E. Krieger Publishing Company, 1971); Richard Lowitt, *George W. Norris: The Persistence of a Progressive, 1913-1933* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971); Robert K. Murray, *The Politics of Normalcy: Governmental Theory and Practice in the Harding-Coolidge Era* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1973).

<sup>29</sup> As Dumenil insists, the fact that the 1920s so clearly showcased a recognizably "modern" culture should not prevent scholars from tracing the origins of this transformation in wartime and pre-war practices and institutions. Lynn Dumenil, *The Modern Temper: American Culture and Society in the 1920s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1995), 3-4.

interventions into the economy in the 1920s, an analysis of the morale programs' leveraging of gender, sexuality and race to motivate masculine effort offers insight into far more enduring kinds of intervention and power.<sup>30</sup>

In its explication of the operative theories of motivation that the War Department used to guide its morale programs, the dissertation makes a contribution to American intellectual history—particularly the history of social science and applied psychology. As Dorothy Ross has demonstrated, early social scientists such as Edward A. Ross, Albion Small, Charles Horton Cooley and Franklin Giddings were concerned about the decline of motivation and vitality in the industrializing and modernizing United States at the turn of the century, and turned to what they called “social control” to create social cohesion and improve motivation among urban populations. Their approach to social control, recognizing that the kinds of sanctions and punishments meted out in traditional communities would be ineffective and/or absent in urban contexts, sought to harness and channel desires and drives as the basis of a new form of discipline in modern liberal society. They also looked to remake the physical and social environments as a means of implementing social control.<sup>31</sup> The wartime morale agencies clearly drew upon the basic approach and concerns of early social science. Military leaders displayed a prescriptive environmentalism that was highly aware of the basic phenomenological insight that all human experience is spatial, and that urban and social space “governs” by constraining certain choices and encouraging others.<sup>32</sup> As Albert Galloway Keller—the Morale Branch’s leading coordinator of that agency’s demobilization efforts—articulated in a 1918 book, it was his belief that “the great mass of individuals pursue their petty interests as they see them, close at hand,” and that they rarely noticed these “impersonal forces.” “[T]he vast bulk of mankind,” he insisted, “live on unconscious of their very existence, or vaguely sensing it.”<sup>33</sup> Operating on this basic insight, wartime leaders prioritized the control of environments within their motivational strategies because of their importance in shaping human experience. Theories of morale, rooted as they were in early social science, applied psychology, phenomenological philosophy, and civilizational discourses, described a kind of hard-fought lengthening of the “circuit path” of sexual desire: first, making sex difficult to obtain; then, raising the selection criteria by which it

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<sup>30</sup> Michael McGerr, *A Fierce Discontent: The Rise and Fall of the Progressive Movement in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), xvi, 315.

<sup>31</sup> Dorothy Ross, *The Origins of American Social Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 219-256.

<sup>32</sup> For a guide to the relationship between phenomenology, space, and environment, see Jo Vergunst, “Phenomenology of Space and Environment,” in H. Callan ed., *The International Encyclopedia of Anthropology* (Sept. 5, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118924396.wbiea2012>. For theories of space as a medium of governance, see Keller Easterling, *Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space* (London: Verso, 2014); Aggregate Architectural History Collaborative, *Governing by Design: Architecture, Economy, and Politics in the Twentieth Century* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012).

<sup>33</sup> Albert Galloway Keller, *Through War to Peace: A Study of the Great War as an Incident in the Evolution of Society* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1921 [1918]), x.

can be accessed; and finally, associating sexual fulfillment (and various symbolic stand-ins for this) with specific forms of achievement. All of these required a remaking of what the German phenomenological philosopher Edmund Husserl called the “life-world”: the phenomenological reality that we, as living beings, inhabit, which “predelineates” the “world-horizon” or perceivable possibilities and anticipated outcomes available to us.<sup>34</sup> One of the key theorists of morale—the Harvard professor William Ernest Hocking—was a student of Husserl in 1902 and 1903, and his environmental approach to morale clearly derived influence from his teacher’s phenomenology, such as when he insisted that “a man’s mental self cannot be separated from his daily habits, [or] from the environment he lives in.”<sup>35</sup>

Environments, in this phenomenological perspective, are social as well as spatial. People are not merely subjects, but also environmental objects—fixtures of a social environment for other people. If the people in a man’s milieu encourage him to go to war, and/or signal that they are disinclined to have sex with him unless he meets a particular set of criteria, then this shapes the horizons of possibility in his life. These environments are emotional. People tend, in Barbara Rosenwein’s phrasing, to belong to one or several “emotional communities,” animated by distinctive systems of feeling.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, according to Peter and Carol Stearns, various “social agencies and institutions” attempt to produce, elicit, standardize, and control emotional feelings among individuals and groups—a process that these historians of emotions call “emotionology.”<sup>37</sup> Taking these insights into account, this dissertation seeks to make sense of the ways that military leaders aimed to influence entire groups of men by shaping their social and emotional environments. Consequently, this project analyzes propaganda designed to shape group dynamics (such as spurring social and sexual hierarchies, encouraging intra-group solidarity and/or competition, encouraging particular relationship dynamics and expectations, etc.), war camp policies concerning social space, and activities that regulated the types of social contact that soldiers had with women, and considers the impact these may have had on interpersonal dynamics. If the American morale programs were modern, their records cast doubt on the notion of modernity that imagines progress as the triumph of reason over feeling. The military’s policies and interventions were meant not just to influence the thinking and ideas of soldiers, but to reshape their feelings by altering their social and sexual environments in ways that would be conducive to their motivation to fight. Therefore, rather than

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<sup>34</sup> Christian Beyer, “Edmund Husserl,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2020 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2020/entries/husserl/>>.

<sup>35</sup> William Ernest Hocking, *Morale And Its Enemies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1918), 97.

<sup>36</sup> Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

<sup>37</sup> Peter N. Stearns and Carol Z. Stearns, “Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 90, No. 4 (Oct. 1985), 813-836.

merely reading these sources, and trying to understand their direct impact on individual soldiers, the project seeks to understand how policies and prescriptions concerning social and sexual behaviors among soldiers aggregated into environments that would enable and constrain particular sets of accessible experiences for most of these men. Rather than analyzing this history in either a purely “top-down” or “bottom-up” fashion, then, this dissertation attempts to grasp the networked, inherently-situated, “trans-personal” nature of affect and its control.<sup>38</sup>

Another aspect of the methodology used in this dissertation is a non-moralizing approach that is less concerned with tracking down injustices and heroic resistance than it is with understanding mechanisms and dynamics that influenced the choices and behaviors of individuals.<sup>39</sup> Looking beyond a simple oppressed-oppressor framework, the dissertation shows how the military’s campaigns sought to produce a sexual economy that was exploitative of both men and women.<sup>40</sup> This speaks to the significance of the title. By turning an analytical gaze upon the men behind the girl, the dissertation aims to examine the institutional forces that shaped, mediated, and benefited from gendered relations, rather than treating gendered

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<sup>38</sup> This dissertation owes a methodological debt to the interdisciplinary field of affect theory. Yet, for the reader who is familiar with this field, the research’s emphasis on sexuality may seem odd, since numerous affect theorists have clearly insisted that libidinal drives are too narrow of a basis to place human motivation upon. See, for example, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 18-20; Lawrence Grossberg, “Affect’s Future: Rediscovering the Virtual in the Actual,” interview by Gregory J. Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, in *The Affect Theory Reader*, ed. Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 317. Here, as in discussions about repression, the crucial factor is that the motivational campaigns of the wartime morale agencies did not merely harness a pre-existing drive; they quite literally produced a particular set of desires in order to constrain these. Without getting too deep into a discussion of human nature (see footnotes 31 and 43 for more on this), one might cautiously argue that human motivation may not be inherently driven by libidinal drives, but it can be trained, particularly through the structuring of environments, to become preoccupied with sexual outcomes and prospects. On the concept of the “transpersonal,” see Hanzi Freinacht, *The Listening Society: A Metamodern Guide to Politics, Book One* (Metamoderna, 2017), 125-32. The concept is based upon Gilles Deleuze’s concept of the “dividual,” which sees human beings neither as entirely autonomous or self-contained, nor as merely passive components of collectives, but instead as intersubjectively linked, overlapping, and deeply affected by one another.

<sup>39</sup> See Jane Bennett and Michael J. Shapiro, *The Politics of Moralizing* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 3; Nicola J. Smith, *Capitalism’s Sexual History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 12-13.

<sup>40</sup> For a critique of the overemphasis of straightforward oppressed-oppressor dynamics in liberal political culture, see Iris Marion Young, “Five Faces of Oppression,” in *Rethinking Power*, ed. Thomas W. Wartenberg (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 175-77.

antagonism as an entirely direct and pre-given power relation between men and women.<sup>41</sup> What this research seeks to offer is an historical account of an important moment in which elite forces and institutions within society attempted to shape and mediate the intimate relations between the sexes.<sup>42</sup> This is indicative of a sort of “moderate” social constructionism that informs the research methodology of this project; a determination not to take the subject and its desires for granted, but instead to investigate elites’ various efforts to produce particular kinds of subjects by stimulating, blocking, and canalizing their desires, and representing men’s situations to them in such a way that it would result in certain specific self-understandings of their interests.<sup>43</sup>

Here, the dissertation is influenced by, and seeks to contribute to the history of gender. This project’s particular use of this literature derives from the way that gender history scholars have solidified a relational approach to studies of gender that “insist[s] on the fundamentally social quality of distinctions based on sex,” and emphasizes the importance of gendered norms for both men and women. In this view, “women and men were defined in terms of one another, and no understanding of either could be achieved by entirely separate study.”<sup>44</sup> Within this

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<sup>41</sup> Such an approach draws from the growing scholarly emphasis upon mediated intimacy, and upon gender as a relational social institution, which offers a richer way of conceptualizing power than the concept of patriarchy does. In an exemplary article that questions the analytical value of the concept of patriarchy for making sense of modern (as opposed to pre-modern) gender relations, Joan Acker endorses “a shift in the theoretical object from patriarchy to gender”—a shift that recognizes the “structural, relational, and symbolic differentiations between women and men.” This shift drops a universalizing and undifferentiated understanding of men’s direct subordination of women in favor of a more differentiated (both in terms of time and space, and by class, race, etc.) and complex understanding of gendered relations. This perspective recognizes the way in which gendered intimacy is mediated, encouraged, and profited from by a variety of institutions, which offers a more nuanced understanding of gender than patriarchy does, since the latter implies the direct, immanent domination of women by men. Similarly, Judith Butler cautions that “[t]he very notion of ‘patriarchy’ has threatened to become a universalizing concept that overrides or reduces distinct articulations of gender asymmetry in different cultural contexts.” Such “transcultural notion[s] of patriarchy” risk misunderstanding the culturally-unique functions and articulations of gender. Joan Acker, “The Problem with Patriarchy,” *Sociology*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (May, 1989), 238; Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 48. See also Raewyn Connell, “Theorising Gender,” *Sociology*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (May, 1985), 260-272.

<sup>42</sup> This is consonant with a recent move among media studies scholars to analyze the highly mediated forms of intimacy under neoliberalism—a phenomenon whose history extends much further back than the 1970s, as the present research demonstrates. See Meg-John Barker, Rosalind Gill and Laura Harvey, *Mediated Intimacy: Sex Advice in Media Culture* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018), 1-29.

<sup>43</sup> On soft, as opposed to “strong” social constructivism, see William M. Reddy, “Against Constructionism,” *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (June 1997), 327-351. On the production of interests, see the philosophical writings of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari—particularly their collaborative work *Anti-Oedipus*—in which the duo points to the way that people’s perceptions of their interests can be shaped in such ways that they actually believe that their exploitation is beneficial to them. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Penguin, 2009), 172-73.

<sup>44</sup> Joan W. Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 91, No. 5 (Dec., 1986), 1054. Mark Carnes makes similar claims when he insists on the mutual constitution of men and women, and their respective influences on each other’s behaviors and outlooks. Mark C. Carnes, “Foreword,” in ed. Laura McCall and Donald Yacovone, *A Shared Experience: Men, Women, and the History of Gender* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), x-xi. These insights are also mirrored in sociological scholarship, for example, Candace West and Don H. Zimmerman, “Doing Gender,” *Gender and Society*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Jun., 1987), 125-151. West and Zimmerman highlight that when people “do gender,” they do so in both performative and interactional ways. For them, doing gender “is a situated doing, carried out in the virtual or real presence of others,” and always occurring as “an emergent feature of social situations.”

poststructuralism-influenced relational framework, this dissertation attempts to demonstrate the way that women and men (both real and fictional) influenced and constrained one another's sexual attitudes and behaviors, with particular emphasis on the way that institutions increasingly sought to encourage specific expressions of social sanctions and rewards by cultivating gendered expectations.<sup>45</sup> Historians have not yet given much attention to the ways that powerful interests, in various times, and through various means, have bid to shape the eligibility criteria and expectations by which people discern between prospective sexual and romantic partners. Neither have historians written much about the way that elites attempted to cultivate social and sexual scarcity in order for sexual selection criteria to have a powerful governing effect upon people's behaviors, since sexual/romantic partner abundance could counterbalance and/or bypass sexual and romantic choosiness. Because of the fact that, if one can shape a society's sexual selection criteria, one can shape much of the behavior in that society, historians should become far more attuned to expectations in general, and sexual selection criteria in particular.<sup>46</sup>

This study seeks to make a start at this investigation, and in doing so, offers novel insight about the modern adaptation of elite power and influence in the early twentieth century. The wartime morale campaigns, which leveraged representations of sexual desirability in order to compel soldiers to lean into their wartime duties, were a product of an important network of elites' efforts to modernize forms of power and control. In *Morale: A Modern British History*, the modern European cultural historian Daniel Ussishkin claims that the management of morale, which had its origins in military campaigns, is actually a primary modality of power in modern mass democratic societies, since in these societies, where, in most instances, "coercion would be impractical, inefficient, and undesirable," governing requires the shaping of the "desires,

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<sup>45</sup> See Raewyn Connell's critique of sex role theory and Jack Halberstam's critique of queer theory's preoccupation with norms and normativity on the basis that such shorthand references offer little in the way of "describing in rich detail the practices and structures that both oppose and sustain conventional forms of association, belonging, and identification." Raewyn W. Connell, "Sex Role Theory," in *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1987), 48-53; Jack Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 17. The philosopher and behavioral psychologist Cristina Bicchieri points out that expectations are the main driver of behavior, and because of them, people's behaviors often do not reflect their favored outcomes. "Interdependence," Bicchieri explains, "not independence, rules social life. Indeed, a host of studies show that the main variable affecting behavior is not what one personally likes or thinks he should do, but rather one's belief about what 'society' (i.e., most other people, people who matter to us, and the like) approves of." Crucially, actual expectations are less motivating than beliefs that people have about what others expect of them. Cristina Bicchieri, *Norms in the Wild: How to Diagnose, Measure, and Change Social Norms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 10. For an excellent example of the methodology of tracing gendered expectations (in this case, tracing the disappointment of these gendered expectations), see Elaine Tyler May's book on the reasons for divorce in the early twentieth century. Elaine Tyler May, *Great Expectations: Marriage and Divorce in Post-Victorian America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

<sup>46</sup> Sociologists have been more attuned to this fact. As Edward Laumann, et. al. insist, "[w]hat a given individual finds sexually appealing . . . [is] as much a product of social factors as are [their] sexual behaviors." Edward O. Laumann, John H. Gagnon, Robert T. Michael, and Stuart Michaels, *The Social Organization of Sexuality: Sexual Practices in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 148.

hopes, expectations, and psychological makeup” of citizens.<sup>47</sup> If the American morale programs were modern, their records cast doubt on the notion of modernity that imagines progress as the triumph of reason over feeling. In order to wield power in mass democracies, one must move people emotionally as a means of motivating them. Of course, the rallying of emotions has not been monopolized by mass democracies. In Fred Turner’s analysis of the Committee for National Morale during the Second World War, he shows how the idealistic American sociologists and psychologists who staffed the committee were at pains to distinguish democratic morale from fascist morale. While both whipped up emotions to their respective causes, according to the psychologist Gordon Allport, writing in an article entitled “The Nature of Democratic Morale,” democratic morale needed to appeal to reason as well. Where, as Turner explains, “[t]otalitarian propaganda worked to divide the emotions from the reason,” democratic morale aimed to bring these together so that “[e]motion and reason, intellect and will, evaluation and action . . . would be one.” Whereas the totalitarian “became a fractured person” on account of the split between emotions and reason, the calculating citizen of a democracy, equipped with a “whole” self supposedly undivided against itself, ought to be able to rationally assess his or her interests, and enter into “voluntary cooperation . . . not managed from above” on this basis. Rejecting traditional forms of propaganda that tell people how to feel and what to think, the Committee for National Morale used what Turner calls “democratic surrounds”—multimedia exhibitions and environments that a person could peruse at their own pace and order, drawing their own conclusions. Despite the democratic ambitions of these theorists, however, this environmental approach to securing morale and influencing citizens that they pioneered was, in Turner’s words, “a new [managerial] mode of social control. . . . a mode in which people might be free to choose their experiences, but only from a menu written by experts.”<sup>48</sup>

This dissertation follows a similar line of reasoning, but unlike previous studies of morale, it grounds its analysis of motivation in discourses and practices of gender and sexuality, demonstrating the centrality of gendered sexual deprivation and parasexual allure within the military’s motivational campaigns. By remaking the spatial and social environment of the soldier, such that he could not easily access opportunities for sex with women, while simultaneously exposing him to alluring-but-unavailable women (both real and fictional), and inundating him with women’s expectations of him (again, both real and fictional), the military’s morale apparatus created its own version of a “surround”—one in which both the rationality and emotions of the soldier would ideally compel him to evaluate that it was in his best interest to be brave and to achieve valor. He was, of course, free to choose otherwise, but this, according to all of the

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<sup>47</sup> Daniel Ussishkin, *Morale: A Modern British History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 1.

<sup>48</sup> Fred Turner, *The Democratic Surround: Multimedia and American Liberalism from World War II to the Psychedelic Sixties* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 5-6, 44-45.

information available to him in his mediated environment, would jeopardize his standing in the eyes of women.<sup>49</sup> The fact that military leaders could remake the environments of soldiers meant that they could literally produce the interests of the soldier, giving lie to the idea that the pursuit of these necessarily manifested in freedom.

For the historical actors that this dissertation follows—namely, the leaders of the American military’s morale agencies—morale described an emotional and psychological alignment with the organizational mission and requirements of the war machine within the newly bureaucratized military.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, for these leaders, so-called “industrial morale” offered a new way to discipline entire workforces after the war, with a minimum amount of resistance or tension. As the final chapter of this dissertation explores, after the war, the morale theorists behind the military’s motivational drives shifted their wartime efforts to use sex to motivate soldiers into efforts to motivate men to do economic work.

This dissertation offers insight into an important chapter in the history of motivation. The early twentieth century was a pivotal time for motivation in the United States, for several reasons. In the first place, increasing prosperity meant that base necessities, which were increasingly satisfied, could no longer be relied upon to spur labor or effort. This posed a serious risk for an industrial nation whose culture and economy were increasingly shifting from an emphasis on production to an emphasis on consumption.<sup>51</sup> In the second place, as cultural historians of this period have pointed out, the locus of authority was rapidly shifting from top-down sources of authority to peer groups, as American society became increasingly urbanized

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<sup>49</sup> This parallels a quote by the commissioner of the War Industries Board, who insisted that, when it came to convincing companies and individuals to sacrifice for the war effort, “[w]e never use compulsion. Of course, if a man . . . didn’t want to play with us, he found he couldn’t get any fuel or railroad cars or any labor or anything; but we never used any compulsion.” Bernard Baruch, cited in William E. Leuchtenburg, *The Perils of Prosperity: 1914-32*, second edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 36.

<sup>50</sup> According to Stephen Skowronek, “[o]ver the first two decades of the twentieth century, the American army was transformed . . . into a constituent part of a new bureaucratic state. Professionalism, nationalism, and corporatism—ideals inextricably linked with the modernizing thrust of Progressive state building as economy and efficiency—heralded this reconstitution.” Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 212.

<sup>51</sup> As Warren Susman has pointed out, “after World War I, the mature capitalism of the new industrial civilization demanded a new ethic, an ethic that encouraged people to buy, a consumption ethic.” At this time, he states elsewhere, “[k]ey words began to show themselves: plenty, play, leisure, recreation, self-fulfillment, dreams, pleasure, immediate gratification, personality, public relations, publicity, celebrity. Everywhere there was new emphasis on buying, spending, and consuming. Advertising became not only a new economic force essential in the regulation of prices but also a vision of the way the culture worked: the products of the culture became advertisements of the culture itself.” Warren Susman, *Culture as History: The Transformation of American Society in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), xxiv; Warren Susman, *Culture and Commitment, 1929-1945* (New York: George Braziller, 1973), 4.

and secular.<sup>52</sup> In a world of declining religiosity and paternalistic authority, elites and commercial institutions needed to adapt their approach to social control and motivating effort by creating and influencing a gendered sexual economy predicated on sexual and romantic choosiness, where the drive for intimate connection would motivate obedience without extrinsic authority. As David Riesman argued in *The Lonely Crowd*, the period witnessed a “shift from inner-direction to other-direction as the principal mode of insuring conformity in the urban American middle class”—that is: a shift from an internalized sense of guilt and obligation to an externalized sense of social pressure, rooted in approval and disapproval. Whereas the former was animated by morality, the latter was animated, according to Riesman, by morale.<sup>53</sup>

In its focus on sexual manipulation, this study builds upon the established literature on sexual policing, showing how sexualized allure, at least in the period under consideration, worked hand-in-hand with sexual restriction.<sup>54</sup> A related goal of this dissertation is to further complicate scholarly understandings of the so-called sexual liberalism that historians associate with the 1920s—to offer evidence that sexuality then was perhaps not less, but in fact more burdened by social obligation than it had been in the preceding decades. Carl N. Degler has already pointed out that sex was far less regulated in the late nineteenth century than it is

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<sup>52</sup> See Paula Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920's* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 225-259. In her chapter on “Competition and Conformity in the Peer Culture,” Fass analyzes peer pressure and claims that competition within the peer group in the 1920s was one of “the primary instruments of socialization.” See also Beth L. Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 27. According to Bailey, who is influenced by Fass, competition among courting young people “expressed itself through conformity; conformity was the ultimate sphere of competition. It was a self-contained, self-regulating, self-limiting system.” Similarly, Warren Susman insists that in the new “culture of abundance,” people strove, not to have “character” (defined as an extrinsic “moral qualities”), but to have “personality” (defined by the approval and admiration of others). This was the “new self” that a culture of abundance demanded; one more preoccupied with status, consumption, appearances, and self-realization. Susman, *Culture as History*, xxii; 271-285.

<sup>53</sup> David Riesman, Nathan Glazer and Reuel Denny, “From Morality to Morale,” in *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001 [1950]), 37-65. On this concept of morale's place in a culture of abundance, see also T. J. Jackson Lears, “From Salvation to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930,” in Richard Wightman Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears, eds., *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 3, 12-13.

<sup>54</sup> The literature on the policing and restriction of sexuality during this period includes: Bristow, *Making Men Moral*; Pliley, *Policing Sexuality*; Mara L. Keire, *For Business and Pleasure: Red-Light Districts and the Regulation of Vice in the United States, 1890-1933* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); Mary E. Odem, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Ruth M. Alexander, *The ‘Girl Problem’ Female Sexual Delinquency in New York, 1900-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995). This list is by no means exhaustive, but offers some of the literature that informs this dissertation.

commonly imagined to have been.<sup>55</sup> Meanwhile, other scholars have linked the emergence of freer sexual choice within modern Western societies to new kinds of constraints.<sup>56</sup> If indeed there was a shift away from top-down authority in the sphere of sexuality in the early 20th century, these scholars have argued, it should not be understood in straightforwardly emancipatory terms. Scholars have been more inclined to update the field's interpretation of sexual liberalism than to discard it altogether. Unlike its supposed predecessor, Catherine Cocks argues that the concept of sexual liberalism remains potent, "striking," and "convincing."<sup>57</sup> Joanne Meyerowitz, who generally approves of the use of the term "sexual liberalism" to describe the new sexual culture that emerged in the first half of the twentieth century, claims that while it "endorsed sexual expression more than sexual restraint," its development "was not necessarily politically progressive or sexually liberating."<sup>58</sup> In this sense, sexual liberalism was tied to the emergence of certain "technologies of the self," to use Foucault's parlance, in which subjects self-constrain their choices because of environmental conditions that influence their

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<sup>55</sup> Degler insists that the ideology of Victorian female passionlessness "was more that of an *ideology seeking to be established* than the prevalent view or practice of even middle-class women." One key insight of this view is that, if the Victorian approach to sexuality was an "*ideology seeking* [and, presumably struggling] *to be established*," rather than a pervasive, on-the-ground fact, then sexual liberalism cannot be understood as a successful campaign to break out of a repressive Victorian sexuality. Scholars who accept this rejection of the "repressive hypothesis" tend, like Foucault did, to view developments in sexual culture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as being intimately related to an evolution of power, rather than an emancipation from power. Carl N. Degler, "What Ought to Be and What Was: Women's Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 79, No. 5 (1974), 1471, emphasis mine. This position—that Victorians were perhaps far more sexually active than they have been given credit for—has also been forcefully argued by Peter Gay. Peter Gay, *The Tender Passion: The Bourgeois Experience, Victoria to Freud, Volume 2* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

<sup>56</sup> Jeffrey Weeks, drawing on Foucault, emphasizes that liberation, in the sense of some "release of a hidden or blocked essence" is less adequate as a description of how sexuality is contested and manipulated than "conscious intervention at the level of the definition of appropriate sexual behavior." This discursive (and therefore inherently social) conditioning of the meaning of sexuality, if accurate, means that sexual outlooks and behaviors are highly susceptible to the influence of norms and peer pressures. Perhaps, then, sexual liberalism was less of a "breaking-out" than a "*breaking in*"—that is: the establishment of a new sexual order under the guise of liberation and sexual freedom. Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society*, 10.

<sup>57</sup> Catherine Cocks, "Rethinking Sexuality in the Progressive Era," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Apr., 2006), 94.

<sup>58</sup> Joanne Meyerowitz, "The Liberal 1950s? Reinterpreting Postwar U.S. Sexual Culture," in Karen Hagemann and Sonya Michel, eds., *Gender and the Long Postwar: Reconsiderations of the United States and the Two Germanys, 1945-1989* (Johns Hopkins University Press and Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2014), 297. Kathy Peiss also points to the new constraints facing women in the modern sexual culture of the 1920s and 30s, focusing on how the emerging beauty culture in that period represented a simultaneous freedom and new form of unfreedom: "Ironically, a period that began with cosmetics signaling women's freedom and individuality," she explains, "ended in binding feminine identity to manufactured beauty, self-portrayal to acts of consumption." These practices were part of a heterosexual "dating market," the pressures of which advertisers continually sought to burden women with. Kathy Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 135.

perceptions of their own interests.<sup>59</sup> Feminists have been the main critics of sexual culture in the era of sexual liberalism.<sup>60</sup> Second-Wave feminists developed a corpus of literature (and politics) concentrating on how women have especially been constrained and exploited within “liberal” sexual culture, complicating any notions one might have that this was simply an era of new freedoms.<sup>61</sup> Within the modernizing gender system of the early twentieth century, Meyerowitz has explained, women were subjected to the cruel, and seemingly contradictory pressures of being both modest and alluring.<sup>62</sup> A series of related feminist critiques have argued that normative femininity can be understood as a particular kind of alienation suffered by women. If perhaps femininity has often been opted-into by women, these writers have argued, it has been done so under the pressure that doing so would garner social rewards and not doing so would garner social sanctions.<sup>63</sup>

This dissertation sets out to extend this analysis of gendered power within sexual liberalism by analyzing how gendered expectations were projected in the other direction—

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<sup>59</sup> See Luther H. Martin, Huck Gutman and Patrick H. Hutton, eds., *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (Amherst, MA.: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988). It is important to specify that perception is central in the model I am seeking to sketch here. The sociologist William Thomas argued that individuals operate according to their perception of institutions, norms, and expectations placed upon them, rather than the reality of those pressures. William Isaac Thomas and Morris Janowitz, *W. I. Thomas On Social Organization and Social Personality: Selected Papers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

<sup>60</sup> Feminist historians have thoroughly analyzed how female sexuality was constrained and repressed in the early twentieth century. This literature includes: Pliley, *Policing Sexuality*; Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Woman's Sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977); Odem, *Delinquent Daughters*; Ellen Fitzpatrick, *Endless Crusade: Women Social Scientists and Progressive Reform* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); Beryl Satter, *Each Mind a Kingdom: American Women, Sexual Purity, and the New Thought Movement, 1875-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Alexander, *The 'Girl Problem'*; Regina Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work, 1890-1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Pascoe, *Relations of Rescue*. This is not an exhaustive list, but merely enumerates some of the prominent literature dealing with the phenomenon.

<sup>61</sup> Sheila Jeffreys, *The Spinster and Her Enemies: Feminism and Sexuality, 1880-1930* (London: Pandora Press, 1985), 4, 5. See also Sandra Lee Bartky, *Femininity and Domination* (New York: Routledge, 1990). Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* produced one of the most influential critiques, arguing that women were subject to the (often internalized) peer pressures employed by partners, friends and family members concerning beauty standards, acceptable levels of sexual modesty and propriety, and proper roles. Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2013 [1963]), 316.

<sup>62</sup> Joanne Meyerowitz explains that culture—and especially Hollywood films—in this period increasingly pressured women to possess a combination of “the purity of the Victorian angel [and] the sexuality of the chorus girl.” Joanne J. Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift: Independent Wage Earners in Chicago, 1880-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 127.

<sup>63</sup> Sandra Lee Bartky, for example, considers femininity to be a “distinctively feminine mode . . . of alienation” in which internalized dimensions of male domination—such as narcissistic self-objectification—are experienced as “gratifying.” Bartky, *Femininity and Domination*, 34, 36. See also Jacqueline Rose, “Femininity and Its Discontents,” *Feminist Review*, No. 80 (2005), 24-43. Rose argues that feminism ought to embrace psychoanalysis because of the latter's ability to “challenge the concept of psychic identity,” and to approach feminine subjectivity—as the subjectivity of internalized patriarchal values—as a problem, rather than as a trusted source of wisdom or authority. See also Susan Brownmiller, *Femininity* (New York: Linden Press, 1984); Iris Marion Young, “Is There a Woman's World?—Some Reflections on the Struggle for Our Bodies,” lecture presented in *The Second Sex—Thirty Years Later: A Commemorative Conference on Feminist Theory* (New York University, September, 1979). These latter critiques of femininity are compelling because they identify the way in which gendered power was not merely applied against women by men, but also wielded by women against themselves and others.

toward men—as men sought to make themselves eligible within a sexual economy.<sup>64</sup> Because feminist scholars have already produced very detailed analyses of the ways that gendered expectations constrained women, this research will primarily center on the expectations that leaders sought to cultivate—in women toward men, and in men toward themselves. It shows that the military’s propagandists—particularly the military’s morale agencies—men instilled a belief in men’s minds (whether accurate or not) that if they did not comport themselves in a particular way (exhibiting bravery and valor during the conflict, and becoming productive, gainfully-employed citizens after the war) that they would be deemed ineligible as romantic partners by women. Within the resulting mediated (and mediatized) sexual economy of the Great War, the military’s leaders leveraged real and simulated women’s discerning sexuality to motivate men to shun short-term pleasure and take on responsibility.<sup>65</sup>

Women’s historians—especially those looking at moral reform—have already examined how elite and middle-class women’s campaigns in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries sought to wield a certain degree of authority over men’s sexuality.<sup>66</sup> Yet the transition to sexual liberalism has been treated (at least implicitly) as an effective end of this authority and constraint. As Sheila Jeffreys, who views the social purity movement’s limited victories over male sexuality as a positive historical development characteristically laments, the sexual revolution of the 1920s should be viewed as a triumph of antifeminist forces against the

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<sup>64</sup> This oversight is likely due to the prevailing influence that women’s history has had on the subfield of gender history. Cécile Dauphin, Arlette Farge, Geneviève Fraisse, et. al. critique women’s history for failing to address the ways that women have participated in gendered power. They point out that much of women’s history is “hampered . . . by a narrow framing of the issues exclusively in terms of the dialectic of domination and oppression, with no attention to frequent and complex variations or to exclusively female forms of power.” For them, the point of gender history should not be to merely map out male supremacy, but “to understand how a women’s culture was constructed within a system of inegalitarian relations and how it concealed the flaws of that system,” bearing in mind that “[c]ultures are based on the consensus of a certain community,” and that “[e]very element of a culture must be conceptualized in terms of relations and dependencies—relations to and dependencies on the other sex, the social group, the political and economic context, and the entire cultural domain.” Here, the collection of French historians of gender propose to study the overall ecology of social, political and cultural factors that underpin gender relations. Cécile Dauphin, Arlette Farge, Geneviève Fraisse, Christiane Klapish Zuber, Rose-Marie Lagrave, Michelle Perrot, Pierrette Pézerat, Yannick Ripa, Pauline Schmitt-Pantel, and Danièle Voldman, “Women’s Culture and Power,” in Jacques Revel and Lynn Hunt, eds., *Histories: French Constructions of the Past*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Free Press, 1995), 622, 624-5.

<sup>65</sup> The term “mediatized” denotes a situation in which communications media do not merely mediate, but play a fundamental and active role in shaping operations. As Sarah Maltby has argued, militaries are increasingly “mediatized,” in the sense that “the media act as both a rationale and interface for communication within the military, and between the military and [the public],” with militaries establishing “Media Operations” branches that use media to, among other things, sustain “morale and a will to work” within the ranks, “retain ‘freedom of manoeuvre’ from political intervention,” “gain and maintain domestic political support for military activity,” “gain and maintain public support for military activity,” “achieve operational success,” “protect operational security,” “maintain internal morale,” “gain and maintain alliance cohesion during an operation,” and “[t]o counter the enemy information campaign.” Sarah Maltby, “The Mediatization of the Military,” *Media, War & Conflict*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (December, 2012), 255-257.

<sup>66</sup> David J. Pivar, *Purity Crusade: Sexual Morality and Social Control, 1868–1900* (Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1973); Jeffreys, *The Spinster and Her Enemies*; Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “Beauty, the Beast, and the Militant Woman: A Case Study in Sex Roles and Social Stress in Jacksonian America,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 23 (1971), 562-84; Charles E. Rosenberg, “Sexuality, Class and Role in 19th-Century America,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (May, 1973), 131-153.

burgeoning sexual power that women, through (quasi-)feminist moral reform campaigns, had struggled to create.<sup>67</sup> This dissertation aims to complicate that conclusion by examining how sexual manipulation, based upon a combination of environmentally-regulated sexual scarcity, the policing of men's and women's sexual conduct, the encouragement of men and especially women to be sexually discerning, and the mass promotion of militarily- and economically-useful behaviors as sexually desirable all came together to create a stratified and competitive sexual economy that used sex to motivate male effort, risk and sacrifice.

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<sup>67</sup> Sheila Jeffreys offers what she calls "a new interpretation of [the] 'sexual revolution' [of the 1920s]," insisting that "[t]he effect of the 'sexual revolution' was to cripple the feminist campaign to assert women's right to control her own body." Jeffreys, *The Spinster and Her Enemies*, 4, 5.

## Chapter 1: Sex and the Theories of Morale Strategy During the War

From the beginning of the American entry into the conflict, military leaders insisted that it would take more than brute force to win the war. Secretary of War Newton D. Baker—a progressive reformer whose prior career was not in the military but in municipal politics—stressed the importance of mental vigor and determination among soldiers, the absence of which no amount of weaponry or money could make up for. Writing retrospectively shortly after the war's close, Baker claimed that “the thing which ultimately brought about the victory of the Allied forces on the western front was not wholly the strength of the arm of the soldier, not wholly the number of guns of the Allied nations; but it was rather the mental forces that were at work nerving those arms, and producing those guns, and producing in the civil populations and military populations alike of those countries that unconquerable determination that this war should have but one end, a righteous end.” Crucial to this mission, Baker insisted, was the “business of mobilizing the mind.” The soldier should feel backed up and supported by his government and by his family, since both were what he was ultimately to fight for. This, and only this, could help him to maintain bravery and stave off hopelessness in the adverse conditions of war. “[W]hen the night was dark in France,” he concluded, “when the stars were not visible over the trenches and the noise of hostile artillery was menacing and fearful, when it was lonesome for the sentinel, the thing that sustained him there, the thing that made it possible for him to stay, was the unseen but almost palpable hand of his country resting on his shoulder.”<sup>1</sup> One of the main tasks of morale work, then, had been to make this sense of support “almost palpable,” and to continually remind the soldiers what and who they were fighting for.

But the determination to fight and endure, even for private interests, was not automatic. If they were going to be persuaded to fight at all, soldiers, especially those who were involuntarily conscripted, must be motivated to do so. And in order to be motivated, they first and foremost be made susceptible to motivating influences. These were the central stakes and concerns for the leaders in the military who hoped to bolster military morale. As officials from the Morale Branch put it after the end of the war:

A civilian cannot be changed into a soldier by merely putting him into uniform, providing him with a weapon and instructing him in the rudiments of military discipline. If, month after month, he is to endure with cheerfulness and unshakeable resolution, the hardships

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<sup>1</sup> Newton D. Baker, “Introduction,” in George Creel, *How we advertised America; the first telling of the amazing story of the Committee on public information that carried the gospel of Americanism to every corner of the globe* (New York: Harper and Brother, 1920), xii, xiii.

and dangers, the exhausting nervous and emotional strain and the monotony of modern war, there must obviously be within him some powerful motive capable of dominating many of the ordinary weaknesses of human nature, of so controlling his will that the victory of the army of which he is a part becomes the supreme object of his desire.<sup>2</sup>

The means by which military triumph would become “the supreme object of his desire” was entirely up in the air as the United States entered into the war. At that time, a number of men in various positions around the country began to theorize about what morale was, and how to improve it. In books, articles, pamphlets, and other publications, these “morale theorists,” as the rest of this dissertation will call them, detailed an approach to morale that ultimately informed the War Department’s strategy for motivating soldiers.

The origins of the concept of morale are murky, according to Daniel Ussishkin, but it has an etymological origin in French, with the term “*le moral*” seeming to appear in the mid-eighteenth century to refer to mental (as opposed to physical) faculties. According to Ussishkin, it was the Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz who was the first to apply the concept to the military. For Clausewitz, who did not use the French word “*le moral*” but instead used the German words “*moralische Potenzen*” and “*moralische Kräfte*” (meaning, essentially, “psychological forces” in English), there were two essential components of this state of being: virtue (or what one might today call morality or discipline) and mood. As Ussishkin explains, in the English-speaking world (at least in Britain), “the term was rarely used, ‘virtually unknown,’ before 1914,” when the World War broke out.<sup>3</sup> For the theorists of morale, then, the term had a relatively shallow history, leaving plenty of room to further theorize and strategize about it.

During the war, a number of highly-educated and well-placed Americans began theorizing about morale. One of these was the prominent psychologist G. Stanley Hall, who, before the advent of the Military Morale Branch, had proposed the founding of a morale agency to the Psychology Committee of the National Research Council, and who was slated, by the National Research Council’s Psychology Committee, to become the chairman of a subcommittee on morale in August, 1918—a position that he never took up.<sup>4</sup> Hall nevertheless was one of the key figures responsible for introducing morale to the War Department, and his 1920 book *Morale: The Supreme Standard of Life and Conduct* offers insight into the War Department’s thinking on the subject.

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<sup>2</sup> Capt. Randolph C. Shaw and 1st Lieut. J. L. Bennett, “Military Morale Work: A History of its Institution and Development in the United States Army,” enclosed in letter from Major R. J. Burt, Acting Chief of the Morale Branch to Chief, Historical Branch, War Plans Division, General Staff, September 20, 1919; W. D.—History of Morale Branch; Records of the Historical Section Relating to the History of the War Department, 1900-1941; G-4 Liaison & Communication, Orders & Publications; Record Group 165; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Ussishkin, *Morale: A Modern British History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 12-14.

<sup>4</sup> Robert M. Yerkes, *Report of the Psychology Committee of the National Research Council* (Washington, D.C.: National Research Council, 1919), 132.

Another important figure in the theorization of morale was the army physician and educator of preventive and sanitary medicine Edward Lyman Munson, who was the instigator and leader of the Military Morale Section and the Morale Branch. Prior to the war, Munson had pioneered so-called “sanitary tactics,” which strategized about how the military could use the military’s medical services to give soldiers a sense of safety and confidence. He believed that they would fight harder and take more personal risks on the belief that if they were injured, that they would be promptly and effectively treated. He also suggested that wounded soldiers be promptly removed from the sight of other soldiers, so that their pain and disfigurement would not dissuade others from risking their own safety.<sup>5</sup> Munson had also served as a medical officer in the Philippines and along the Mexican border during the US’s conflict with Pancho Villa, where social conditions between soldiers and women sufficiently concerned the progressive Secretary of War Newton D. Baker that he commissioned a study of “sexual immorality” there—a study that culminated in the War Department’s founding of the Commission on Training Camp Activities.<sup>6</sup> As a senior medical officer on this campaign, Munson would have been intimately connected with these events. His 1921 book, entitled *The Management of Men: A Handbook on the Systematic Development of Morale and the Control of Human Behavior*, further extended his explorations of how to motivate and control men in such a way that they would be willing to fight in a dangerous and faraway war.

The Harvard philosophy professor William Ernest Hocking was another important theorist of morale. During the war, Hocking was a war camp course inspector, and his writings and lectures on morale held great sway among the military’s morale agencies. His thoughts on morale—many of which he had developed for lectures at Williams College and Yale and published in periodicals—were gathered up and published in a 1918 book entitled *Morale and Its Enemies*.

Another theorist of morale was the longtime YMCA leader, co-founder and president of the Parks and Recreation Association of America (which was one of the civic organizations that served as part of the CTCA), and war camp activities inspector Luther Halsey Gulick, Jr. Gulick was a pioneer of physical education, one of the inventors of the modern rules of basketball, and an advocate of municipal governments using recreational facilities to divert children, adolescents and young adults away from the “demoralizing” influences of the brothel and the saloon. His contribution to the theory of morale was a 1919 book entitled *Morals and Morale*,

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<sup>5</sup> Dale C. Smith, “Edward Lyman Munson, M.D.: A Biographical Study in Military Medicine,” *Military Medicine*, Vol. 164, No. 1: 1 (1999), 3-4; Edward L. Munson, *The Principles of Sanitary Tactics: a handbook on the use of medical department detachments and organizations in campaign* (Menasha, WI.: Press of Banta Publishing Co., 1911); John F. Morrison and Edward Lyman Munson, *A Study in Troop Leading and Management of the Sanitary Service in War* (Fort Leavenworth, KS.: Ketcheson Printing Co., 1910), 3-4.

<sup>6</sup> Smith, “Edward Lyman Munson,” 4; Raymond B. Fosdick, *Chronicle of a Generation: An Autobiography* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), 135-141.

which was published by the YMCA's Association Press and sported an introduction from the CTCA's leader Raymond B. Fosdick. As Fosdick stated in this introduction to the book, which was published after Gulick's death in August, 1918, "Dr. Gulick accurately portrays the point of view of the War Department in stimulating the creation, through public and private agencies, of every form of healthful activity that could appeal to our red-blooded soldiers in the Army."<sup>7</sup>

Two additional theorists who contributed to the theory of morale were Max Joseph Exner and Harold Clarke Goddard. Exner was a social hygienist and YMCA physician—one of two men (the other being Raymond Fosdick) commissioned by Secretary Baker to report on sexual immorality along the US-Mexico border in 1916. He did not write explicitly about morale, but nevertheless did write on the relationship between sex and motivation and inspired the work of morale strategists. Goddard—the only morale theorist mentioned here without a clear connection to the War Department—was the head of the English Department at Swarthmore College. His contribution to morale theory was his 1918 book entitled *Morale*, which made an academic case for controlling soldiers' environments in order to compel them to fight.

Nearly all of the American social reformers, psychologists, and university professors who theorized morale had some connection to the War Department's morale programs. But their studies of morale were not an entirely coherent or coordinated project. Their writings on morale seem, instead, to have been part of an academic conversation that these well-connected figures were having with one another and with the wider civil society. At the center of this conversation was, of course, the drive to win the war against Germany. But the morale theorists all had wider ambitions and concerns. The need to move social discipline and social authority away from moralizing and onto a new foundation is a key theme in the morale theorists' writings. Ussishkin has demonstrated how for the theorists of morale writing during World War I and the 1920s, the concept offered "both a form of discipline and an interiorization of disciplinary codes." For an era in which academics were increasingly aware of human instincts, morale offered, for figures such as G. Stanley Hall, a "vitalist" form of power and influence—a way to move beyond externally-imposed forms of moral authority, and toward "a new foundation for civilized life."<sup>8</sup> Morale, in other words, offered a compelling alternative to morality.<sup>9</sup> Whereas morality had primarily been concerned with spiritual obligation and religious sanction, morale was concerned with motivation. Rather than seeking to compel people not to do things, the morale theorists sought a reliable way to motivate them to do things—happily, efficiently, and effectively.

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<sup>7</sup> Raymond B. Fosdick, in Luther H. Gulick, *Morals and Morale* (New York: Association Press, 1919), vii.

<sup>8</sup> Ussishkin, *Morale*, 14.

<sup>9</sup> This was David Riesman's argument about the changing location of social authority in the first half of the twentieth century. David Riesman, Nathan Glazer and Reuel Denny, "From Morality to Morale," in *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001 [1950]), 37-65.

Any solution to the problem of motivation, the morale theorists agreed, would require the soldier's enforced separation from "baser" pleasures—particularly sex. According to these theorists, men—and especially soldiers—must maintain what they called "sexual continence" as a precondition for building and maintaining motivation and drive. G. Stanley Hall, for example, wrote that "[t]he soldier, like the pugilist training for a championship bout, . . . really ought to, and does entirely forego, for the time being, the exercise of the procreative function. It should by every means be held in abeyance."<sup>10</sup> Exner claimed in *The Rational Sex Life For Men* that men must resist engaging in sexual activity, since this would "kill high aspiration, degrade ambition, destroy idealism, disorganize useful capacities, bringing confusion into the whole organization of our lives." Sexual satiation diminished men's "inherent capabilities," and the man would therefore become "quite inefficient without an inner motive that will furnish the driving power to carry life forward to high idealism and noble achievement."<sup>11</sup>

Munson, too, highlighted the centrality of sexual continence: "Chastity and self-control are powerful factors in the support of war strain. Energy dissipated in one way is lost to use in another. There is less reserve to draw upon in emergency. In those addicted to promiscuous sex indulgence the very character is changed, habits and outlook on life are altered for the worse, and physical strength and endurance impaired."<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Gulick "stress[ed] the relation of 'winning the war' to sex morals." Gulick insisted that sexual continence was a precondition for military efficiency, and suggested that the military ought to learn from sports: "It is well known in boxing circles that during training for the contest no dissipation [meaning: ejaculation] is to be tolerated." The reason for this was that "when it comes to supreme endurance, nerve, power of the will, and speed, a man cannot dissipate and be at his best." Gulick was steadfast in his endorsement of this view, insisting that "[c]oncerning this there is no room for discussion." In exactly the same way as athletes, Gulick reasoned, "[w]inning the war is dependent upon men having themselves completely under control. . . . [I]n order to win the war the men have got to be at the top notch of power and endurance, and this means morality till after the struggle is over."<sup>13</sup>

All of these theories of morale shared a "hydraulic" understanding of sexuality in which motivation and "vigor" could be conserved or "dissipated" through ejaculation. This view, which was characteristic of turn-of-the-century sexology, had its foundations in earlier nineteenth-

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<sup>10</sup> G. Stanley Hall, *Morale: The Supreme Standard of Life and Conduct* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1920), 103-4.

<sup>11</sup> Max J. Exner, *The Rational Sex Life For Men* (New York: Association Men, 1918), vii-viii.

<sup>12</sup> Edward L. Munson, *The Management of Men: A Handbook on the Systematic Development of Morale and the Control of Human Behavior* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921), 197.

<sup>13</sup> Luther H. Gulick, *Morals and Morale* (New York: Association Press, 1919), 36-38, 55.

century notions of sperm as a “vital fluid” that was a direct source of willpower, and therefore not to be wasted, but instead guarded and accumulated in what G. J. Barker-Benfield has called a “spermatic economy.”<sup>14</sup>

Concerns of this kind had become common among social reformers and physicians in the nineteenth century as they fretted over the consequences of urban life in industrializing cities in the United States and England. The concern was that urban life, with its lack of physically strenuous work and indulgent leisure pursuits was creating a crisis of “overcivilization,” in which men were losing their vigor and vitality, resulting in the urban condition known as neurasthenia, or “city rot.” The consequence was an anxious loss of motivation and an “irritable weakness” among urban men. To combat this disorder of the willpower, reformers, doctors, and even politicians embraced an ideology of strenuousness which advocated athletic activity, self-discipline, and moral education, and gave rise to a tradition of “muscular Christianity.” A number of civic organizations combined all of these prescribed remedies. Chief among these was the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) and, later, the Playground Association of America (which later became the Parks and Recreation Association of America—which Luther Gulick co-founded and led)—both of which would become core organizations within the Commission on Training Camp Activities during World War I, where they brought the signature blend of athletics, counseling in “strenuous life” principles, moral education, and “wholesome” leisure time activities which were characteristic of muscular Christianity.<sup>15</sup> The core organizations of the CTCA, therefore, shared the same social and intellectual footing—and many of the same leading figures—as the community of thinkers pioneering the principles of military morale. They shared concerns about the preservation and hydraulic channeling of vital energies.

The morale theorists’ formulations on motivation resembled Sigmund Freud’s writings on sublimation, and there is no doubt that at least Hall’s theory of morale was influenced by Freud, whom he had brought to speak at Clark University to speak in 1906, on Freud’s only visit to the

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<sup>14</sup> Joseph Allen Boone, *Libidinal Currents: Sexuality and the Shaping of Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 436, n. 8; G. J. Barker Benfield, *The Horrors of the Half-Known Life: Male Attitudes Toward Women and Sexuality in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 179-88. According to Benfield, the idea that sex and motivation were highly intertwined seems to have been a longstanding and ongoing concern within American democracy, as Tocqueville observed in the 1830s. If men’s sexuality could be kept in check, they were bound to be more focused on their work. Tocqueville thought that industriousness was both a cause and a symptom of sexual continence (with sexual continence being primarily a result of women’s enforcement of morals), and, using the terminology of his time, described the basic process of both diversion and sublimation: “The tumultuous and constantly harassed life which equality makes men lead, not only distracts them from the passion of love, by denying them time to indulge in it, but it diverts them from it by another more secret but more certain road. All men who live in democratic ages more or less contract the ways of thinking of the manufacturing and trading classes; their minds take a serious, deliberate, and positive turn; they are apt to relinquish the ideal, in order to pursue some visible and proximate object, which appears to be the natural and necessary aim of their desires.” Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol. 2 (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1945 [1835]), 221.

<sup>15</sup> Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 25-39.

United States. However, as the historian of psychology Henri Ellenberger has demonstrated, the concept of sublimation—the idea that one’s sexual instinct may be transformed and directed into non-sexual drives and activities—was an established concept well before Freud began to write about it.<sup>16</sup> Hall indicated in a 1911 address to a meeting of eugenicists that he saw Freud as being part of a larger sea change in scientific, sociological and religious thought about sex. This sea change involved other figures, such as Charles Darwin, the sexologist Havelock Ellis, the anthropologist John Ferguson McLennan, the criminologist Cesare Lombroso, the psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing, and the priest and theologian James Spencer Northcote.<sup>17</sup> As Lester Goodchild points out, the foundational thinkers who influenced Hall’s ideas the most were Ralph Waldo Emerson, Charles Darwin, and Ernest Haeckel.<sup>18</sup> Unlike Emerson, Darwin and Haeckel, Freud, while influential, was not a foundational thinker for Hall or the other morale theorists. In their writings, the morale theorists used different terminology than Freud did to discuss sublimation, preferring electrical, hydraulic and radiant energy metaphors to describe the channeling of passions and instincts into culturally-encouraged activities and behaviors.<sup>19</sup>

Nowhere was such a hydraulic or radiant understanding of sexual energy portrayed more literally than in Munson’s book *The Management of Men*, where he theorized that men have a constantly-accumulating, but limited supply of energy, which must be expended through the proper channels. To illustrate this point, Munson provided a series of diagrams depicting literal pistons in varying positions of expansion and contraction, corresponding to different phases of the day. During an eight-hour sleeping period, vital energies would be restored, and they would have to be expended, in a controlled way, throughout the day, through military training and recreation. (See Figures 1.1, 1.2 & 1.3) The channels through which energy was released were thought to be instinctive channels (of which there were twenty-one, including “hunger,” “play,” “constructiveness,” “reproduction,” “sympathy,” “hunger,” etc.)—the representation of which was the subject of another diagram. (See Figure 1.4) Because “energy is constantly being developed for the fulfillment of one instinct or another,” Munson instructed, it “therefore must constantly be expended.” This necessitated the creation of “proper channels,” such as athletics and wholesome leisure activities, to prevent “pressure” being released

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<sup>16</sup> Henri F. Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 505.

<sup>17</sup> G. Stanley Hall, “Eugenics: Its Ideals and What It Is Going to Do,” *Religious Education*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1911), 158.

<sup>18</sup> Lester F. Goodchild, “G. Stanley Hall and an American Social Darwinist Pedagogy: His Progressive Educational Ideas on Gender and Race,” *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (February 2012), 64-65.

<sup>19</sup> As Dorothy Ross explains, “Hall chose . . . to use a term borrowed from neurophysiology, where the neural impulse was often spoken of as radiating or irradiating from one point in the nervous mechanism to adjacent or connected areas. This neural image is congruent with the concept of diversion common in the nineteenth-century English and American literature on sexual hygiene, where it was assumed that energy diverted from sexual activities could be channeled into civilized pursuits.” Dorothy Ross, *The Psychologist as Prophet* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 372 fn. 8.

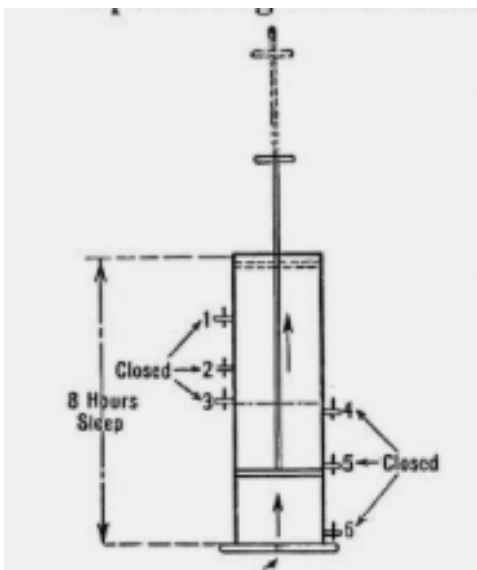


Figure 7. 8-Hour Sleep Period.

As the piston is drawn upwards, the cylinder fills with air. This process is comparable to the sleep period of the soldier during which he stores up energy. It will be noted that in this diagram all cocks, both military and other, are closed.

Cocks

Military

- 1. Exercise of initiative
- 2. Opportunity for advancement
- 3. Physical exertion

Personal

- 4. Domestic
- 5. Civic
- 6. Pleasure

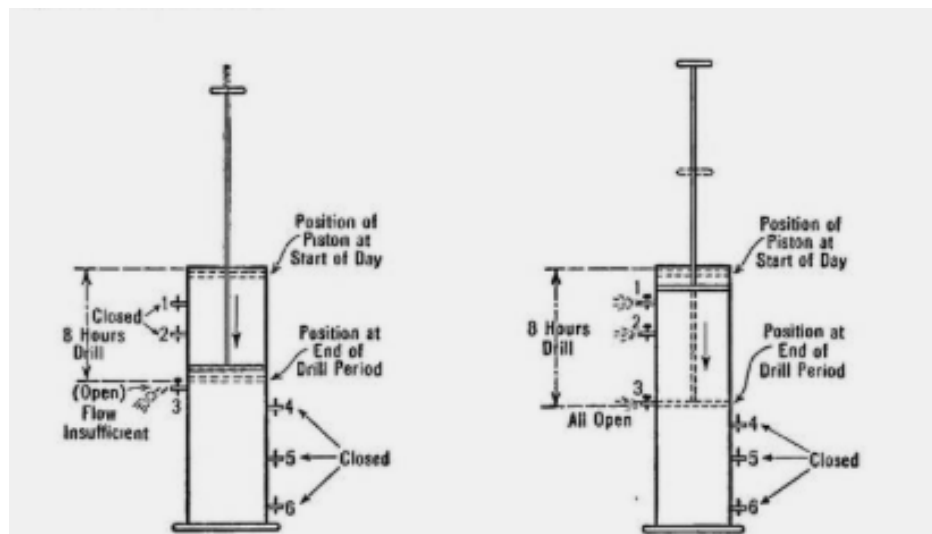


Figure 8. 8-Hour Military Period.

As it often is

A. During half the waking period, initiation and opportunity are repressed and represented by closed cocks 1 and 2.

As it should be

B. Cocks 1, 2 and 3 are all open, indicating opportunity to express personality as well as expend physical energy.

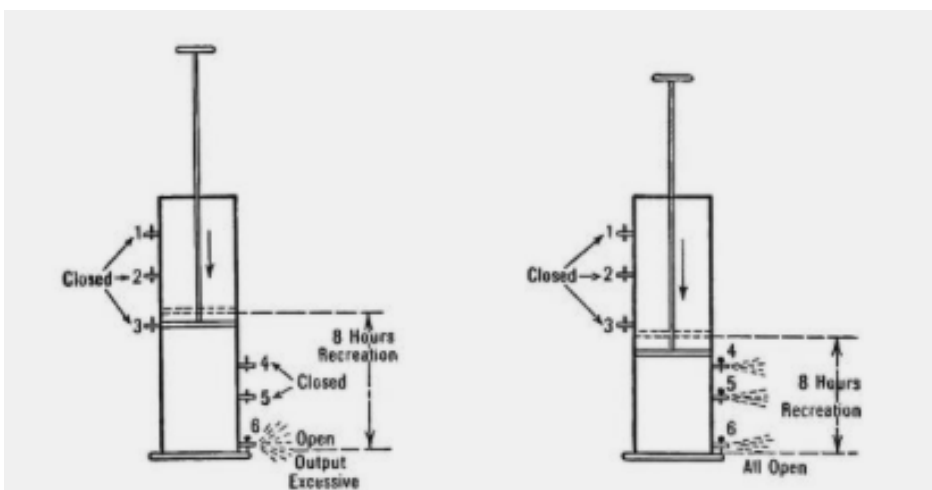


Figure 9. 8-Hour Personal Period.

As it often is

A. With more than half of the day's store of energy at the soldier's disposal and cocks 4 and 5 as well as military outlets, closed. The result is a heavy flow through No. 6.

As it should be

B. The position of the piston at the beginning of the period shows most of the day's energy already expended. Cocks 4, 5 and 6 are all partially open and there is some flow through each. Education has enlarged the soldier's field of interests so that this period is not confined to pleasure alone.

Figures 1.1, 1.2 & 1.3: Diagrams of pistons in Edward Lyman Munson's book *The Management of Men*, representing the soldier's energy levels fluctuating throughout the day, as the result of sleep, "drill" and recreation. Energy should be channeled, in a controlled and productive way, through "cocks," which would be opened by specific activities to relieve pressure.

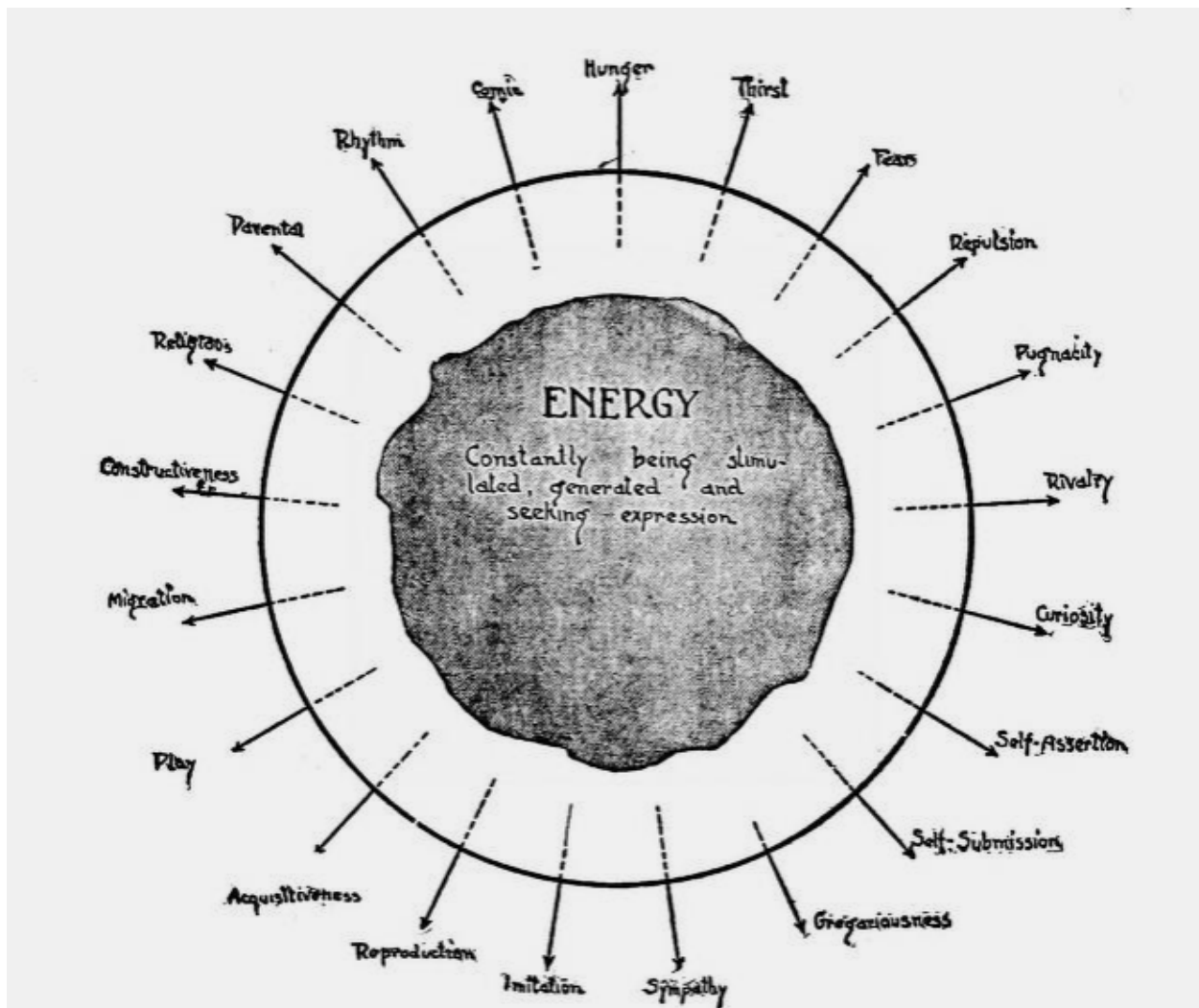


Figure 5. Diagrammatic Conception of the Human Reservoir of Power.

**Figure 1.4:** Munson’s depiction of “energy,” described as a “Human Reservoir of Power,” which is “[c]onstantly being stimulated, generated and seeking expression,” and the instinctual channels through which he believed that it was possible to express it.

“through harmful ones.”<sup>20</sup>

Importantly, this hydraulic model was not a purely repressive one. “A too common fault in the handling of men,” Munson warned, “is based on the idea that instincts . . . can and often should be suppressed. The tendency is to produce conformance by compression. This teaching is not only unscientific but dangerous, for the unnecessary blocking of an instinct inevitably produces discontent and usually trouble. The better way is to recognize that instincts exist as laws of nature, that they have to be reckoned with, and to direct and utilize them so as to

<sup>20</sup> Munson, *Management of Men*, 100.

promote the purpose desired.” The point, in other words, was not to suppress (or “compress”) energy or stimulation, but to channel the expression of instincts—preferably into activities that were productive. Munson explained that “[t]he so-called sublimation of an instinct occurs when a strong feeling is removed from the instinct to which it naturally belongs and is fastened to another object with an entirely different response.” This, Munson explained, occurs “when the soldier ‘fights for a principle,’ . . . [or] when some undesirable instinctive tendency is directed into a channel of positive value. Sublimation of this sort may convert the baser sentiments into something of true worth.” Munson insisted that man’s so-called “reproductive instinct” should be sublimated as “chivalry, whereby the soldier regards himself as protecting women and the ideals for which womanhood stands.” “The officer should study his men so as to bring sublimation into play as much as practicable and thereby convert traits of weakness of character into elements of strength.”<sup>21</sup> What’s more, leaders might even choose to strategically stimulate desire as a means of making men more productive, and here they diverged sharply from moral reformers whose chief objective was “social purity.”<sup>22</sup> Munson claimed that “if an instinct has been stimulated and its expression checked by ethical considerations or other means, the energy which has been developed may be drawn off by the suitable opening of other channels through the stimulation of compensating instincts.”<sup>23</sup> (See Figure 1.5)

Other morale strategists echoed this sentiment. Hocking insisted that in the war camps it would be “worse than useless to go at this problem as a problem of repression.” While some repression was necessary for establishing the psychological preconditions for building up the “moral resource” of the armed forces, it would be “as fatal to condemn what is harmless as to approve what is wrong.”<sup>24</sup> Exner thought that the interpretation of sexual instincts and sex in general as “something ignoble, dishonorable, impure” was unhelpful. Instead, man’s sexual drives ought to be “interpreted in order that he may make them serve the highest interests of his developing manhood.” “Thus,” he concluded, “this powerful and all pervasive instinct, instead of becoming a barrier to real achievement and a down-drag on every noble impulse, will, as it

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<sup>21</sup> Munson, *Management of Men*, 98, 209-210.

<sup>22</sup> David Pivar has demonstrated how World War I “drove a wedge” between the religious and female-driven social purity movement and the male-driven and medicalized social hygiene movement. The use of “chemical prophylaxis” in the form of “K-packets” issued to soldiers, and the military’s policy of arresting, compulsorily examining, testing, and detaining women suspected of prostitution, while refraining from punishing the men that visited prostitutes or had sex with “promiscuous” women (as long as they reported to the medical officers immediately afterwards for post-exposure treatment), was rightly viewed as an extension of the so-called “double standard of morality” that they had campaigned so fervently against. David J. Pivar, *Purity and Hygiene: Women, Prostitution, and the “American Plan,” 1900-1930* (Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 2002), 201-225.

<sup>23</sup> Munson, *Management of Men*, 98.

<sup>24</sup> William Ernest Hocking, *Morale And Its Enemies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1918), 179, 188.

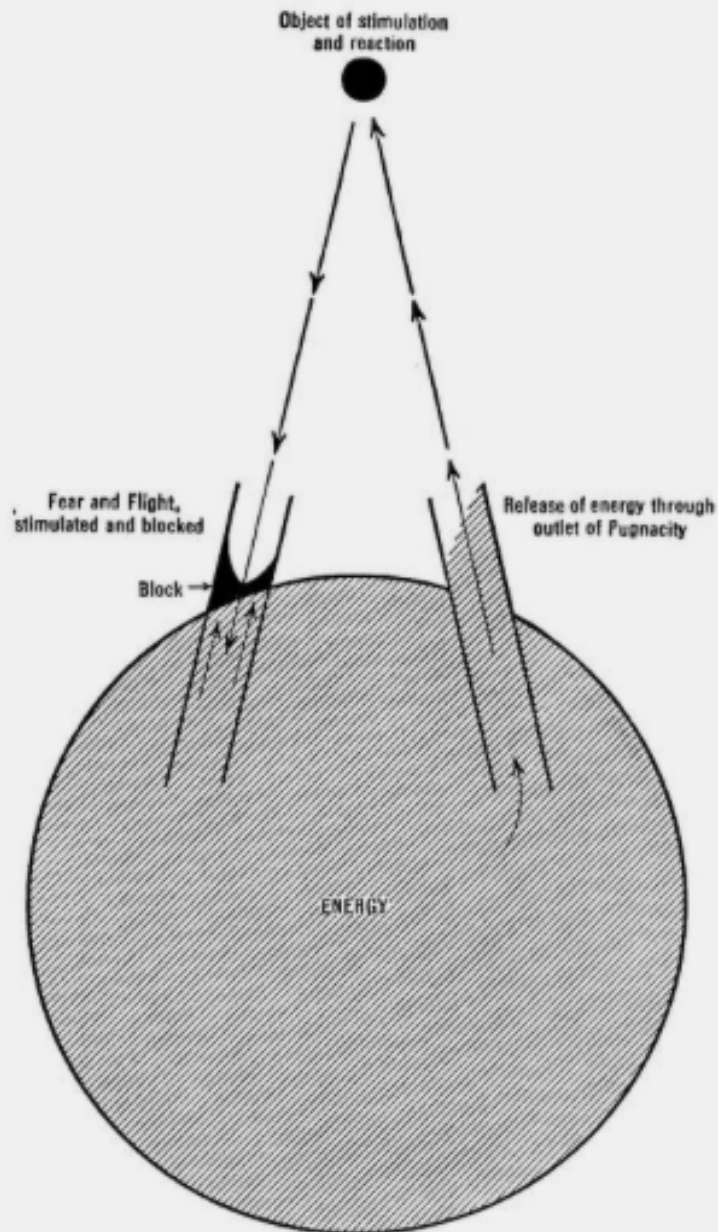


Figure 6. Diagrammatic Conception of Energy Stimulated Through a Blocked Channel Seeking Expression Through an Open Outlet.

**Figure 1.5:** Munson's representation of "The Basic Instincts." Here, "energy's" expression is simultaneously "stimulated" by an "object," and blocked from being expressed through undesirable or unproductive outlets.

should, call out our finest qualities and energize our best capacities.”<sup>25</sup>

Elsewhere, Hall had criticized what he called the “morbid modesty” of earlier attempts to control sex, which over-relied on morality and sanctions.<sup>26</sup> In his book on morale, Hall argued that “transcendental sanctions are losing power, [so] we must build up on a natural basis a new prophylaxis and be able to show that anything is right or wrong according as it is physiologically *and socially* right or wrong.” Moral education pamphlets and “scare talks” should avoid “platitudes spun to . . . tedious length,” and instead should associate proper sex with positive life outcomes. “[T]he most effective appeal of all,” Hall claimed, was that of “bodily and mental perfection,” and therefore such talks and pamphlets would be better written by a physician than a member of the clergy or a moral reformer figure. The entire point of exploring morale was in order, in Hall’s words, to find a “substitution everywhere of immanence for transcendence . . . a restatement of the essential old dogmas in terms of the human needs from which they sprang, . . . an attempt to state and meet these needs by more adequate, modern modes of thought and life.”<sup>27</sup>

Gulick, too, thought that moralizing approaches were an ineffective way to motivate sexual restraint. “It is not morality which [chaste athletes] have in mind,” he insisted; “it is success; it is to win the contest.” Men should be made to want to be stronger, better and faster, and to pursue this as a matter of “inner necessity rather than external compulsion”—a goal that would be “most effective when self-selected and backed by personal will and desire.” Whereas in the past, moral education had sought to train young people “to avoid sexual diseases and disabilities,” Gulick claimed, in the present situation, “[m]orals should be taught as a factor in great attainment in athletics, scholarship, personal character, war, or anything else which involves the preservation of human power.” Gulick—himself one of the key figures within the muscular Christian tradition—maintained that this new, internalized imperative for sexual restraint “differs from the old in its emphasis only. The older ideal seemed to be predominantly negative: ‘Thou shalt not’ was its authoritative formulation. The newer formulation is ‘Thou shalt.’” Such an approach carried forward the same behaviors that the older-fashioned, moralizing program advocated, but it also “has, in addition, a constructive program.”<sup>28</sup>

While the morale theorists were not opposed to religion, they thought that moral appeals were an ineffective means of motivating young men. All of the morale theorists grappled with the appropriate role of religion in the military’s morale apparatus, but Hall and Munson both wrote

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<sup>25</sup>Exner, *Rational Sex Life For Men*, viii-x.

<sup>26</sup> Jeffrey P. Moran, *Teaching Sex: The Shaping of Adolescence in the 20th Century* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 45.

<sup>27</sup> Hall, *Morale*, 108-9; 347-48.

<sup>28</sup> Gulick, *Morals and Morale*, 36, 57-60.

on it at length. As has already been mentioned, Hall believed that society's leaders should replace religious doctrine with morale as a more modern mode of self-regulation. The two could be mutually-reinforcing though. In a section of his book on "The Religious Instinct," Munson evaluated that religion still had strategic utility for the military's morale apparatus. Because the soldiers "have nearly all been religiously brought up and are reverent especially in time of war," he believed that religion could be "a potent aid to discipline," even if the "[s]oldiers are of an age and sex in which the religious instinct is not at its strongest." In Munson's framing, then, religious beliefs could be leveraged in order to convince soldiers to obey and to behave themselves, even if, as he put it, "[t]he type of approach which may be effective with women and children is not psychologically sound in the effort to reach lusty young males of the military age."<sup>29</sup>

The morale theorists' "constructive" approach to sexuality was part of a growing belief among psychologists and sex educators that sexual desire was a resource to be managed, rather than a nuisance to be repressed. According to Jeffrey Moran, sex educators in the 1910s—Exner among them—had begun using the metaphor of circuitry to describe the ideal outcome of the properly regulated sexual impulse. Taking cues from G. Stanley Hall's pioneering writings and lectures, which "called for a more general appreciation of the sexual impulse," sex educators thought, in Moran's words, that "excess sexual energy was critical to the human species' development of civilization," and that, "[b]y deferring, sublimating, or substituting for physical sexual impulses—taking what Exner called the 'long circuit' between hypertrophied desire and satisfaction—the human race had fostered conjugal love, social solidarity, aesthetics, and spirituality." In their minds, all of human culture had been built on the back of diverted erotic energy.<sup>30</sup>

The view that deferred gratification motivated people to shoulder life's responsibilities clearly informed the morale theorists' writings too. In another of his wartime books, entitled *The Dynamic of Manhood* (1918), Gulick argued that the satiation of what he called "sex hunger" "lessens, or even prevents the higher forms of experience. It is like short circuiting an electric current and thus depriving the engine of its power." Gulick thought that a direct path between

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<sup>29</sup> Munson, *Management of Men*, 202-204. The notion that social and sexual morals could serve strategic ends was not a new or novel concept. Edmund Burke saw religious morality as a means of "consecrat[ing] the state," and "emphasized the social benefits of Christianity, rather than its truth," while also viewing the romantic and aesthetic values of the nobility as offering enticing and useful pathways for the sentiments that would subjugate individual will to social harmony. Similarly, the thinkers of the Scottish Enlightenment—who clearly had an impact on Burke's thought—advocated "social morality" and "manners" as means of achieving social cohesion and productivity. Following an identical line of reasoning, the morale strategists saw a practical utility for moral and religious programs and messaging, even if they did not entirely believe in the strategic value of moralizing. See Ian Harris, "Burke and Religion," in *The Cambridge Companion to Edmund Burke*, ed. David Dwan and Christopher J Insole (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 103. For more on Edmund Burke's perspective on manners, social discipline, and the importance of these for what he called "civilization," see Daniel O'Neill, "Burke on Democracy as the Death of Western Civilization," *Polity*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (January, 2004), 201-225.

<sup>30</sup> Moran, *Teaching Sex*, 41-42, 45.

desire and sexual satiation was inherently wasteful and damaging, undercutting the basis of what he called the “deferred instinct” of love, which could only emerge from a longer and more intricate circuit path. Here, he took as his model the plot of romantic dime novels, in which “the maiden is captured and the lover performs impossible deeds of daring before she is rescued and marries the hero.” The romantic story’s “impossible deeds of daring” were not unlike other everyday deeds, which the man would perform on his long, indirect path toward satiation, and in Gulick’s view, one’s “entire life” could gain a certain “atmosphere” of higher meaning by inhabiting the romantic labyrinth of elaborate rituals of deferred gratification.<sup>31</sup>

For Goddard, the satiation of the basic instincts of “nutrition and the other factors of self-perpetuation and -preservation” left sexual reproduction as the only remaining base instinct to which motivational efforts could cater to. If a man was fed, clothed, and sheltered, these basic requirements of survival no longer held any motivational impetus for him. In order to motivate men outside of situations of extreme material scarcity, then, one needed to draw upon his drive for sex and sexual reproduction. And in order for this to provide any motivation, the man must not be sexually satiated. This, he explained, was the reason “why the voluptuary is the supreme enemy of life and why he has ever had only the contempt of right-thinking men; why the world, whatever its own practice or its hypocritical pretense to the contrary, has always at heart venerated the man of self-control in sexual matters.” Hedonism, Goddard thought, completely undermined the foundations of men’s motivation.<sup>32</sup>

All of the morale theorists hoped that the sexual instinct could be transformed into more refined feelings and emotions in men—a variety of sympathies and sentimentalities that they referred to as the “higher instincts,” “higher emotions,” or “secondary sex qualities.” According to Exner, the primary purpose for sexual self-control was to create a basis for higher emotions. “Self-control is only the beginning, a necessary condition for that culture of affections from which the deep, enriching springs of life flow.” “Self-control,” he explained, “is a necessary condition for the higher cultivation of the affections,” and affection, in Exner’s view, was an essential sentiment—“a spiritual quality of the soul, one from which spring the highest reaches of human feeling and activity.” Affection, for Exner, was the basis of love, and the basis of everything worthwhile in human culture. And affection was the only proper manifestation of the sex instinct: “Only in terms of the affections can the sex instinct in man be truly interpreted . . . and only in the sphere of the affections can that impulse find legitimate expression.”<sup>33</sup> The affectionate man was the man capable of dedication, loyalty, and commitment—all important qualities for a military that intended to ask men to risk making the ultimate sacrifice.

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<sup>31</sup> Luther Gulick, *The Dynamic of Manhood* (New York: Association Press, 1918), 69, 75-77.

<sup>32</sup> Harold Goddard, *Morale* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1918), 101, 103.

<sup>33</sup> Exner, *Rational Sex Life For Men*, x-xii, 4.

Hall emphasized that sexual drives were “the most capable of metamorphosis of any human instinct,” and therefore the most suitable for being channeled into non-sexual ends. The object of sexual control, he thought, was to transform the sexual instinct into a higher form of feeling and dedication—what he called, borrowing Charles Darwin’s term for sexually desirable, but non-reproductive characteristics, “secondary sex qualities.”<sup>34</sup> Society, he thought, needed “more spiritualization of sex; . . . sanity, emotional, volitional, and intellectual, depend upon the proper regulation of this function.” Achieving this, in his view, was crucial for motivating the men in the military. “War is lost or won chiefly upon the development of secondary sex qualities,” he insisted.<sup>35</sup>

In Hocking’s view, under normal conditions of peace, the sexual instinct would be kept in check by a set of routines, habits and conditions, allowing men and women “to deal with one another, not quite impersonally, but unsexually.” In this view, these instincts were not to be altogether squelched. Instead, habits, routines and roles would “keep the continuous current of sex-interest in the position of an inactive spectator, making its own remarks, stimulating or retarding the flow of intercourse, but wholly out of circuit for the main business in hand.” For Hocking, it was important to maintain this “continuous current of sex-interest,” for it underlay and animated the everyday interactions of modern, productive people. Such a “current of sex-interest” rested on a delicate balance between stimulation and self-control. The striking of this balance, he thought, was “a late and difficult achievement of civilization”—one that had been achieved “unequally by different races and members of races, but an achievement upon which obviously the freedom and scope of civilized life directly depend. Hard work, the pursuit of science, concern for justice, and in fact for every end we call ‘objective,’ naturally inhibit the sexual motive, and can thrive only as it is inhibited or sublimated.”<sup>36</sup> For Hocking, then, the problem of morale was inherently part of a larger set of questions regarding the relationship between sexual drives and motivational structures. The control of sex, and the redirecting of sexual desire into a motivational force, constituted the foundation of civilization.

Hocking’s reflections that sexual restraint was the basis of civilization was shared among the morale theorists, and this view provides an important insight into how they—and the US military leaders who they advised—thought about race during the conflict. One of the defining characteristics of “lower races,” they thought, was that its members could not consistently hold sexual urges in abeyance. Yet, those urges were important, providing the “energy,” or motive force behind their everyday activities and their will to strive and achieve. Because of this, Hall

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<sup>34</sup> See Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man, Selection in Relation to Sex*, second edition (London: John Murray, 1896).

<sup>35</sup> Hall, *Morale*, 103, 109.

<sup>36</sup> Hocking, *Morale and Its Enemies*, 171.

actually advocated that boys be encouraged to act wild as children and adolescents, so that they could cultivate their more “primitive” instincts and drives before becoming adults. As boys matured into men, Hall thought, they would increasingly learn to master and channel these drives into productive and socially-acceptable behaviors—something he thought that members of less “civilized” races would not ultimately accomplish. This was known as “recapitulation theory.”<sup>37</sup> Hall was at the center of the eugenics movement, with two of his students—Henry H. Goddard and Robert M. Yerkes—going on to become prominent figures in the movement. Hall endorsed eugenics himself, spoke at a eugenics conference in 1911, and fretted about so-called “race suicide” (or the demographic decline of those of European descent), but he was more of a social Darwinist than a eugenicist, advocating for the advancement of all races through educational and vocational achievement.<sup>38</sup> This stance stemmed from his Lamarckian conception of evolution, which held that organisms, during the course of their lives, develop adaptive traits that alter their genes and which they may pass on to their offspring. Whereas non-Lamarckians such as Herbert Spencer thought that education was a lost cause for people he deemed to be racially inferior, Lamarckians like Hall thought that education and other environmental interventions could actually give them traits over the course of their lifetimes that their offspring would inherit. While, in this conception, not everyone began from the same starting point, and for the “lower races,” there would likely be a limit to how much they could develop towards a “civilized” state, it was nevertheless possible to alter the starting points of successive generations through interventions into their lives. The most important interventions to make were in education and the environment, not in whether or not “inferior” people had offspring.<sup>39</sup> While race certainly mattered in this perspective—and this outlook on race would ultimately shape the military’s treatment of African American women and soldiers a great deal, as subsequent chapters will elucidate—there was also room for “uplifting” races through social policy.

All of the morale theorists saw sexual self-control as a cornerstone of military morale. The soldier, if he was going to feel any commitment to the fight whatsoever, needed to be separated from sources of sexual satisfaction, so that his basic sexual urges could be redirected into higher emotions and commitments. As Hall put it, “[a]t no point does morale coincide more closely with morality”—in other words, morale was entirely dependent upon sexual continence. Sexually continent men, in Hall’s view, were also more resilient under pressure: “[W]ar involves

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<sup>37</sup> Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 92-94.

<sup>38</sup> This address was published as G. Stanley Hall, “Eugenics: Its Ideals and What It Is Going To Do,” *Religious Education*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (1911), 152-159.

<sup>39</sup> Lester F. Goodchild, “G. Stanley Hall and an American Social Darwinist Pedagogy: His Progressive Educational Ideas on Gender and Race,” *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 52, No. 1 (February 2012), 72, 91-97.

the most intense of the activities of both body and mind, and we know now that chastity and self-control are essential prerequisites in enabling men to undergo all kinds of war strain. . . . [T]hose guilty of [sexual] self-indulgence have less reserve to draw upon for any emergency.”<sup>40</sup> The sexually-active soldier, in this view, was a less effective and less resilient soldier. As Exner worried in his own publication, among sexually unrestrained soldiers, certain “habits of thought and practice [would] disrupt our defenses and take the bite out of our powers of attack.”<sup>41</sup>

With the importance of sexual control established in theory, the morale theorists pondered how best to achieve it in actuality. For one thing, they all thought, it was necessary to establish conditions in which soldiers could not find opportunities to release sexual “energy” in non-productive or counter-productive ways. Munson articulated this sentiment when he stated that channeling of stimulated energies into constructive channels would be easier if “undesirable acts are kept at a distance to prevent their influence.”<sup>42</sup> Gulick included, as an appendix to his book on morale, Exner’s report “Prostitution and its Relation to the Army on the Mexican Border,” in which Exner diagnosed the sexual deviance of that situation as being, in essence, a problem of environment, and called for the “moral sanitation of the environment, so that the soldier may be given a fair chance to keep his moral balance.”<sup>43</sup> Hall likewise highlighted the importance of the environment for the maintenance of good morale, and proclaimed that the “chief end of man” was “to keep ourselves, body and soul, and our environment, physical, social, industrial, etc., always at the very tip-top condition.”<sup>44</sup> Hocking, too, emphasized the importance of controlling the sexual environment of soldiers, endorsing the military’s policy of “keeping the boys as far as possible” from the sexual dangers of cities that continued to harbor prostitutes and other sexually-active women.<sup>45</sup>

Yet the morale theorists also believed that the most reliable forms of sexual restraint would come from the men themselves, in the form of self-discipline. In order to motivate the men to embrace what they called “sexual continence” for their own reasons, the morale theorists thought the military should give them lectures delivered by speakers whose messages would appeal to health, strength and vitality. Munson thought that the best appeal to soldiers was an approach that emphasized “[s]elf-denial for the purpose of greater physical strength and

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<sup>40</sup> Hall, *Morale*, 103, 109.

<sup>41</sup> Exner, *Rational Sex Life For Men*, viii.

<sup>42</sup> Munson, *Management of Men*, 98.

<sup>43</sup> Exner, in appendix to Gulick, *Morals and Morale*, 102.

<sup>44</sup> Hall, *Morale*, 1.

<sup>45</sup> Hocking, *Morale and Its Enemies*, 178.

endurance.”<sup>46</sup> Similarly, Hall and Gulick thought health and athletic success could be powerful motivators for men.<sup>47</sup> To encourage this in draftees, all of the morale theorists endorsed, and some of them designed, the various “social hygiene,” sports, and “anti-vice” programs that the War Department—and particularly the CTCA—brought to the soldiers.<sup>48</sup>

One effective way to get men to associate chastity with health, efficiency and vigor was to associate its converse with weakness, degeneracy and disease. It was primarily for this reason that morale theorists thought that the War Department should expose the soldiers to lectures about venereal disease. For the morale theorists, the purpose of discussing venereal disease was not primarily to prevent disease, then, but to convince the soldiers to refrain from sexual activity so that they would be more susceptible to being motivated to fight. Neither Hall or Munson thought that, in Hall’s words, “scare talks on the dangers of infection” were the most effective ways to prevent soldiers from engaging in sexual activities, but they acknowledged that they were “effective up to a certain point,” as Munson put it.<sup>49</sup> Hocking’s comments also reveal how morale took priority over sexual health. He claimed that while the chemical-based prophylaxis that the military used to prevent venereal infection soon after potential exposure was both effective and necessary, over-reliance on this method, without an accompanying administration of “moral prophylaxis” would fail to produce the psychological prerequisites of “good morale.” In other words, despite how effective they were in combatting disease, the military should avoid touting medical treatments in the interest of chastity. Hocking claimed that the German armed forces were over-reliant on mere chemical prophylaxis, which he believed was “coarsening” their “[moral] fiber,” which placed them at a strategic disadvantage *vis-a-vis* the American Expeditionary Forces.<sup>50</sup> Some morale theorists even downplayed the risks of sexually-transmitted diseases to the armed forces. Gulick ventured that while early in the conflict, venereal disease had posed a serious danger to the military’s ability to conduct war, but by 1918, “a new situation has arisen. Venereal disease is so well controlled, that morality can no longer be promoted through the fear of these diseases. For the first time we have to evaluate morality because of its own significance rather than as an agency to protect one from disease.” He continued, “[n]ow that it is becoming evident that morality is no longer to be advocated as an agency for the prevention of disease, we are commencing to see its larger and truer values. . . .

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<sup>46</sup> Munson, *Management of Men*, 199.

<sup>47</sup> Hall, *Morale*, 108; Gulick, *Morals and Morale*, 36.

<sup>48</sup> Munson, *Management of Men*, 627.

<sup>49</sup> Hall, *Morale*, 108; Munson, *Management of Men*, 199.

<sup>50</sup> Hocking, *Morale and Its Enemies*, 177.

The next great step is to promote morality as a direct aid to military efficiency.”<sup>51</sup> Gulick, while continuing to use the term “morality” to describe proper sexual comportment, nevertheless saw this as being in the service of morale. The ultimate purpose of sexual restraint, for Gulick, was the motivation of soldiers. As an urgent threat facing the military, sexual health barely mattered in comparison.

With the environment and men’s goals secured against potential “dissipating” influences, the question remained about how best to stimulate and channel energy in productive directions. On this, many of the morale strategists agreed. Women—so long as they were of the “right sort”—could play a crucial role. Munson thought that “[w]omen have a powerful influence on military efficiency and morale”—a notion that, he said, was expressed by the commonplace phrase “the girl behind the man behind the gun.”<sup>52</sup> The best way to leverage women, Munson thought, was to convince them to put pressure on men to be pugnacious:

[W]omen, even if they are not prone to exercise this instinct themselves, may arouse it among their males. They are emotional, and once swayed by a conviction they call on the other sex to do what their own will not or cannot do for itself. The Spartan mother who told her son to ‘return with his shield or on it’ was merely one of the multitude of women who adjure their defenders to prefer death to dishonor. To arouse the women to the will to win is to furnish the greatest incentive to pugnacity in troops. How far feminine influence should be used, and in what direction, is a factor which the wise commander will effectively determine.

By this logic, it was women’s patriotism, rather than men’s, that the morale worker might appeal to. “When women are stirred to patriotic sacrifice,” Munson advised, “men fear to be slackers.”<sup>53</sup>

The importance of women in motivating men meant that the boundaries between the home front and the battlefield blurred. In order to make civilian women into instruments of morale, the War Department would require a particular apparatus to direct these appeals at women. “As this source of inspiration of troops exists only in civil life,” Munson explained, “measures applicable to its control must extend beyond the confines of the military establishment.” For this, Munson emphasized the “opportunity to use the various women’s and girls’ organizations,” and counseled on the strategic value of “getting them to think and talk about war aims in war time and systematically putting their ideas into letters in clear and persuasive fashion.”<sup>54</sup> In other words, rather than propagandizing men directly to get them to

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<sup>51</sup> Gulick, *Morals and Morale*, 35-36.

<sup>52</sup> Munson, *Management of Men*, 50.

<sup>53</sup> Munson, *Management of Men*, 50, 122.

<sup>54</sup> Munson, *Management of Men*, 50, 122.

internalize the cause of the war, the military leadership ought to sell the war's importance to civilian women, who would, in turn, write letters to the soldiers they knew and loved in order to put pressure on them to take the war seriously and apply themselves to the task of winning it. G. Stanley Hall took a similar position. "Never have women played such a part in war," Hall pronounced.

When the war came, the noblest war brides, mothers, sweethearts, and sisters said, 'Go!' They condemned slackers ('If I had not gone I could not get near a girl'). Mothers wept, but secretly, and dared not try to restrain their even young boys who felt the call, but sent them off with a blessing and a cheer. . . . Women kept up every possible connection between their dear ones at the front and their home, concealing everything that could cause pain and showing only courage and good cheer, disguising everything that was bad or discouraging, slow to criticize but swift to praise and hearten, and themselves bearing up if their loved ones were wounded, crippled, or even slain, with a composure and heroism which none, least of all they themselves, dreamed they possessed.<sup>55</sup>

Hall endorsed the military consciously wielding the pressure that a community of women and girls could place on a man to march off to war. As the parenthetical quote "If I had not gone I could not get near a girl" demonstrates, Hall approved of those women who not only encouraged men to join the military, but threatened them with a form of social occlusion if they didn't. To put off one's military duties, in this arrangement, would be to become a pariah among the women of one's community; becoming an outcast from one's family, and ineligible for sex and romance. This pressure would not cease once they enlisted, either, but continue in the form of letters and visits. Meanwhile, the women themselves must conceal any conflicting feelings they had about sending men they loved off to risk their lives, and participate in a culture of mutual encouragement and optimism, publicly reassuring one another that the sacrifices and social violence were worth it.

Other morale theorists also thought that women could aid in motivating soldiers. Hocking emphasized that "[t]he young women of a community are perhaps chiefly responsible for the *quality* of the self-esteem of enlisted men," and thought that they could play an important role in "aiding soldierly sobriety of self-judgement." In addition to this, Hocking claimed that, both because of their physical segregation from each other, and because soldiers were commonly portrayed as protectors of women, the young doughboy was "unusually interesting" to women, just as women would be "unusually interesting" to the young, unattached soldier. Hocking thought that this came with both opportunities and risks, since, as he and others had already established, it was vital to maintain the chastity of soldiers, and women were liable to show their appreciation for soldiers in sexual, rather than in parasexual, ways. Since men's chastity was

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<sup>55</sup> Hall, *Morale*, 110, 112-113.

the very basis for men's susceptibility to the influences of women, men, in their segregation from women and in their condition of enforced chastity, would be even more swayed by women's opinions of them, and to women's appeals (whether real or perceived) that the men become heroes in defense of their safety and honor. "Women become the symbols for the whole of that amenity of life built up and cherished by the finer sensitivities of the race," Hocking explained, whereas "the soldier becomes the symbol of its defense."<sup>56</sup> Because of women's ability to motivate men, Hall reflected, the war had "opened as never before the whole question of the relation of the sexes in all its aspects."<sup>57</sup> Morale demanded a delicate balance between the separation of the sexes, and their controlled mingling; the enforced precondition of sexual chastity and the encouraged stimulation of desire and its sublimation into a sense of responsibility. This was the sense of equilibrium that Hocking had referred to in his reflections on the interchanges between the sexes; the conditions under which a "continuous current of sex interest" could be wielded to motivate desirable conduct and productivity.

This type of morale strategy would require that the military expose the soldiers to particular types of women. Morale strategists emphasized the importance of vetting the women who soldiers came into contact with, and controlling the conditions under which contact occurred, in order to prevent the stimulating contact with women from turning into the dissipating conduct of sex. "Military morale can be greatly promoted," Munson thought, if men had contact with "the right kind of women."<sup>58</sup> Hocking thought that one of the more promising methods for improving morale among troops and meeting the soldier's "need for the society of women," was "the admission of qualified women into service at the canteens both within and outside the war zone." Such women should have "unlimited good fellowship together with unlimited good sense and poise, a type of woman in which America is peculiarly rich." At the same time, and in contrast to this idealized profile, it would be important to exclude "the undesirables, the faddists, and the excitable."<sup>59</sup> Gulick, too, insisted upon the importance of employing the "right kind of women" in morale work. According to Gulick, while woman had "always followed the Army," they had always been "one kind of women"—that is: sex workers—"but now a new kind of woman is following the Army—representatives of your own women at home, selected delegates from among your own mothers, sisters, sweethearts, and wives."<sup>60</sup> Hall, too, emphasized the important role to be played by "the true woman," who "chiefly wants . . . an environment most

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<sup>56</sup> Hocking, *Morale and Its Enemies*, 146, 170.

<sup>57</sup> Hall, *Morale*, 110.

<sup>58</sup> Munson, *Management of Men*, 50.

<sup>59</sup> Hocking, *Morale and Its Enemies*, 179, 181.

<sup>60</sup> Gulick, *Morals and Morale*, 70-71.

favorable for her great function of conserving and replenishing the race.” Such a woman, possessing “*ewige weibliche*,” or the “eternal feminine,” was “the best embodiment of morale in the world.” Hall, like many progressives, believed that “[w]oman is nearer to the race [ideal] in body and soul and is a better representative of the species than man,” and thought that she could reform the behaviors and the institutions of men in times of both war and peace by “introduc[ing] the best traits of her sex into public and economic life”—perhaps beginning with the war camps.<sup>61</sup> As the next chapter demonstrates, the YMCA and other organizations within the CTCA, operating according to this very logic, carefully vetted the women who they allowed into war camps as workers and for social events, excluding women who did not fit the racial, cultural, or class profile of what the White, middle-class leaders of these organizations imagined to be the “eternal feminine.”

### Conclusion

Most of the morale strategists cited above were involved, in one way or another, in proposing, founding, and/or administering actual programs for improving morale—a diverse set of activities that would come to be referred to by the umbrella term “morale work.” These morale strategists, writing both during and immediately after the war, offer insight into the logic of the War Department’s various morale agencies, and how these agencies sought to tackle the problem of troop motivation. These writings clearly show that the control and manipulation of sex were foundational to that effort. All of them saw sexual continence as a mandatory precondition for establishing and maintaining the vague and elusive condition of “good morale,” and they all believed that some version of diverting and/or sublimating the “energy” conserved through sexual continence into productive endeavors would be invaluable for establishing the military’s competitive edge. As their writings show, sexual continence was only a precondition

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<sup>61</sup> Hall stated that he agreed with anthropological studies that “have told us much of the primitive reverence of the seer-like, intuitive, prophetic traits of women,” and offered praise and appreciation for Auguste Comte, whose “Worship of Women” asserted that women, through love and the cultivation of sentimentality, could have a profound “moral influence” on society. Following in Comte’s footsteps, Hall’s embrace of women’s formal political enfranchisement was, perhaps counterintuitively, part of a broader anti-feminist political sentiment. “Her enfranchisement in many aspects of this great movement has advanced by leaps and bounds since the war began,” he enthusiastically relayed. He even insisted that the world “should be more of a woman’s world,” in the sense that it “will bring to her and her apostolate for the race a new reverence.” Women’s “task” was “to re-evaluate the world and all its institutions—business, trade, state, church, science—by the supreme test of their service in bringing future generations to an ever more complete maturity.” “These,” Hall urged, “are the real woman’s rights.” Here, women would be free, as long as they freely chose to impose traditional values and a conservative social order. This was opposed to “the ideal of those feminists who claim everything that man has, would do everything that he does, in his way, and because he does it”—a view that he insisted “must be radically modified.” It was only by embracing her differences “in the industrial, social, domestic, intellectual, and even marital relations [that she could] justify all the great new opportunities which are now opening to her throughout the world.” As the following chapters demonstrate, during World War I, many women were asked to play an active part in the conflict, but many of these women were employed specifically to play the role of women whose presence would encourage “virility” and drive among the men—a process that Hall described in detail. Hall, 110-12, 114, 249.

for good morale. These morale strategists—who were all men—assigned to women a particularly important place in motivating sexually-continent soldiers. According to the morale theorists, the most effective means of motivating young men to train, to work, to fight, and to even risk death overseas, was to urge women to make their approval and acceptance of men conditional upon the men’s shouldering of military responsibilities. As the following chapters demonstrate, women did actually assume important roles in the morale programs of the War Department—nearly always as players in the male morale leaders’ plans and designs. Instead of referring, then, as Munson did, to “the girl behind the man behind the gun” when seeking to make sense of men’s motivation in the war, one should instead speak of the “men behind the girl behind the man behind the gun.”

## Chapter 2:

### To Protect and Entice: Morale and the Commission on Training Camp Activities

The Secretary of War Newton D. Baker established the Commission on Training Camp Activities (CTCA) in April, 1917 with the clear mission of controlling soldiers' sexual behaviors and social environments. Its philosophy, as its chairman Raymond B. Fosdick explained, was to both "repress the twin evils inevitably associated with armies in training camps, i. e., liquor and prostitution," and to "*compete* with them" through the provision of "wholesome" recreation and leisure activities.<sup>1</sup> To accomplish these two main goals, the CTCA enlisted a variety of service organizations and reform agencies, whose experience, existing curricula, personnel, private fundraising capacities and familiarity with the public the War Department harnessed for its own purposes. The War Department deployed these organizations in and around training camps in the United States, and, especially in 1918, dispatched some of them overseas to run hospitality huts and tents and provide entertainment in the war camps and leave areas where American soldiers would take breaks from fighting.

Scholars, citing public statements by the CTCA's leaders and correspondence with the CTCA's largely religious private service organizations, have argued that the agency's policing of sexual behavior was fundamentally driven by moral and medical concerns.<sup>2</sup> The CTCA's campaign to prevent sex among the soldiers, in other words, was a bid to instill Christian sexual morality among the soldiers, and was a desperate effort to curb the transmission of venereal disease within the ranks. Such analyses, however, have not fully explored the relationship between the War Department and the CTCA's service organizations, or explained how the military's goals were distinct from, and often overrode, the goals of the private service

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond Fosdick, "Autobiographical sketch," enclosed in correspondence from Raymond Fosdick to Cedric Larson; June 4, 1942; Raymond Blaine Fosdick Papers; Box 3, Folder 14; Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 5-6.

<sup>2</sup> Allan M. Brandt, *No Magic Bullet: A Social History of Venereal Disease in the United States Since 1880* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 52-121; Nancy K. Bristow, *Making Men Moral: Social Engineering During the Great War* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 12. For additional scholarship on the CTCA, see Scott W. Stern, *The Trials of Nina McCall: Sex, Surveillance, and the Decades-Long Government Plan to Imprison "Promiscuous" Women* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018), 42-80; David J. Pivar, "Cleansing the Nation: The War on Prostitution, 1917-1920," *Prologue* 12 (Spring, 1980): 29-40; Mark Thomas Connelly, *The Response to Prostitution in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980); Courtney Q. Shah, "'Against Their Own Weakness': Policing Sexuality and Women in San Antonio, Texas, during World War I," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 19 (September, 2010); P. C. Kemeny, "Protestant Moral Reformers and the Campaign to Suppress Prostitution during World War I," *The Journal of Presbyterian History*, Vol. 92, No. 2 (Fall/Winter 2014), 52-72; Andrew Byers, *The Sexual Economy of War: Discipline and Desire in the U.S. Army* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2019), 93-162; Kimberley A. Reilly, "'A Perilous Venture for Democracy': Soldiers, Sexual Purity, and American Citizenship in the First World War," *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (April, 2014), 226-228.

organizations that were under its command.<sup>3</sup> As this chapter shows, for War and Navy Department officials, venereal disease and morality were, in fact, secondary to motivation as concerns that they harbored about soldiers' sexual behaviors. Some of these officials—particularly, and most notably, Raymond Fosdick—had reservations about the religious moralizing of many of the CTCA's service organizations, even as they harnessed rhetoric of medical danger and moral suasion in their campaigns against prostitution and drunkenness.

The primary goal of the CTCA was to improve troop morale in order to make the soldiers into more effective fighters—a mission that, as the previous chapter demonstrates, the theorists of morale thought would require sexual continence. While venereal disease was no doubt important to the War Department for its own reasons, rhetoric concerning the risks of venereal disease and the threats posed to morality by sexual activity were also useful for garnering support for the agency, and holding together the coalition of organizations that it relied upon to administer the social programs and sexual policing that underlay the military's strategy for improving troop morale.

That neither medical or moral concerns were the ultimate priorities of the CTCA is clear from the War Department's pre-war activities in 1916, when, at the urging of representatives from the YMCA, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the American Social Hygiene Association, Secretary Baker commissioned Fosdick to travel to the US-Mexico border to investigate the social conditions of the National Guard and Army troops amassed there as part of the Mexican Expedition against Francisco "Pancho" Villa.<sup>4</sup> Fosdick reported a high prevalence of prostitution and drunkenness in and near the war camps, and concluded that while the risk of venereal disease was "not an excessively high percentage" (roughly five per 1,000 soldiers were reported as being in recovery from venereal infection at the time—a figure he surmised could rise over time), and that so-called "chemical prophylaxis" (or post-exposure medical treatment) was effective in preventing contraction, that the prevalence of prostitution was nevertheless having an effect on the motivation and moods of the troops.<sup>5</sup> In the towns near war camps, he reported,

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<sup>3</sup> Newton D. Baker, Circular No. 507, "Welfare of Soldiers"; October 18, 1919; Raymond Blaine Fosdick Papers; Box 23, Folder 7; Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University.

<sup>4</sup> Brandt, *No Magic Bullet*, 53.

<sup>5</sup> He later made it clear that this was the true impetus for his expedition to the US-Mexico border, recalling that Secretary Baker "was quite concerned about the reports which he had as to the morale of the troops along the Rio Grande," and that this led to his being commissioned to investigate. There was no mention made in this later recollection that disease played any part in Baker's concerns. Fosdick, "Autobiographical sketch," 4. Fosdick was not the only one to suggest that the risk—or at least the statistics—of venereal disease infection may have been overblown. The War Camp Community Service—which was one of the service organizations under the command of the CTCA—alluded to the fact that there may have been "exaggerations" about the prevalence of venereal disease infection in the Spanish-American war as well, though they insisted on the continuing dangers that these diseases posed for the military. War Camp Community Service, Inc., "Community Service: A Military and Social Necessity," Kautz Family YMCA Archives, Box 57, War Camp Community Service ca. 1918, Social History Archives, University of Minnesota, 1.

“[t]he shocking exhibitions which greet the eyes of passersby in a ‘crib’ section [red light districts composed of purpose-built informal structures called ‘cribs’] constitute an inevitable demoralizing influence.” He worried that the mere “sights from the street” were enough to leave “a scar on a man’s life which he can never efface,” and that this was especially dangerous because such risks faced not just patrons of these districts, but also “young recruits . . . —mere boys—” who were exposed to its (unspecified) psychological effects simply from walking by them in the streets. Fosdick thought the military needed to develop a new “prophylactic policy” that would eliminate “the advertisement and artificial excitations surrounding prostitution,” and “shield” the would-be wayward soldier “from undue temptation.”<sup>6</sup> The conditions in and around war camps were dangerous, in other words, because of their depressive psychological effect on the troops; not necessarily because they posed a medical risk or an affront to morality.

Nevertheless, public health and social morality provided cover for programs of sexual control. In a statement that mixed appeals to health, strength, efficiency and morality, the Secretary of the Navy Josephus Daniels (who probably did see soldiers’ sexual behaviors in moral terms) made the case for bringing medical doctors in to support sexual control programs, and in the process, revealed his own strategic thinking about how medical experts and medical discourses could be used in a combat against sexual incontinence in the ranks of the military. In a pamphlet entitled “Men Must Live Straight If They Would Shoot Straight,” based on remarks he gave to the Clinical Congress of Surgeons of North America, Daniels claimed that venereal disease was “the greatest foe of military efficiency”—a greater foe than battle itself, and that venereal disease was more detrimental than other diseases. The only solution, he insisted, was complete chastity. “Continence of young men must be preached in the home, in the school, in the marts of trade, in the pulpit and military camps, and among shipmates afloat.” Even though Daniels insisted that “I do not mean to have it inferred that I think the medical aspect of the entire question is more important than the fundamental moral issue,” he continually couched his appeal in rhetoric about venereal disease prevention. Such a process should not over-rely on ministers and preachers, he insisted, since “[t]he preacher seeks to save their souls, and too many youths hardly realize they have souls. But they know they have bodies, and the doctor is the man to whom they entrust the treatment of their bodies.” Daniels therefore advocated that the military use doctors as strategic allies in the battle against sexual activity. When the doctor inveighed against sexual activity, Daniels advised, “his words have a weight no other admonition possesses.” Daniels therefore urged doctors to “exercise an amazing power of suggestion,” because “young soldiers and sailors heed your wise counsel, . . . [and] you will contribute more to the winning of the war than manufacturers of shells.” In addition to their ability to appeal to

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<sup>6</sup> Raymond Fosdick, “Report on prostitution along the Mexican-American border,” enclosed in letter from Raymond Fosdick to Honorable Newton D. Baker, August 10, 1916; Raymond Blaine Fosdick Papers; Box 23, Folder 6; Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 6-8, 12, 14.

young men in a way that others could not, Daniels explained, a major part of the reason that it was important to recruit doctors to the cause of continence was because some doctors had been claiming that sexual activity was important for the health and vitality of young men—a position that ran headlong into the official perspectives of the War Department and the Navy Department, that “sexual continence is compatible with health and the only sure preventive of venereal infections.” Such permissiveness on the part of the medical profession, Daniels thought, was “to preach immorality and a lowering of manhood.”<sup>7</sup> As is evident from his claims, Daniels’ worries were primarily about military efficacy—which was compromised, in his view, by sexual activity. In this view, venereal disease, in addition to posing a real risk, was perhaps even more important as way to leverage medical discourse to appeal to soldiers, and to compel medical professionals to fall in line with the policy of the War and Navy Departments.

Similar appeals formed the core of the instructional pamphlet entitled *Keeping Fit to Fight*, prepared by the American Social Hygiene Association, approved by the Surgeon General of the Army, and issued by the CTCA to every member of the army. Disease, the widely-circulated sex education pamphlet asserted, was the likely consequence of any sexual liaison outside of marriage—with a prostitute or otherwise. By emphasizing that the soldier’s health was at stake, and that disease would put the man out of action, making him a “slacker” and a “moral shirker,” the CTCA clearly aimed to convince soldiers that sexual self-restraint was in their own self-interest.<sup>8</sup> Such body-oriented appeals were common during the war, and they signified a shift in tenor among sex reformers, who increasingly cited medical, rather than moral authorities in their campaigns against sexual activity—a shift that was as much about strategy as about authentic concern for soldiers’ health.

In the industrialized regions of the United States, moral reformers had long organized against the “twin evils” of alcohol and prostitution. By structuring the CTCA as a committee of both governmental and private organizations, the War Department was, in large part, seeking to harness that well-established morality-driven movement. There was a clear hierarchical relationship between the War Department and the various service organizations enlisted to serve CTCA ends. The religious service organizations that provided much of the CTCA’s entertainment, athletic and canteen services—such as the YMCA, the Knights of Columbus and the Jewish Welfare Board—were assets to the War Department’s plans.

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<sup>7</sup> At the same time, Daniels believed that in a fight for democracy, it was imperative “to preach clean lives so as also to make democracy worth fighting for.” Men in a democracy had a duty to the state, which carried with it an obligation that “the individual . . . curb his passions and exercise self-restraint in order that the institution of the family, which is the fountain-head of the State, and from which springs our noblest inspirations, shall remain pure and undefiled.” Josephus Daniels, “Men Must Live Straight If They Would Shoot Straight”; October 22, 1917; Raymond Blaine Fosdick Papers; Box 23, Folder 7; Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 7-8, 10, 12-14, 16.

<sup>8</sup> The American Social Hygiene Association and the Commission on Training Camp Activities, *Keeping Fit to Fight* (1918), 14.

The fundamental distinction between the War Department's strategic priorities and some of the CTCA organizations' moral ones is clear in Fosdick's February, 1919 reports on morale. While Fosdick believed that the cantonment (camp-based facilities for soldiers) and leisure-time programs of the YMCA and the other five service organizations provided an "incalculable" benefit for "the future citizenship of the United States," he also assessed that these organizations had major flaws. Specifically, Fosdick criticized the sectarian nature of many of the religious service organizations, whose faith-based distinctions from each other caused them to compete in the field, rather than cooperating. Fosdick claimed that the Catholic Knights of Columbus, were inefficient with their allotment of the National War Work Campaign's funds, and thought that the organization was wrong in refusing to employ female personnel—who he thought were far more effective at raising troop morale than male canteen workers.<sup>9</sup> He also disapproved of the evangelizing approach that the YMCA often took, claiming that the organization "has too narrow a basis; no organization that is built on an evangelical foundation can get very far in this new era, and the YMCA is too blind to see the signs of the times."<sup>10</sup> He thought in particular that "the character of [the YMCA's] personnel" rendered many of them "utterly un-adapted" to the work, since they could not appeal to "our virile, red-blooded young soldiers." Christian appeals, he thought, would be ineffective in swaying young men. "Personally," Fosdick reported, "I believe it was a mistake for the YMCA to go into this business at all." Fosdick believed that the social and recreational work of the Army should, in the future, "be intrusted [*sic.*] to the Government to operate," even if this added expenses to the military's wartime budget. After all, Fosdick reasoned, "[m]orale is as important as ammunition and is just as legitimate a charge against the public treasury."<sup>11</sup> Fosdick clearly prioritized morale over morality, and here he departed from an earlier generation of moral reformers.

In formulating their programs, the leaders and secular divisions of the CTCA drew directly from the insights of the morale theorists, who they sometimes cited as authorities on the subject of troop morale and motivation. In an August, 1918 bulletin of the CTCA's Social Hygiene Division of the Army and Navy, the editors explained how the military's policy of enforcing total sexual continence for its military personnel was directly consonant with the morale theorist William Ernest Hocking's "enlightened modern attitude" toward morale. Citing Hocking's writings, the editors insisted that "'wine and women' . . . have . . . a very direct bearing

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<sup>9</sup> Raymond Fosdick, "Report to the Secretary of War on the Activities of Welfare Organizations Serving With the A.E.F.," enclosed in memorandum from Adjutant General Robert C. Davis to the Commanding General of the 3rd Army, February 14, 1919; G-3, G.H.Q., A.E.F. Library File; G-3 Library; Record Group 120; Box 75, 30, 34, 37-38.

<sup>10</sup> Correspondence from Raymond Fosdick to H. S. Braucher; March 3, 1919; Raymond Blaine Fosdick Papers; Box 2, Folder 10; Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University.

<sup>11</sup> Fosdick, "Report to the Secretary of War on the Activities of Welfare Organizations Serving With the A.E.F." 31-32, 40-41.

upon the morale and fighting capacity of a country's armed forces," and therefore it was imperative that these "common enemies of fighting strength" be altogether eliminated, rather than regulated.

In its program for combating venereal diseases in the army and navy emphasis has never been placed upon medical prophylaxis, or 'early treatment', but upon continence. This is presented not only as the one sure way to escape infection, but as the one way consonant with self-respect. How can the soldier who regards his role in this war as that of a protector of women, permit himself to dishonor and degrade womanhood by patronizing a prostitute? This is the point of view that is persistently stressed in every lecture to soldiers and sailors and in all official literature on the subject.<sup>12</sup>

Men's fighting vigor, this CTCA bulletin reasoned, following Hocking's logic, should be motivated by an impulse to protect women, and this motivation would be undermined if the men were sexually active. Here, morality mattered only insofar as men should be encouraged to adopt a personal, internalized morality. This would be far more effective than a universal, transcendent one. Both Hocking and the editors emphasized a "power of conscience" that would peg men's "self respect" to their success in exercising sexual self-restraint. The authors claimed that "the strongest possible ground on which to plead with the men to keep themselves clean" was "not only for their own sakes and for the salvation of their souls," but that

they belong to their country's service and must conserve and use all their powers for her sake. To waste the substance of their manhood, their steadiness of nerve, their energy and vigor, is to reduce their power of service and to throw away that which does not belong to them. . . . Our country needs today men who are physically fit, morally strong, and resolved to consecrate all their powers to the winning of this war.<sup>13</sup>

The bulletin, in its hydraulic understanding of men's motivational energy, insisted that men should not waste their "powers" in indulgent acts of hedonism; they should channel these powers into their military responsibilities.

As the following section explores, the CTCA used the pretext of sexual health to convince state and local governments to ramp up the policing of sexuality around the war

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<sup>12</sup> W. A. Bradley, "The Mail Bag: A Bulletin for the Exchange of Ideas and Information," No. 3, August 31, 1918; Morale Branch, Box B1; General Correspondence File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 17, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 1, 3. Andrew Huebner claims that, in the mind of military leadership, "men visiting prostitutes posed a challenge to the story of upstanding men saving women from German violation." Andrew J. Huebner, *Love and Death in the Great War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 178.

<sup>13</sup> W. A. Bradley, "The Mail Bag: A Bulletin for the Exchange of Ideas and Information," No. 2, July 21, 1918; Morale Branch, Box B1; General Correspondence File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 17, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 3.

camps, leading to the arrest and mass detention of tens of thousands of women and girls who the War Department believed posed a threat to the men's sexual continence. At the same time, however, the CTCA hired conventionally attractive women to work in the war camps, consistently portrayed alluring women in military publications, and encouraged correspondence between doughboys and their wives, sweethearts, mothers and sisters. Only from the perspective of motivation can the CTCA's repressive measures be reconciled with that same organization's deliberate employment of women and women's appeals to stimulate the soldiers. The ultimate purpose of all of these programs was the same: the War Department's belief that men would be more driven and motivated to fight if, in a state of sexual continence, they were simultaneously exposed to the stimulating experience of being surrounded by the presence of encouraging (but never sexually available) women, whose presence would be all the more motivating because of the men's sexual continence. The remainder of this chapter offers an investigation of the concrete means by which the CTCA pursued this parasexual motivational strategy.

### **“A Double-Barreled Attack”: The Organization of the CTCA**

The CTCA used what Fosdick called “a double-barreled attack” to combat sexual activity among soldiers, which consisted, in the first place, of “police measures to clean up the environment of the camps, and, second . . . the creation both within and without the camps of agencies and activities which will furnish as far as possible an acceptable substitute for the normal home and community life from which the soldiers have been uprooted.”<sup>14</sup> Correspondingly, the CTCA had two basic parts. The first, “preventive” part of the CTCA's work was the investigation and so-called “suppression of vice” in and around training camps—specifically, the prevention of soldiers' consumption of alcohol and their engaging in sexual acts with women both inside and/or outside of the camps. The CTCA's second, “recreational” aspect provided what the War Department deemed “wholesome” leisure activities and environments, organized through its seven participating civic organizations, including, especially, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), and the Playground and Recreation Association of America (PRAA) (later to be represented as the War Camp Community Service, Inc.).<sup>15</sup> (See Figure 2.1)

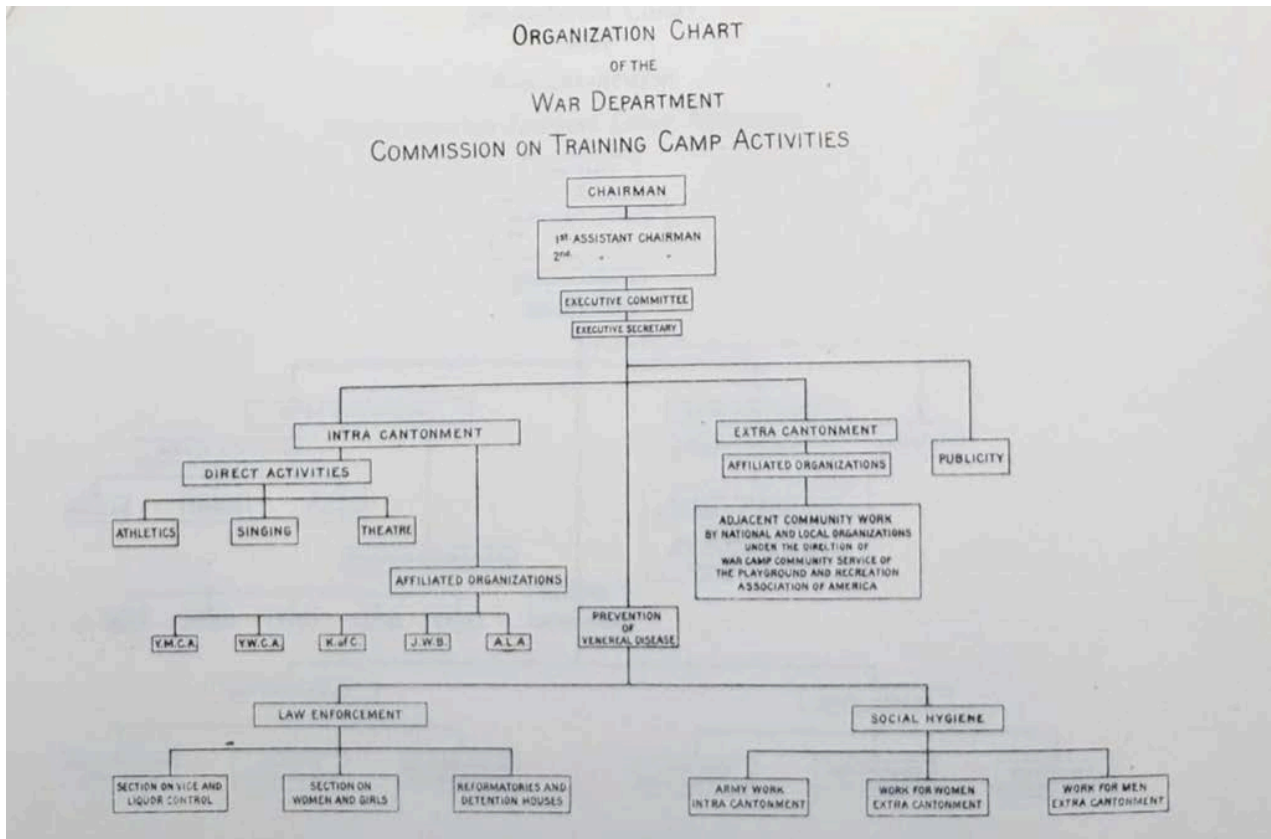
Each of these two parts had two separate branches. The preventive work of the CTCA involved both the use of law enforcement to police the environmental conditions in and around

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<sup>14</sup> Fosdick, “Autobiographical sketch,” 5-6.

<sup>15</sup> The Commission on Training Camp Activities, “The War Department Commission on Training Camp Activities,” (Washington, D.C., 1917); Raymond Blaine Fosdick Papers; Box 23, Folder 7; Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University.

military camps, and the deployment of social hygiene programming designed to dissuade women and girls from engaging in illicit sexual activities with soldiers. The “recreational” work of the CTCA also had two basic types: “intra cantonment” work, involving the provision of entertainment and activities inside of the camps, and “extra cantonment” work, which organized activities in the communities adjacent to camps. Each side of the organization can be understood as covering one aspect of the War Department’s parasexual motivation strategy.



**Figure 2.1:** This “Organization Chart” shows the basic organization of the CTCA. It demonstrates how the agency’s goals covered both the affirmative and stimulating side of entertainment social programming, and the repressive side of law enforcement and “social hygiene” work.

## Containing the “Sex Offender”: Women’s Work and the Policing of the Sexual Environment Surrounding Training Camps

Seeking to eliminate sexual opportunities for training soldiers, the War Department’s CTCA pressured municipal governments to use their policing powers to transform the physical, social and political environments surrounding war camps. Though initially conceived as a mere clearing house for directing and coordinating the activities of civic organizations such as the YMCA and the Knights of Columbus within the training camps themselves, the CTCA took on additional responsibility in May, 1917 after Congress added Sections 12 and 13 to the Selective Service Act (sections that Fosdick himself helped to author), calling for a ban on the sale of alcohol to men in uniform, as well as for the suppression and prevention of “lewdness, assignation, or prostitution” within a “certain” radius of military camps—a radius (usually five or ten miles) to be determined by the Secretary of War, and one that would extend the jurisdiction and the responsibilities of the CTCA into civilian population centers.<sup>16</sup> With these sections of the so-called “Army Law” in place, the CTCA became increasingly involved in surveillance and coordinating the policing of the towns and cities adjacent to military camps.<sup>17</sup>

As a first step of what the CTCA referred to as “suppressive work,” the Commission established what it described as a “machinery” for “the gathering of full and accurate information as to actual conditions in the neighborhood of camps”—involving a mixture of CTCA field agents, agents from the Department of Justice, army intelligence officers, and the military police, in collaboration with private, pre-existing vigilance organizations such as New York City’s Committee of Fourteen, the Committee of Fifteen of Chicago, the Watch and Ward Society in New England, and John D. Rockefeller, Jr.’s Bureau of Social Hygiene.<sup>18</sup> The CTCA also instructed camp commanders to assemble a monthly report “[o]n the moral conditions of the camp and surrounding zones,” to be submitted to the Adjutant General of the Army on the first of each month.<sup>19</sup> Together, these investigative and information-gathering agencies provided ongoing intelligence about drunkenness and sexual activity in and around the camps—information that could be used by law enforcement.

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<sup>16</sup> “Selective Service Law,” published in *Selective Service Regulations Prescribed by the President Under the Authority Vested in Him by the Terms of the Selective Service Law (Act of Congress Approved May 18, 1917, With Supplementary and Amendatory Acts and Resolutions)* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918), 355; Fosdick, “Autobiographical sketch,” 7; Newton D. Baker, letter to the Mayor of Allentown, August 10, 1917; Letters 201 Mr. Fosdick; Education & Recreation Branch, Correspondence of the Education Section, 1918-1920; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 17, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 1-2.

<sup>17</sup> Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 98-99.

<sup>18</sup> CTCA, “The War Department Commission on Training Camp Activities,” 25.

<sup>19</sup> Letter from Department Commander to Commanding Officer, n.d.; Raymond Blaine Fosdick Papers; Box 2, Folder 1; Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University.

After information gathering, the Commission assisted law enforcement agencies in policing the “vice conditions” in and around the war camps.<sup>20</sup> Though it would never fully achieve its ambitions, the War Department sought total control over the sexual environment of soldiers.<sup>21</sup> The CTCA turned to the municipal governments of cities and towns adjacent to military camps, and instructed these “to secure and maintain the standard of municipal cleanliness,” in pursuit of which they should strive for three main goals: “to make prostitutes and other venereal disease carriers hard to find;” “to protect young girls and to prevent them from entering lives of prostitution;” and “to stimulate official action and educate public opinion to get behind the program.”<sup>22</sup>

The CTCA approached sexual promiscuity as an environmental problem best addressed by putting pressure on municipal governments to regulate the spaces where sex occurred. In order to make sexual opportunities “hard to find,” the CTCA insisted, first and foremost, that municipal governments eliminate all open and tolerated prostitution, using, as the Assistant Director of the Section on Women and Girls of the CTCA’s Law Enforcement Division put it, “federal authority to wake up those complacent communities which are willing to see exploited the weaknesses of men and women.”<sup>23</sup> In the summer of 1917, Fosdick sent a memo to the police chiefs and sheriffs of over a thousand towns and cities, informing them of the “new army law [the Draft Act, sections 12 and 13], relating to the sale of liquor to soldiers in uniform and to the control of prostitution,” and demanding their cooperation in the enforcement of this law.<sup>24</sup> In

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<sup>20</sup> CTCA, “The War Department Commission on Training Camp Activities,” 25-26.

<sup>21</sup> In this, they had the support of top military brass. Unlike prior military leadership, General Pershing believed in the strategic value of abolishing prostitution altogether, rather than merely regulating it. Raymond Fosdick, “Papers Relating to the Attitude of the AEF in Relation to the Problem of Prostitution,” enclosed in letter from Raymond Fosdick to Newton D. Baker, August 20, 1918; Raymond Blaine Fosdick Papers; Box 23, Folder 6; Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 4.

<sup>22</sup> Bascom Johnson, “Next Steps: A Program of Activities Against Prostitution and Venereal Diseases for Communities Which Eases for Communities Which Have Closed Their ‘Red Light’ Districts,” 1918; Venereal Disease and Work of Social Hygiene Division, CTCA; War College Division and War Plans Division, Subordinate Offices, Morale Branch; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 24, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 9-10.

<sup>23</sup> Henrietta S. Additon, “Work Among Delinquent Women and Girls,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 79, No. 1 (September, 1918), 160.

<sup>24</sup> Raymond Fosdick, letter to the Chiefs of Police, June 5, 1917; Letters 201 Mr. Fosdick; Education & Recreation Branch, Correspondence of the Education Section, 1918-1920; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 2, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. At the same time, Secretary Baker sent a letter to all US governors, urging them to take on their own share of the responsibility for securing the conditions around military camps. Baker, letter to the Mayor of Allentown. Over four decades later, Fosdick would assess that “Baker’s letter [to both governors and to local police chiefs] had an electric effect, and under the pressure of local opinion some of the more sordid places began to disappear.” With the additional pressure of law enforcement, the CTCA was successful in eliminating red light districts across the country. “Once the tide began to turn,” Fosdick recalled, “communities that were not included in military zones and were thus under no legal obligation to conform started cleaning house.” Raymond B. Fosdick, *Chronicle of a Generation: An Autobiography* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), 145-47. Nancy Bristow shows that the anti-red-light district campaigns were highly effective, even in cities, like New Orleans, where the local authorities were resistant to shuttering these areas. For Bristow’s assessment of the efficacy of the campaigns, see Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 103-107.

an attached memo, Secretary Baker explained his authority to enforce these laws within a five mile radius of any military camp (though he insisted that he could extend this radius to include any “evil resorts” that he viewed as posing a threat to the troops), and threatened that the War Department would relocate camps “to a more desirable locality” if “clean conditions could not be secured”—a threat that was backed up in September by General Order No. 125, which gave authority to camp commanders “to close undesirable amusement places located on Government property or to prevent by use of the provost guard or otherwise the attendance of soldiers at such amusement places located on private property.”<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the Commission used the information gathered by the aforementioned “machinery” to keep track of progress, so that the War Department’s leaders would immediately know about any nonconformity or false claims by local governments.<sup>26</sup>

While some cities resisted, the threat of losing the business and employment that these massive military installations brought to their municipalities was generally enough to compel compliance. By 1918, the vast majority of red light districts in the United States had been closed down, and the CTCA’s suppressive work graduated to an attempt to eliminate more diffuse practices of sexual activity, by regulating spaces where so-called “clandestine prostitution” could occur, such as hotels, apartments and rooming houses, and even the “great outdoors,” which posed a new and unprecedented threat because of the ability of the automobile to defy many of the conventional means of regulating space.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, the CTCA placed further pressures on municipalities to not only cooperate, but bear much of the burden of enforcing the military’s new laws. The CTCA offered model nuisance legislation designed, for example, “to Penalize Owners and Lessees” who used their properties “for prostitution, lewdness or illegal gaming, or . . . liquor,” and advised that cities establish revocable licenses for leisure establishments, to increase municipal governments’ leverage over their owners and leaseholders. Additionally, they offered published guidance for removing officials from public office who protected or otherwise impeded the adoption and enforcement of these laws.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> War Department, “General Orders No. 125,” September 22, 1917; Raymond Blaine Fosdick Papers; Box 20, Folder 6; Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 3, § V; Baker, letter to the Mayor of Allentown, 2.

<sup>26</sup> Johnson, “Next Steps,” 3-4.

<sup>27</sup> By November of 1917, red light districts had been closed in Deming, NM; El Paso, TX; Waco, TX; San Antonio, TX; Fort Worth, TX; Houston; Hattiesburg, MS; Spartanburg, SC; Norfolk, VA; Petersburg, VA; Jacksonville, FL; Alexandria, GA; Savannah, GA; Charleston, SC; Columbia, SC; Greenville, SC; Douglas, AZ; Louisville, KY; and Montgomery, AL, with plans in place to close the infamous Storyville district in New Orleans. CTCA, “The War Department Commission on Training Camp Activities,” 26. By 1918, all major red light districts in the United States had been closed, and “[t]his was accomplished quickly,” Fosdick assessed, “because each State or municipality concerned—sometimes both—took over the storming of its section of the line to be attacked.” Johnson, “Next Steps,” 2, 4-5. On the persistent problem of prostitution outside of red-light districts, see Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 107-112.

<sup>28</sup> Johnson, “Next Steps,” 17, 23.

The War Department and federal officials also exercised pressure on states to assist in the policing of so-called “vice.” On January 2, 1918, the Surgeon General issued a statement to state health officials insisting that “[t]he control of venereal infections in connection with the prosecution of the war constitutes the most important sanitary problem now confronting public health authorities of the United States.” Neutralizing such a threat required not only the policing of military personnel, the Surgeon General argued, but also civilians, since “the prevention of venereal infections in the military population is dependent on the degree with which these infections are prevented in the civil community. This imposes upon the civil health authorities the duties of forcefully attacking the venereal problem.” On this basis, the Federal government placed pressure on state governments to, among other measures, arrest and detain women (and some men) who they considered to be at risk of spreading venereal disease. Whether or not sexual health was an actual priority underlying the military’s program for controlling sexual behavior, the states’ public health measures for the containment of venereal diseases certainly did provide the power to enforce a sweeping campaign against sexual activity, and to dramatically expand states’ penal apparatuses.<sup>29</sup>

Concretely, the “control of prostitution” involved state and local governments closing thousands of leisure spaces in hundreds of cities, and police and health authorities detaining tens of thousands of women.<sup>30</sup> In a move that Kristin Luker has interpreted as a shift from a “maternalist” state to a “male state,” as the government adapted the techniques and organizations pioneered by female progressive reformers to serve wartime purposes, the CTCA’s work with so-called “wayward” women and girls shifted, increasingly, from protective to

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<sup>29</sup> This state-level expansion of the American penal apparatus took place under the auspices of the Kahn-Chamberlain Act of July 9, 1918, which made states directly responsible for developing and administering programs for venereal disease control. The Act created “an Interdepartmental Social Hygiene Board consisting of the Secretary of War, Secretary of the Navy and Secretary of the Treasury, and the Surgeon General of the Army, Navy and Public Health Service,” and “a Division of Venereal Diseases in the Public Health Service,” the latter of which was charged with three main tasks: “(1) To study and investigate the cause, treatment, and prevention of venereal diseases—(2) to cooperate with State Boards of Health for the prevention and control of such diseases within the states; and—(3) to control and prevent the spread of these diseases in interstate traffic.” To incentivize states’ cooperation, one million dollars was set aside to be allocated to states that would match the funds, and “[p]ut into operation through a legislative enactment or a state board of health regulation having the effect of law, regulations in conformity with the suggestions approved by the Surgeons General . . . for the prevention of venereal diseases.” C. C. Pierce, “The Federal Campaign Against Venereal Diseases,” in *Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work (Formerly, National Conference of Charities and Correction) at the Forty-Sixth Annual Session held in Atlantic City, New Jersey, June 18, 1919* (Chicago: Rogers & Hall, Co., 1919), 212-213.

<sup>30</sup> Brandt, *No Magic Bullet*, 84-92.

corrective measures.<sup>31</sup> According to Jessica Pliley, “as America mobilized for war, groups like the American Social Hygiene Association and the Department of War’s CTCA positioned women as vectors of disease, which led to shifting the discourse from protecting white women from dissolute men to protecting young virile men from venal and venereal women.”<sup>32</sup> In the process, the public perception of “promiscuous” women—many, but not all of whom were professional prostitutes—correspondingly shifted from a “white slavery” narrative that saw them as victims (so long as they were white) to what historians have described as “a witch hunt,” in which sexually deviant women became, in Barbara Meil Hobson’s words, “Public Enemy Number One.”<sup>33</sup> As the CTCA continued to attempt to control the sexuality of soldiers, they became increasingly harsh in their representation of women’s motives, and increasingly carceral in their treatment of those women and girls who violated the federal government’s policies restricting sexual activities near the war camps.

Fosdick founded a Committee on Protective Work for Girls in September, 1917, but within six months, the reformers involved in protective work concluded that the protection of “the supposedly good girl” was less effective than directly intervening in the behavior of the “delinquent girl.”<sup>34</sup> The most “serious problem of the camp cities,” Henrietta S. Additon—the Assistant Director of the Section on Women and Girls of the CTCA’s Law Enforcement Division—wrote in a pamphlet entitled “Work Among Delinquent Women and Girls,” came from the “already delinquent women and girls,” and so, by April, 1918, the CTCA changed its strategy and policies concerning women and girls, and established the Section on Women and Girls of the Law Enforcement Division. Jane Deeter Rippin headed the new division which focused on policing and reforming those it deemed “sex offenders”—a term that it reserved for unmarried, sexually active women and girls.<sup>35</sup> The adoption of this new term—sex offender—was ubiquitous in the reports of the Law Enforcement Division in 1918, and signaled an expansion of

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<sup>31</sup> Kristin Luker, “Sex, Social Hygiene, and the State: The Double-Edged Sword of Social Reform,” *Theory and Society*, Vol. 27, No. 5 (Oct., 1998), 602; Raymond Fosdick, “Report of the Chairman on Training Camp Activities to the Secretary of War,” 1918; Raymond Blaine Fosdick Papers; Box 23, Folder 6; Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University. This shift was even acknowledged by Jane Deeter Rippin—the head of the CTCA’s Section on Women and Girls, who stated in an interview that the organization’s priorities shifted, during the war, from protecting girls to protecting “the boys.” Jane Deeter Rippin, interview with Vera Watson Schmidt, Rippin, Jane Deeter (Mrs. James Y) papers, Girl Scouts of America Archives, NHPC-001600, Personalities: Rippin, Jane Deeter (Mrs. James Y) - Schmidt Biography - Background notes.

<sup>32</sup> Jessica R. Pliley, *Policing Sexuality: The Mann Act and the Making of the FBI* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2014), 129.

<sup>33</sup> Barbara Meil Hobson: *Uneasy Virtue: The Politics of Prostitution and the American Reform Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 165-83; Joanne Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift: Independent Wage Earners in Chicago, 1880-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); 124-25.

<sup>34</sup> Jane Deeter Rippin, *Outline on Organization and Methods: Section on Women and Girls, Law Enforcement Division* (Washington, D.C.: War and Navy Department Commission on Training Camp Activities, c. 1918), 3.

<sup>35</sup> Additon, “Work Among Delinquent Women and Girls,” 153.

the CTCA's definition of the population to be brought under control.<sup>36</sup> Whereas "prostitute" referred specifically to women who sold sex for money, the CTCA's protective workers used the term "sex offender" to refer to any unmarried sexually active woman, including so-called "charity girls" (women who had non-commodified sex with men outside of committed relationships), and women who simply felt an attraction to the men gathered in their hometowns (a condition that the military and social commentators referred to as "khaki fever"). The war, this reasoning went, had created "an unusual type of prostitute," as the Assistant Director of the Section on Women and Girls cautioned. "Girls idealize the soldier and many really feel that nothing is wrong when done for him. One such girl said that she had never sold herself to a civilian but she felt she was doing her bit when she had been with eight soldiers in a night."<sup>37</sup> The Section on Women and Girls was concerned that a single girl could undermine the military's efforts to contain soldiers' sexual behaviors among large numbers of troops, concluding that "[h]ow many soldiers and sailors had been infected by each girl it is impossible to estimate, but there is daily evidence that one such woman is a source of danger to hundreds of soldiers."<sup>38</sup> To eliminate the problem effectively and efficiently, this reasoning went, the CTCA would need to remove the offending women.

Local representatives of the Section on Women and Girls worked with the Section on Vice and Liquor Control in assessing the individual cases of women and girls arrested for prostitution or sexual activity with soldiers, and advising judges on the best sentence or other corrective measure to dole out.<sup>39</sup> To shield young girls from sexual activity, the CTCA suggested that municipalities appoint female police and "protective" officers to "scout," "patrol," "supervise," "inspect," and "report" "on the conduct of all places of public recreation with a view of making

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<sup>36</sup> Alan Johnstone, "Report on Fort Oglethorpe and Vicinity from Field Trip, October 17th and 18th, 1918," October 19, 1918; Morale Branch, Box B1; General Correspondence File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 17, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 3.

<sup>37</sup> Additon, "Work Among Delinquent Women and Girls," 155. In a similar vein, in 1918, Fosdick reported to the head of the Social Hygiene Division William F. Snow on the "rather interesting situation" of a woman named Ettie A. Rout, who founded a brothel in Paris whose services were free of charge for American soldiers, "under the guise of hospitality." "It was purely a philanthropic venture," Fosdick explained, and its founder—with whom Fosdick spoke—"was undoubtedly sincere in her belief that her ideas were scientifically sound." Lacking the authority to close private establishments in allied territory, the military police posted sentries in front of the brothel to prevent American military personnel from entering. Raymond Fosdick, letter to Colonel William F. Snow, August 13, 1918; Raymond Blaine Fosdick Papers; Box 1, Folder 7; Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University. Such episodes reveal the degree to which the guardians of troop morale saw themselves in contrast to the "old fashioned" approach to cheering up soldiers by turning a blind eye to sexual activity, confronting the commonly-held view that men required sexual release by medical necessity, and that brothels could protect "pure" women by providing an alternative, segregated means for the soldiers to indulge their sexual passions. Newton D. Baker, letter to Raymond Fosdick, September 20; Raymond Blaine Fosdick Papers; Box 2, Folder 1; Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University.

<sup>38</sup> Additon, "Work Among Delinquent Women and Girls," 154.

<sup>39</sup> Additon, "Work Among Delinquent Women and Girls," 153.

them as safe as possible”—safe, that is, from harboring sexual opportunities for soldiers.<sup>40</sup> Many towns and cities, guided by the Committee on Protective Work for Girls, created Protective Bureaus, composed of female police officers and volunteers, to engage in this “protective work.” These women would patrol commercial leisure establishments, intercept female travelers at train stations, surveil, and even approach young women and girls who they believed were in “danger” of engaging in sexual activity.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, the CTCA advised that female probation officers should “befriend delinquent girls,” and help them to overcome their “delinquency.”<sup>42</sup> The only solution, according to the CTCA’s corrective workers, was to make the girls in cities and towns adjacent to training camps “realize the dangers that lie in sexual excess.” As the Section on Women and Girls advised, “[t]he best social worker is the one who knows what motive to use in a particular situation.” Social workers should appeal to the “instinct which may be lying dormant in these women,” and use this as motivation for them “to make good.”<sup>43</sup>

In cases where “protective” work was unable to deter women and girls from engaging in sexual activity, the Section on Women and Girls recommended that they be interned in detention homes, as a means of keeping them out of jails while simultaneously removing them from their home environments.<sup>44</sup> In April, 1918, the CTCA established a Section on Reformatories and Houses of Detention, headed by Martha P. Falconer, to work with states and municipalities in establishing a system of detention facilities, which included hospitals, houses, long-term institutions, and, where funds or available buildings could not be mustered—as was frequently the case in the South—“industrial farms.”<sup>45</sup> According to a report by an Interdepartmental Social Hygiene Board consultant, forty-three detention facilities received federal funding, containing 15,520 detained women and girls between 1918 and 1920.<sup>46</sup>

The CTCA insisted that such detention facilities “must be in the hands of women, for it is women’s job to work with women,” and suggested a curriculum for training women and girls in domestic housework and social morality.<sup>47</sup> Despite an apparently authentic (if misguided)

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<sup>40</sup> Johnson, “Next Steps,” 10.

<sup>41</sup> Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 114-115.

<sup>42</sup> Johnson, “Next Steps,” 10.

<sup>43</sup> Additon, “Work Among Delinquent Women and Girls,” 154-55.

<sup>44</sup> Johnson, “Next Steps,” 10-11.

<sup>45</sup> Fosdick, *Report of the Chairman on Training Camp Activities to the Secretary of War*, 15-16.

<sup>46</sup> Thomas A. Storey, *Detention Houses and Reformatories as Protective Social Agencies in the Campaign of the United States Government Against Venereal Diseases* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1922), 3; Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 129.

<sup>47</sup> Fosdick, *Report of the Chairman on Training Camp Activities to the Secretary of War*, 16.

concern for the welfare of women and girls, these programs prioritized, as Additon put it in her pamphlet, “the benefit of the soldier and sailor, to help keep ‘clean and wholesome the environs of their camps.’” To keep the sexual conditions in and around camps under control, the pamphlet concluded, it would be necessary for “more women and girls [to be] committed to institutions for long periods of time.”<sup>48</sup> The Commission therefore advised, as Fosdick explained in a 1918 report, that girls under the legal age of consent be interned “for the rest of their minority,” and women over the age of consent held “from one to three years, or when possible, for an indeterminate sentence to be followed by long-term parole.”<sup>49</sup> Here, the internment of women would serve the function, besides protecting women and girls from “demoralizing influences” and “wretched surroundings,” of removing them from the physical environment of the soldier, making it safer for the military’s goal of preserving men’s vitality and motivation.

It is worth observing the fact that the War Department, civilian reform agencies, and the legal apparatus of the federal, state, and local governments all primarily targeted heterosexual sex. While in some cities, private moral reform organizations such as the Committee of Fourteen in New York, or the Society for the Suppression of Vice fretted about what they called the problem of “perversion,” and the War Department certainly was aware of the fact that, as one report stated, “the presence of sexual perverts among the commissioned and enlisted personnel [was] common,” homosexuality did not feature in the War Department’s morale strategy. The military was actually reluctant to prosecute soldiers for homosexuality, and overall, lacked any overarching policy for addressing homosexuality within the ranks.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps this is indicative of an unwillingness to reckon with the glaring vulnerability of a hard-won sexual order that relied on gendered segregation to function that could easily be undermined by same-sex attraction and sex. Or perhaps it is an artifact of the military’s priorities in the face of limited policing resources. Regardless of the reasons, it is clear that, to the military leadership, an unchecked heterosexual intimacy presented a far greater and more urgent threat than unchecked homosexual intimacy did, and a disproportionate amount of the burden for this fell squarely on women, whose sexuality seemed to threaten the entire motivational apparatus of the American war effort.

These policies and programs—under the vague guises of “protection” and “correction”—were responsible for the arrest, forced examination, and detention of thousands of women during the US’s brief involvement in the war, and signaled the beginning of the so-called

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<sup>48</sup> Additon, “Work Among Delinquent Women and Girls,” 156, 159.

<sup>49</sup> Fosdick, *Report of the Chairman on Training Camp Activities to the Secretary of War*, 16.

<sup>50</sup> George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Making of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 142-43, 146-47; Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 57-59, 60-61, 74, 77.

“American Plan,” under which government agencies continued to administer a detention system for women arrested on the suspicion of being infected with a sexually-transmitted disease for over two decades.<sup>51</sup> The American Plan was designed and implemented by the Interdepartmental Social Hygiene Board, and under the plan, the federal Public Health Service, state health authorities, and local health officers, endowed with authority granted to them by the Chamberlain–Kahn Act of 1918, which authorized the quarantine of women suspected of being venereally infected, used the pretext of public health to continue to inspect and incarcerate women well after the war had ended.<sup>52</sup>

The CTCA’s policing of women and girls was carried out unevenly, along racial lines. Operating in cities and towns where years of anti-vice restrictions had commonly concentrated prostitution into poor African American neighborhoods, the CTCA claimed that there was a greater degree of criminality in many Black communities adjacent to training camps, and that African American women in these communities were especially prone to criminality and venereal infection. In order to curb what a CTCA commissioner based in Atlanta called “the well known high percentage of immorality that exists among the colored women,” the CTCA disproportionately targeted Black women and girls in their surveillance and policing campaigns. When Black women were arrested and detained, authorities tended to send them to jails instead of detention houses, especially in the South, where there was strong opposition to creating detention facilities for African American women and girls. Meanwhile, leaders in the CTCA and military opted not to provide the same recreational and educational programs for Black soldiers and civilians as they did for White soldiers and civilians, preferring to rely upon police, probation officers, courts and detention facilities to control the behaviors of African Americans.<sup>53</sup> The excessive and disproportionate targeting of Black women by the police, as the fourth chapter explores, also contributed to major outbreaks of racial violence that would come to shape the roles that African American men would ultimately be allowed to play in the war.

### **“Make a Girl Instinctively Protect Herself:” The Young Women’s Christian Association and Social Morality Work**

The CTCA controlled the sexuality of men by policing women who they considered to be sexually deviant. The CTCA also looked to women to be voluntary arbiters of men’s sexual

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<sup>51</sup> Barbara Hobson, using reports from the War Department, estimates that 15,010 women were detained under these programs, and that 30,000 were “helped” in some way by the new penal apparatus during World War I. Hobson, *Uneasy Virtue*, 176-77.

<sup>52</sup> Pivar, “Cleansing the Nation,” 30-33.

<sup>53</sup> Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 159-162.

conduct. For this purpose, the CTCA developed a robust “social morality” program, enacted through the Bureau of Lectures of the Social Morality Committee of the War Work Council National Board of the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA). The Bureau of Lectures directed talks at unmarried women and girls residing near training camps, seeking to train them to refrain from sexual activity until marriage and to help enforce chastity among the troops.

Lynn Dumenil has demonstrated that the YWCA’s wartime efforts were split between two main prongs: protecting women from sexual opportunities presented by wartime conditions, and “promoting moral reform, particularly the notion of the single sexual standard,” which demanded sexual continence from both men and women. In this work, the YWCA viewed itself as meeting both the War Department’s priority of “protecting soldiers from sexually dangerous women” and its own priority of protecting women from the dangers of sex.<sup>54</sup> As the Committee’s director and YWCA Vice President Anna Brown put it, with the government’s establishment of the “safety zones” in which liquor and prostitution were banned, “the government has said to us women, ‘Now see to it that what we are doing to protect men, that you cooperate with. Do not let those boys do wrong in those ways if you can help it.’” This message, if not explicitly issued by the War Department, could be inferred from the government’s policies, she thought. “We women have a great patriotic challenge put to us to see that our boys who have enlisted shall be helped against the attentions of girls and women.”<sup>55</sup> By “attention,” Brown meant sexual attention, since, as she specified elsewhere, women should socially engage with soldiers in non-sexual and “familial” ways.<sup>56</sup>

To pursue this work, the Bureau of Lectures dispatched speakers to travel in circuits between cities and towns adjacent to training camps, and advised young girls and their mothers on the importance of guarding their sexuality from the soldiers in camps.<sup>57</sup> (See Figures 2.2 & 2.3) The Bureau instructed speakers to use their platform to shift public sentiment against prostitution and drunkenness, and to begin by targeting women and girls themselves.<sup>58</sup> The lectures especially targeted girls in their early teens, who the YWCA thought posed the greatest

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<sup>54</sup> Lynn Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense: American Women and World War I* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 81-82. Dumenil does not consider how women were urged to internalize the dictates of social morality lectures, or how women, on that basis, were not only urged to be chaste, but conscripted to actively enforce sexual continence among men as well. Nor does Dumenil consider how the YWCA’s social morality work dovetailed with and supported morale work that sought to motivate soldiers to fight.

<sup>55</sup> Anna Brown, “Our Social Morality Work,” Young Women’s Christian Association of the U.S.A. records, Box 711, Folder 5, Sophia Smith Collection of Women’s History, Smith College, Northampton, MA, 270-71.

<sup>56</sup> Anna Brown, “Girls—A Home Guard,” 1918, Young Women’s Christian Association of the U.S.A. records, Box 708, Folder 18, Sophia Smith Collection of Women’s History, Smith College, Northampton, MA, 9.

<sup>57</sup> “Report of the Social Morality Committee War Work Council,” June 17 to July 1919, Young Women’s Christian Association of the U.S.A. records, Box 708, Folder 17, Sophia Smith Collection of Women’s History, Smith College, Northampton, MA, 2.

<sup>58</sup> Brown, “Our Social Morality Work,” 272-73.

risk—to themselves and the soldiers. Brown described the lectures as filling in where girls' mothers had failed “to inculcate those conceptions of self-respect which make a girl instinctively protect herself.”<sup>59</sup> This, she said, was ultimately the entire purpose of “sending out lecturers”—and it was, in Brown’s mind, the entire purpose of the YWCA as a whole.<sup>60</sup>

In order to appeal to audiences who might not be interested in receiving a talk on sexual abstinence, the YWCA’s Bureau of Lectures speakers designed their lectures to address other topics. Brown insisted that lecturers should never be straightforward about the fact that their lecture was about sexual morality, since this would be ineffectual. “We do not believe that this subject can be presented as a pure sex subject with any hope of an adequate result. The sex question must be only a part, and must seem to be an incidental part of the large presentation of patriotism.”<sup>61</sup> By obscuring the true purpose of the lectures, Brown hoped, the lectures would appeal to people who were not merely likeminded purity reformers and religious devotees.<sup>62</sup>

Unlike earlier social purity discourses that imagined women to be purely passive victims of men’s sexual desire, the YWCA’s Committee on Social Morality acknowledged women’s sexual desires—if only to caution against the dangers of these desires. The proper way for women to relate to their sexuality, the Bureau urged, was as selectors of the most noble and worthy traits—a selectivity with both eugenic and motivational benefits. Women, in this view, should be as selective as possible, in order to bring forth the most desirable characteristics, and the most noble effort on the part of men. In a pamphlet issued by the YWCA’s Committee on Social Morality on the work of the Bureau of Lectures, Brown offered revealing insights about this aspect of the organization’s views on women’s responsibilities in maintaining sexual order and motivating men’s effort. Adopting Darwinian terminology about sexual selection, Brown compared the soldier’s uniform to “secondary sex organs” in the animal world, and claimed that “[w]omen have always been filled with admiration by a soldier’s uniform. And men have liked their admiration so much that they used to go to war to win laurels which they could bring home and lay at the feet of the women they wanted to woo.” But, unlike other animals, Brown insisted, humans needed to “choose as mates those who have qualities of person and character which, when mixed with their own, will produce children with the best physical and mental qualities of both parents.” In being selective in this way, Brown explained, women and girls would have to exercise a great degree of self-control.

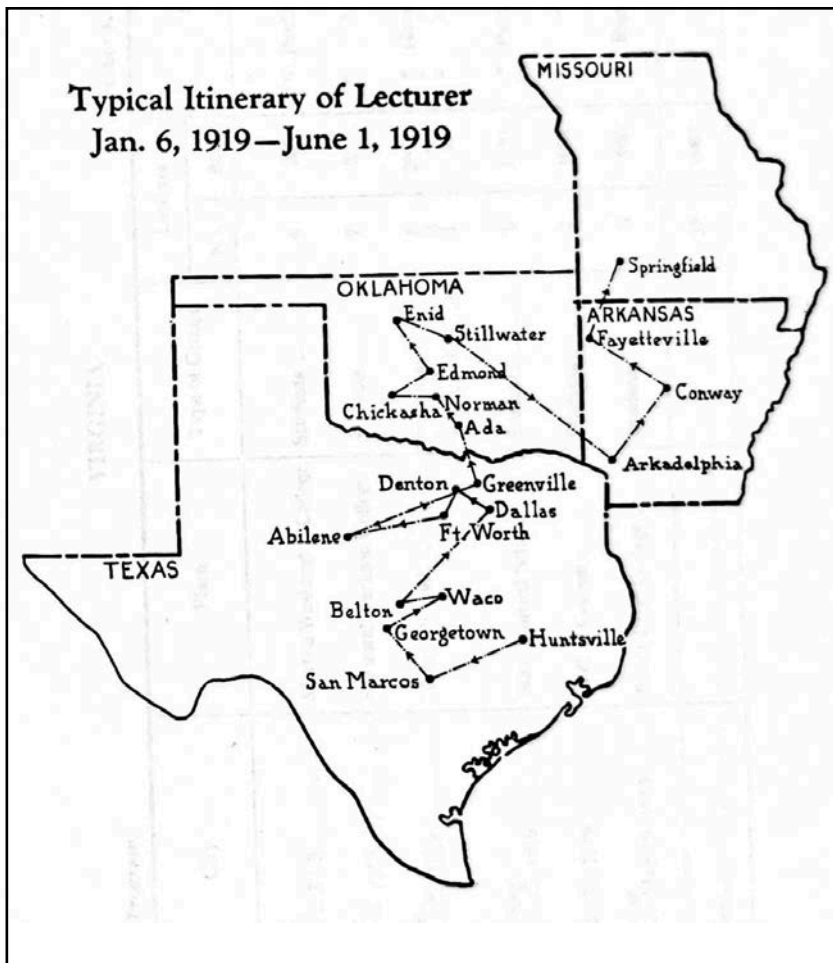
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<sup>59</sup> Brown, “Our Social Morality Work,” 275; Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense*, 80.

<sup>60</sup> Brown stated that “[a]ll the work of the Y.W.C.A. during the past fifty years and for the next fifty years is made necessary by this one thing, the attitude of men and women toward the sex question, and when we grapple with that and do it intelligently, we shall have begun to solve the great social problem.” Brown, “Our Social Morality Work,” 214.

<sup>61</sup> Brown, “Our Social Morality Work,” 272; 274.

<sup>62</sup> The Military Morale Section repeated this tactic of embedding social cues and other forms of propaganda inside of entertaining or exciting content in newspapers, as the next chapter explores.



**Figure 2.2:** This map, from the YWCA’s “Report of the Social Morality Committee War Work Council,” shows the route of the speaker circuit that lecturers from the Social Morality Committee’s Bureau of Lectures would travel in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Missouri.

**Figure 2.3:** This map, from the same report, shows the route of the speakers would travel in Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky.

Knowing things helps us to plan our actions, but our feelings or emotions often upset our plans unless we have wills strong enough to control them. . . . It is this self-control which makes their home a safe place for children to grow up and to learn to control their feelings. The stronger their self-control the better are their chances for fine character.

Women, Brown made clear, needed to be highly selective in choosing a partner, and they should only have one in their entire life. Any deviation from this selectivity constituted—in Brown’s broad definition of the term—prostitution, which included not only the sale of sex, but also non-monogamous sex—“the one who gives herself to different men and the one who sells

herself.” It was immoral for men and women to engage in sex outside of marriage, Brown insisted, and to do so as a woman was to be on a slippery slope leading to commercialized prostitution. “Sooner or later,” she warned,

a girl who has taken such a wrong step begins not to care what happens to her. She either gives herself up to the enjoyment of cheap pleasures like drinking and immoral actions with any man she likes or else she begins to sell herself to every man who is willing to pay.<sup>63</sup>

If women and girls were going to avoid a life of prostitution, Brown urged, they needed to avoid taking what she described as the first steps toward that lifestyle, and abstain from sex.

In addition to refraining from sex themselves, Brown expected women to be the ones maintaining sexual boundaries. Women were to maintain self-control not only to protect themselves and their children, but also to protect men’s vitality. The reason that this responsibility fell on women, according to Brown’s reasoning, was that men were especially weak-willed when it came to exercising control over their sexual impulses. “Girls do not know how easily all men are tempted,” Brown warned.<sup>64</sup> As she explained in a sex education lecture, boys, “at a time when the vesicle [containing sperm] is full,” were driven by an overwhelming urge that compelled them to make advances at women, and it was women’s responsibility to turn these down. It was a myth, Brown insisted, that men required sexual satisfaction and release as a matter of medical necessity. “We know now that that is not true and never was. Men have to learn self-control, and can learn self-control, and it is a part of their education.” Yet, she reasoned, women were largely to blame for the fact “that they are not better educated than they are in that respect.” By giving in to men’s desires, Brown thought, women were perpetuating weakness and irresponsibility.<sup>65</sup>

Brown urged her fellow YWCA lecturers to attempt to get women to internalize their responsibility as guardians of sexual morality by construing their self-control as being personally advantageous. “You have to make girls see why before you say anything about the ‘shouldn’t,’” she insisted. The most effective way for Bureau of Lectures speakers to cultivate this, she thought, was by abandoning attempts to develop “modesty” in girls through their lectures and personal contact work, and instead developing a more personalized sense of “self-respect.” “[M]odesty,” she claimed, was a shallow form of insecure “self-consciousness,” and was therefore unstable and unreliable. By contrast, self-respect was an “unconsciousness of self” that was more thoroughly internalized. Whereas modesty was about conforming to sexual

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<sup>63</sup> Brown, “Girls—A Home Guard,” 3-7.

<sup>64</sup> Brown, “Girls—A Home Guard,” 8.

<sup>65</sup> Brown, “Our Social Morality Work,” 203, 209, 213.

standards, self-respect was about believing in those standards. Self-respect, in Brown's conception, then, was less concerned with the letter of sexual morality principles than with the spirit of sexual morality principles.<sup>66</sup> A sense of "self respect" could be cultivated in women and girls if they could be made to believe that men's sexual attention was cheap and insincere, and that a man who authentically cared about a woman would not make sexual advances. By framing sexual activity and sexual advances in terms of respect, Brown hoped to convince women that men's sexual advances were disrespectful of them, and that their own willingness to give in to men's advances was a betrayal of themselves—a failure of self-respect.

In Brown's framing, many young women and girls were inclined to have sex with soldiers as a way of showing gratitude and appreciation for the sacrifices that these heroic defenders were making. But this was wrong-headed, in Brown's view. "We can," she urged, "make the men we meet see that we believe in them, that we are proud of what they are going to do and we can assure them that we mean to make them proud of us by our self-control and bravery and the service we shall try to render our country in this time of war."<sup>67</sup> This demanded that women shift into a familial role in relation to soldiers, presumably in order to prevent themselves from slipping into a sexual dynamic with the soldiers themselves. "It is our business to be kind and motherly, where we are old enough to be motherly, and sisterly and friendly where friendship is what they need." In this way, though Brown did not mention this explicitly, women and girls could become surrogates of the so-called "home influences" that she and other CTCA leaders thought was desperately needed in the training camps.

Regardless of their ability to play a motherly or sisterly role, Brown insisted that women must not shirk their duty to uphold the sexual morality of the men—and here she made it clear that women's duty was not merely to constrain men's sexuality, but also to motivate and preserve male virility:

[T]o betray the government is to betray our country, and the government is dependent on us to see that men shall have all the help that we can give them, make them manly and clean in their habits while they are in training. . . . [I]t is our job to make men so vitally alive to what Christian women mean in this country, that when they get to France or England, or wherever they go, if they find women there who have not the proper ideals, that they will thank God American women are not like that. We want to give the men in training a fine conception of American womanhood. We want every woman within the reach of our influence and within the sound of our voice to know where we stand in regard to this matter of patriotic service, of denying ourselves liberties.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Anna Brown, "Our Social Morality Work," Young Women's Christian Association of the U.S.A. records, Box 711, Folder 5, Sophia Smith Collection of Women's History, Smith College, Northampton, MA, 199, 276.

<sup>67</sup> Brown, "Girls—A Home Guard," 9.

<sup>68</sup> Brown, "Our Social Morality Work," 270-272.

Here, Brown was advocating a very clear form of parosexuality: a femininity that would be all the more alluring because of its sexual unavailability. Brown thought that patriotic women and girls should operate on the belief that sex was disrespectful to themselves and their would-be partners, and that they should make sure that men would not have easy access to their bodies, and stigmatize women who did not uphold these standards.

Whether or not women took Brown's and the other YWCA speakers' lectures to heart is unclear. Lynn Dumenil, following the historian of American prostitution Alice Clement, evaluates that the YWCA's "outdated" approach to moral reform was likely ineffective "in promoting sexual abstinence."<sup>69</sup> Yet these historians have not considered how the YWCA urged women to internalize the dictates of social morality lectures, or how the organization pressured women, on that basis, not only to be chaste, but to play an active part in keeping men sexually constrained. The Bureau of Lectures was highly active in spreading their messages around the country. By the end of the summer of 1919, the YWCA estimated that its Bureau of Lectures's 56 lecturers—many of whom were female physicians instructed to tailor their messages to Brown's prescribed principles and strategies—had reached 445,205 women and girls in communities near military camps and bases, with 90,456 of those being in the single month between June 1 and July 1, 1919.<sup>70</sup>

Regardless of their influence, the approach of the YWCA's Bureau of Lectures represented an important appeal for a particular set of standards and roles for femininity, and here the YWCA's social morality work dovetailed with and supported the messages of the military's other morale agencies. Women, in this understanding, ought to relate to sex through a prism of respect and self-respect, and, with this mode of evaluation in place, preserve their own wellbeing by maintaining their chastity. Women, as Darwinian defenders of their race's best qualities, and as guardians of men's virility, ought to be gatekeepers of men's access to sexual opportunities, and they ought to use this role to keep other women in check, and to determine which men were deserving of their company and romantic attention and which were not.

### **"Together Under Good Influence:" War Camp Community Service**

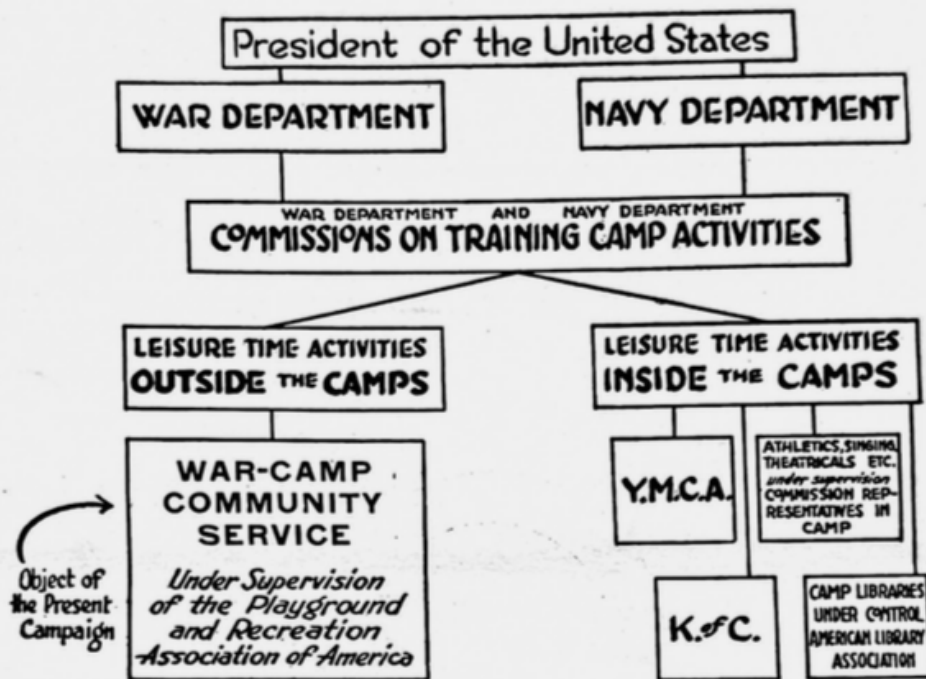
While the YWCA's Bureau of Lectures sought to train women to regulate men's sexual conduct, another organization sought to provide concrete opportunities for women and girls and soldiers to encounter each other in a "proper" way. In May, 1917, the CTCA placed the Playground and Recreation Association of America (PRAA) in charge of "extra-cantonment"

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<sup>69</sup> Dumenil, *The Second Line of Defense*, 81-82.

<sup>70</sup> "Report of the Social Morality Committee War Work Council," 81.

## How the Off-Duty Time of the Soldiers and Sailors is Supervised



**Figure 2.4:** Diagram showing the organization of supervision by the various organizations of the Commission on Training Camp Activities. From War Camp Community Service, Inc.'s *War-Camp Community Service: A Military and Social Necessity*.

work, involving the organization of leisure activities and volunteering in the communities adjacent to training camps—a mission that the PRAA carried out through a subsidiary organization which it called War Camp Community Service, Inc. (WCCS).<sup>71</sup> As one WCCS illustration delineated, whereas CTCA organizations such as the YMCA and Knights of Columbus were in charge of planning recreational activities inside of the camps, the WCCS was in charge of planning recreation outside of the camps. (See Figure 2.4) Founded 1906 (initially under the name of the Playground Association of America [or PAA]) as part of the playground movement, the PRAA was headed by the author on morale Luther Gulick, who was its first president. In addition to Gulick, the organization's leadership included, as honorary president, the ex-president Theodore Roosevelt; as honorary vice-president, the progressive reformer and

<sup>71</sup> "Vote of War Department Commission on Training Camp Activities," Raymond Blaine Fosdick Papers; Box 13, Folder 2; Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University. This mission was bolstered by the issuance of General Orders No. 125 in September, 1917, which stated: "The cooperation of local citizen organizations that have been formed under the direction of the Commission on Training Camp Activities in the vicinity of every camp, will be at the service of camp commanders in the supervision and control of amusement enterprises." War Department, "General Orders No. 125," 3, § V.

muckraker Jacob Riis; as second vice-president, the reformer Jane Addams; and, as third vice-president, the philanthropist and urban social reformer Joseph Lee.<sup>72</sup> Prior to the war, the PRAA was wholly dedicated to reforming the built environment—specifically through the provision of public playgrounds and community centers—in order to of cultivate “character” among children and adolescents. The PRAA’s leaders believed that their guiding principle of “promot[ing] normal, wholesome play” was an effective way of preventing “delinquency . . . by providing a wholesome outlet for youthful energy,” increasing “industrial efficiency,” cultivating “community spirit,” and creating “higher standards of morality,” as the organization’s founding document put it.<sup>73</sup> They hoped that targeted interventions into children’s environments could forge them into better citizens.

The WCCS had a similar mission, though it targeted young enlistees instead of children. As Fosdick explained, the purpose of the organization was “[t]o make the communities adjacent to the training camps the best possible places for the soldiers in their free time—to organize the social and recreational facilities of the towns so that they shall meet every need and contribute to the mental, moral, and physical health of the men in the training camps.”<sup>74</sup> In this, the WCCS saw the residents in town—especially women and girls—as strategically valuable assets. While WCCS officials agreed with others in the CTCA that communities outside of the camps posed “the greatest dangers” to the soldiers, they simultaneously insisted that “it is [also] there that the greatest opportunities for exercising a beneficial influence are found.”<sup>75</sup>

The WCCS’s leaders thought that, rather than avoiding women and girls, the men should have regular contact with them, in a way that would not threaten, but bolster their motivation. The WCCS, which was one of only two secular service organizations serving in the CTCA (the other being the American Library Association), resisted what they saw as a false dichotomy in thinking about how to properly shape the relationship between soldiers and women, “between the life of a libertine and that of an ascetic.” Such old-fashioned thinking demanded that soldiers have no contact whatsoever with women.<sup>76</sup> Against this view, the WCCS insisted “that the effect

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<sup>72</sup> What’s more, Gulick, who, as the previous chapter demonstrates, theorized about morale and how to attain it, was an old friend of Fosdick’s. Fosdick, *Chronicle of a Generation*, 135.

<sup>73</sup> “The Playground Association of America Purpose,” June, 1910, National Recreation Association Records, Box 1, Playground Association of America (PAA) 1906-1909, Social History Archives, University of Minnesota.

<sup>74</sup> “Vote of War Department Commission on Training Camp Activities,” 21.

<sup>75</sup> WCCS, “Community Service: A Military and Social Necessity,” 1.

<sup>76</sup> Nancy Bristow argues that the WCCS was part of a larger movement of reformers who viewed overly “regressive,” traditional reform tendencies as being counterproductive. In their refusal to compromise on their pure visions of morality, these traditional reformers were actually “dangerous because of the encouragement they gave to the forces of degenerative social change . . . driving Americans to a corrupted modernism by denying them a respectable alternative.” The WCCS, she claims, with their embrace of dancing and other co-ed activities, represented a significant departure from this more traditional, purity-based approach. Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 79-80.

of the society of good women is wholly good, that one of the best influences in our lives is the desire to merit their esteem, and that the strongest influence for purity in the life of a young man is the hope of some day being worthy of the love of a good woman.” In this view, “good” women who were capable of maintaining their own “self-respect” (as Anna Brown referred to it), and projecting similar standards onto men, would positively affect the stamina, vigor and drive of soldiers, who would strive to become “worthy” of their affection. “The thrust of the American bayonet is not less fierce for having the American home and American cherished institutions behind it,” the WCCS reasoned. In their view, these institutions—with women as their vectors—would actually enhance the fighting abilities of the American military forces.<sup>77</sup>

The WCCS, like the YWCA’s Bureau of Social Morality, hoped to instill in the minds and hearts of soldiers a lasting reverence for American women. “[O]ur soldiers are going across the sea, where we can no longer control their environment,” the WCCS announced in an instructional pamphlet. “It is for the women of America . . . to make for them an invisible armor which shall protect them wherever they may go, and it is a part of the business of the War Camp Community Service to mobilize and direct our women in the fashioning of this magic garment.”<sup>78</sup> In a protracted conflict in which men’s motivation needed to be maximized, women could be the alluring cause of soldiers’ bravery—both the source of their spirit-lifting comfort, and the guardians of their sexual continence. The morale theorist William Ernest Hocking thought that morale required more than mere incidental contact with women in highly controlled environments where “a palpable pressure of decorum and caution . . . discourages the gayer give-and-take.” What was needed instead, Hocking thought, was an atmosphere where men could more casually and intimately interact with women and girls—a perspective that the WCCS shared.<sup>79</sup> According to the WCCS’s president Joseph Lee, the soldier “needs . . . his natural relations to human kind, and especially to girls and women. He must have it, or he will grow stale and not be a good fighting man. That is an absolute, positive military reason why this work of ours is essential from a purely military point of view.”<sup>80</sup> For this reason, the WCCS sought to actively bring “soldiers and girls together under good influence,” as one of the organization’s guides explained, by encouraging churches and other organizations to host “carefully chaperoned” (that is: chaperoned “both at the party and in the matter of getting home”) parties and events that would cultivate the men’s “natural loyalties”—both to “home and love,” but also

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<sup>77</sup> WCCS, “Community Service: A Military and Social Necessity,” 5-7.

<sup>78</sup> WCCS, “Community Service: A Military and Social Necessity,” 1.

<sup>79</sup> William Ernest Hocking, *Morale And Its Enemies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1918), 181.

<sup>80</sup> Joseph Lee, remarks in “National Conference on War Camp Community Service”; Record Group 165; Box 2 (Education & Recreation Branch Correspondence of the Education Section, 1918-1920); National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 49.

to a fighting spirit.<sup>81</sup> Among these events, the most popular was the dance—an activity that highlighted the WCCS’s deviation from purity as a guiding principle. Where dances had previously been a source of concern for CTCA investigators, the WCCS embraced them as being an especially effective way to entertain and motivate the troops.<sup>82</sup>

The key to successful dances was to make them as intimate as possible without being sexual. To prevent what one of the WCCS’s pamphlets called “licentious forms of dancing,” the organization made sure that all of their events would be chaperoned. WCCS pamphlets instructed chaperones to position themselves in the middle of the dance floor, where they might prevent the “improper holding or improper positions of the body while dancing;” to prevent dancers from leaving the building, where they could escape the watchful eye of the chaperone; to “[b]e sure that all class room and cloak room doors are locked;” and to prevent “orchestra numbers with a sensual rhythm” or “words of which are not in conformity with the dignity of the school.”<sup>83</sup> According to the WCCS, another important step in regulating dances was to make sure that the women and girls attending were of the “right sort”—meaning that their reputations were unmarred with allegations of sex offenses.<sup>84</sup> As a general policy, War Camp Community Service workers were not permitted to “promote or organize private dances either in the streets, dance halls or elsewhere, where . . . [t]he character of every woman attending can not be vouched for.”<sup>85</sup> The organization insisted that dances should have selective door policies, guest lists, and even pre-arranged invitations and pairing between soldiers and women and girls who had established reputations within the community.<sup>86</sup> The WCCS’s staff and leaders hoped that once such a control was in place, and the men began to meet women and girls with positive reputations and something approximating what Anna Brown referred to as “self-respect,” that the soldiers would, of their own volition, choose women and girls who were less inclined toward being sexually active—seeing this as undesirable, undignified, and unattractive. The morale theorist William Hocking, perhaps naïvely, thought that dances could eventually operate without

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<sup>81</sup> WCCS, “Community Service: A Military and Social Necessity,” 7.

<sup>82</sup> These were not only a favorite activity for the WCCS, but also a favorite among the strategists of morale. Hocking advocated the dance over and above other casual opportunities for men and women to mingle, and G. Stanley Hall thought that “[d]ancing properly conditioned is one of the very best and most morally hygienic of all amusements,” but cautioned that, if “uncontrolled it is full of jeopardy for body and soul.” Hocking, *Morale and Its Enemies*, 182; Hall, *Morale*, 265. For the WCCS’s preference for dances, see Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 80.

<sup>83</sup> Harold O. Berg, “Practical Aids in Conducting a Neighborhood Recreation Center,” 1919, National Recreation Association Records, Box 61, PRM Publications 1918, Social History Archives, University of Minnesota, 16-17.

<sup>84</sup> The evaluation of the “right sort” of girls often carried with it a class dimension, as Nancy Bristow has argued. Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 83.

<sup>85</sup> War Camp Community Service, Inc., “Stand By! Handbook of Work for Women and Girls,” March 1919, National Recreation Association Records, Box 122, Playground Association of America - Publications, Social History Archives, University of Minnesota, 60-61.

<sup>86</sup> Bristow, *Makin Men Moral*, 83.

restrictions concerning attendance. In these spaces, “any respectable girl may spend a pleasant evening with a soldier under good auspices and without any intrusive restrictions, while the *déclassées*, whom there is no attempt to exclude, being on the whole less intelligent and attractive, suffer in comparison; and the men gradually tend to drop them in favor of their more scrupulous sisters.”<sup>87</sup> The WCCS’s leaders, like Hocking, hoped that community-regulated activities such as dances would make sexually-restrained women and girls more desirable and attractive in the eyes of soldiers than those who were less restrained, with their value increasing in direct and inverse proportion to their sexual availability.

Without these regulations in place, however, it is likely that the dances would have become more explicitly sexual, and therefore would not have had the parasexual motivational effect that the WCCS and morale theorists hoped that they would have. Yet this would all be pointless if other recreation venues in the community provided opportunities for soldiers and women to socialize in less restricted ways. Therefore, in addition to their own policies and regulations, the WCCS depended on the CTCA’s investigators and local police to regulate the activities that could potentially undermine the efficacy of their parasexual recreation strategy.

To aid government authorities in this task, the CTCA enlisted members of communities to police each other voluntarily, and to report back to the organization when they encountered nonconforming individuals or venues. As the assistant director the Section on Women and Girls Henrietta Additon explained in her pamphlet on “Work Among Delinquent Women and Girls,”

[v]olunteers are being trained in every town to do patrol work. Dance halls, moving picture and cheap burlesque theatres, parks and similar places of amusement are visited regularly and reports of conditions found are sent to Washington, special note being made of the violation of any law or ordinance, the presence of prostitutes, the character of entertainment offered and the general behavior of the people who frequent these places.<sup>88</sup>

In this approach to community, everyday people—peers, family, and strangers—were meant to hold one another accountable and enforce norms and laws. This understanding of community was clearly articulated by Newton Baker, who, in a speech at the National Conference on War Camp Community Service (held October 23, 1919), stated that “one of the great social restraints . . . that makes ordered society possible at all, is the existence of a state of social habits on the part of a people.” Such “social habits are the things we acquire as we grow up in a community. They are enforced by the sanction of personal approval of the people with whom we have to deal. They are enforced by the approval of neighborhood opinion, and they constitute the chief

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<sup>87</sup> Hocking, *Morale and Its Enemies*, 182.

<sup>88</sup> Additon, “Work Among Delinquent Women and Girls,” 158.

force for the preservation of order and the progress which society makes.”<sup>89</sup> This sanctioning and approving vision of community, as the next chapter explores, would have an important impact on the military’s morale agency’s propaganda. But it also informed a community policing plan that aimed to keep the WCCS’s parasexual motivational strategy intact. By enlisting community support, the CTCA multiplied its eyes and ears on the ground.

That the more affirmative work of using civilian women as means of boosting troop morale was contingent on the pre-establishment of “moral conditions” amenable to such work is evidenced by the fact that the WCCS was not among the service organizations that the CTCA used in Europe, where American police authority over the conduct of civilians could not be established. As Fosdick explained in a 1919 report on the “conditions of morale,” the WCCS was not brought overseas “by reason of the fact that it would be impossible to develop its specialized line of work under existing conditions in France.”<sup>90</sup> Such a feat required extensive policing, a functioning penal apparatus, social morality work, and a vast surveillance network—all of which worked in collaboration with each other in the US—so that so-called “delinquency” would not disrupt or corrupt the delicate balance between allure and sexual continence sought by the WCCS and other CTCA organizations.<sup>91</sup>

The measures appear to have worked, at least domestically. As early as October, 1917, a representative from the New England Watch and Ward Society—one of the CTCA’s local private surveillance partners—reported that the “moral conditions” in Cambridge, Massachusetts had been improved by the mixed implementation of both heightened law enforcement presence and the provision of “church socials,” which offered a “counter attraction” to the “summer immorality between sailors and girls [which had been] very common and open.” With the new measures in place, a local patrol officer names “Miss Hutchins” “patrolled all over Cambridge,” and even “attended a dance” and, besides catching a few sailors “[holding] the girls too tightly in dancing,” and attempting to “pick up” girls outside of the dance, she could “find nothing objectionable.” The report reassured that sailors were more likely to meet women under the “proper” conditions of church events, and “many of the couples seen around Cambridge now have become acquainted in a perfectly proper way.” While “[t]here may have been some of that inevitable striking of fire between these young people,” the Secretary of the Watch and Ward Society commented, “there was nothing of an outrageous nature occurring there.”<sup>92</sup> In contrast

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<sup>89</sup> Baker, remarks in “National Conference on War Camp Community Service,” 7.

<sup>90</sup> Fosdick, “Report to the Secretary of War on the Activities of Welfare Organizations Serving With the A.E.F.,” 30.

<sup>91</sup> WCCS, “Stand By!” 20.

<sup>92</sup> Jason F. Chase, letter to Raymond B. Fosdick, October 2, 1917; Letters 201 Mr. Fosdick; Education & Recreation Branch, Correspondence of the Education Section, 1918-1920; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 2, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

to this report, the CTCA's Law Enforcement Division continued to report hundreds of arrests for both prostitution and liquor offenses within the radii of the so-called "safety zones"—at least 248 for prostitution alone between December 19 and 25, 1918, and 177 the week before.<sup>93</sup>

As police and the CTCA's Law Enforcement Division continued to collaborate to put the women who offended the military's policies on sexual activity near the military camps into detention facilities, the WCCS played its own important role in providing social events for soldiers and civilian women and girls, in order to curate their social interactions and compel the men to take their military duties seriously. As the WCCS staff's and leaders' ambitions for dances reveal, they hoped that, in addition to improving the morale of soldiers by exposing them to women in controlled conditions, they could shape the romantic tastes of the soldiers by making them desire women and girls who were more self-restrained and compelling them to see sexually-active women and girls as lewd and undesirable.

### **“You Will Have it in Your Power as Women to Make and Shape the Man-Power of America for a Generation to Come:” The YMCA’s “Intra Cantonment” Work at Home and Abroad**

While the Playground and Recreation Association of America engaged, through War Camp Community Service, Inc., in “inter cantonment” work in the communities surrounding training camps, the Commission on Training Camp Activities placed the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the Knights of Columbus and the Jewish Welfare Board in charge of so-called “intra cantonment” work inside of the camps—both domestically and abroad. (See Figure 2.1) The biggest and most prominent of these organizations was the YMCA.<sup>94</sup> The YMCA had proved itself in its prior work along the Mexican Border, and was, as “the first act of the Commission,” asked to play a “prominent part” in the CTCA's efforts to provision for, and control the leisure activities within the training camps—a responsibility that the YMCA transported overseas with the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) when the United States finally

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<sup>93</sup> Law Enforcement Division Weekly Summary, December 19 to December 25, 1918; records of the Morale Branch, Box B1; General Correspondence File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 17, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD., 3. Law Enforcement Division Section on Vice and Liquor Control, Weekly Summary, December 12, to December 18, 1918; records of the Morale Branch, Box B1; General Correspondence File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 17, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD., 3.

<sup>94</sup> The YMCA was allocated 58% of the funds raised in the United War Work Campaign (a nationwide fundraising campaign that raised private money to send service organizations overseas with the soldiers). Fosdick, “Report to the Secretary of War on the Activities of Welfare Organizations Serving With the A.E.F.,” 31.



**Figures 2.5, 2.6 & 2.7:** These drawings by Private Edward Fiske and published in the YMCA-run military newspaper *Trench and Camp*, speak to the centrality of alluring women in both the minds and the media of American soldiers.

deployed troops, *en masse*, to France in the summer of 1918.<sup>95</sup> The YMCA offered a range of services, including lodges and huts for soldiers to spend their leisure hours in, athletics programs, entertainment of various stripes, and a supply of provisions of various kinds.

Like the WCCS, the YMCA's leaders thought that women—so long as they possessed the “right” disposition—were the greatest asset available to the military in its quest to motivate the men to fight. This ideal of women being motivators of the soldiers was clearly depicted in a variety of cartoons in the YMCA-run military newspaper *Trench and Camp*. In the first place, the newspaper regularly published drawings of young women's made-up faces, as the Camp Upton edition of the newspaper did with a series of drawings by Private Edward Fiske, of the 7th Company. (See Figures 2.5, 2.6 & 2.7) Cartoons also depicted women entering or passing through the training camps as capturing the gaze and the imaginations of soldiers. (See Figures 2.8 & 2.9) Other cartoons and illustrations represented men dreaming and thinking about women. One cartoon in a September, 1918 issue of *Trench and Camp*, entitled “His Only Only,” showed a sleeping young recruit dreaming of women, above a poem about how a soldier wistfully thought “tender thoughts” of his “only-only girlie” as he “walk[ed] my post in military manner.” The poem described how, when the soldier “salute[d] all colors and standards,” that he saw this woman in those symbols, and wondered if she loved him. (See Figure 2.10)

<sup>95</sup> Fosdick, “Autobiographical sketch,” 6. According to E. C. Carter, who was the Chief of the YMCA's AEF division, “[t]he task [of the YMCA in the American Expeditionary Forces] is a very great one. It undertakes . . . to take the place of the American home, the American church, the American school, the American college, the American stage—all that is best in the life of America.” “Address to New YMCA Workers by E. C. Carter, Chief Secretary,” Appendix VI of Luther H. Gulick, *Morals and Morale* (New York: Association Press, 1919), 141.

Women were even more important for the motivation of soldiers overseas than they were domestically, and the CTCA's organizations mobilized thousands of women to accompany the soldiers to France in order to keep the men in a state of stimulation. According to the Chief of the YMCA's overseas efforts E. C. Carter, women "doing their part" was "ten times more needed" than it was back in the training camps, because they were further away from the "steadying effects" of other influences. For that reason, the YMCA would "provide the touch of the American home through American women."<sup>96</sup> Fosdick claimed that the 2,500 women who the YMCA sent to France—carefully selected from "the entire womanhood of America"—were "beyond praise." After spending eight months with the American Expeditionary Forces, Fosdick reflected after the war,

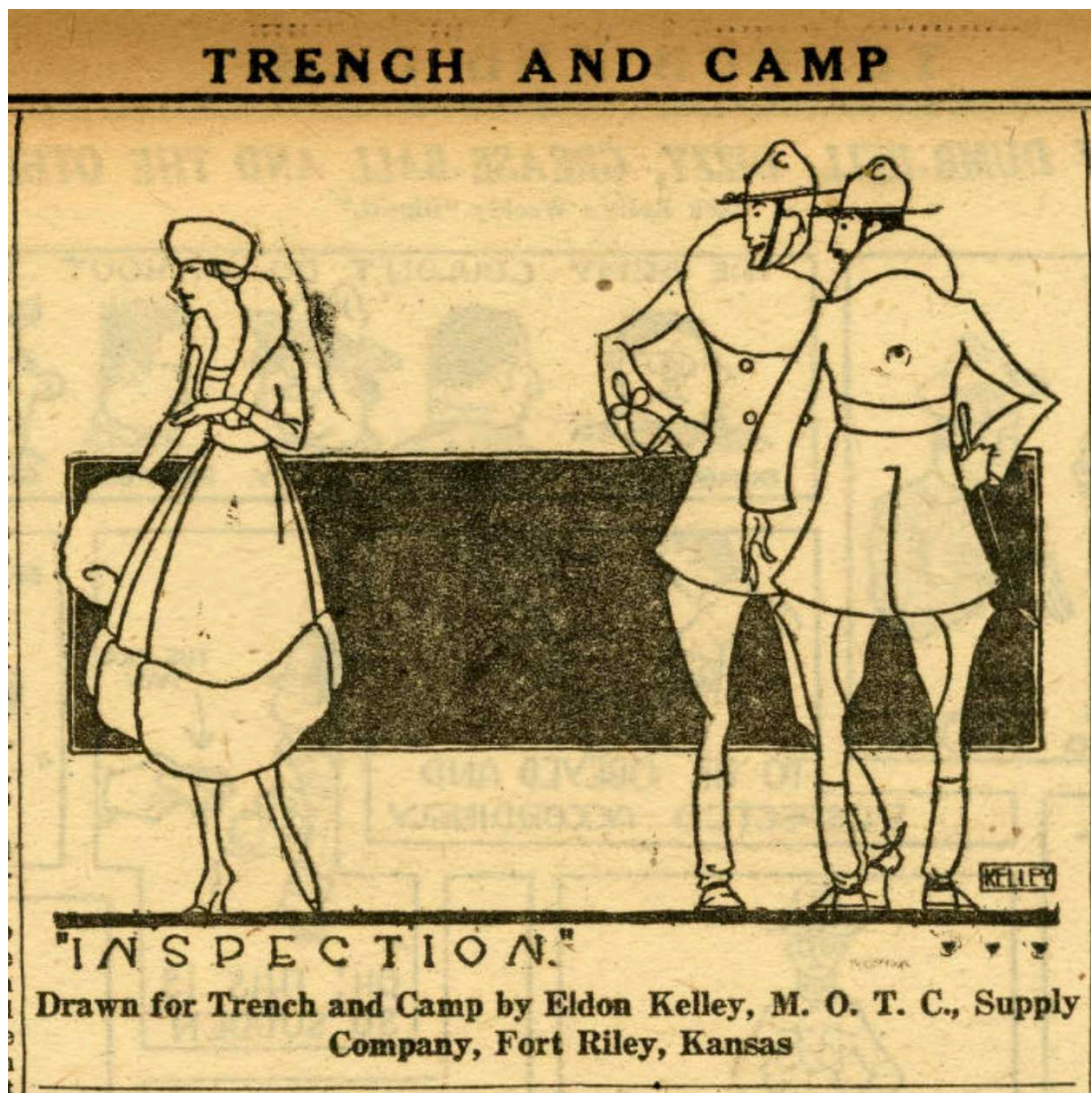
I am convinced that the average woman worker attached to a hut is worth four or five men workers. Certainly her effect on the morale and spirit of the troops is extraordinary. An 'honest-to-God American girl', as the soldiers call her, can do more to keep the men cheerful and create an atmosphere of home than any other factor; and the work of our women in France—YMCA girls, Salvation Army girls, Red Cross girls and the representatives of the other agencies—has been in no small degree responsible for the unflagging devotion and the inexhaustible patience with which our troops carried forward their high enterprise.<sup>97</sup>

Fosdick's use of the phrase "honest-to-God American girl," which resembled the terminology that other CTCA leaders and morale theorists used to describe the women who they saw as being potentially beneficial to the soldiers' morale, is telling. In its criteria for selecting women to work in canteens and YMCA huts overseas, the YMCA selected for much more than their ability to serve coffee and sell concessions. As Kara Dixon Vuic has shown, the YMCA hired women to staff the AEF's canteens who they thought would be attractive to soldiers, yet who they also thought would resist any advances that the soldiers made on them. In their search for these women, Vuic explains, the YMCA carefully selected women who were both attractive and "steady"—often in their 30s and college-educated—so that they would allure the men while having the self-control to resist inappropriate flirtations or sexual engagement. These women possessed, in Vuic's terminology, "alluring respectability." "Although military and civilian leaders always carefully couched the women's work in a language of respectability," Vuic explains, "and

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<sup>96</sup> Carter in Gulick, *Morals and Morale*, 141-42, 144.

<sup>97</sup> Fosdick, "Report to the Secretary of War on the Activities of Welfare Organizations Serving With the A.E.F.," 32-34.

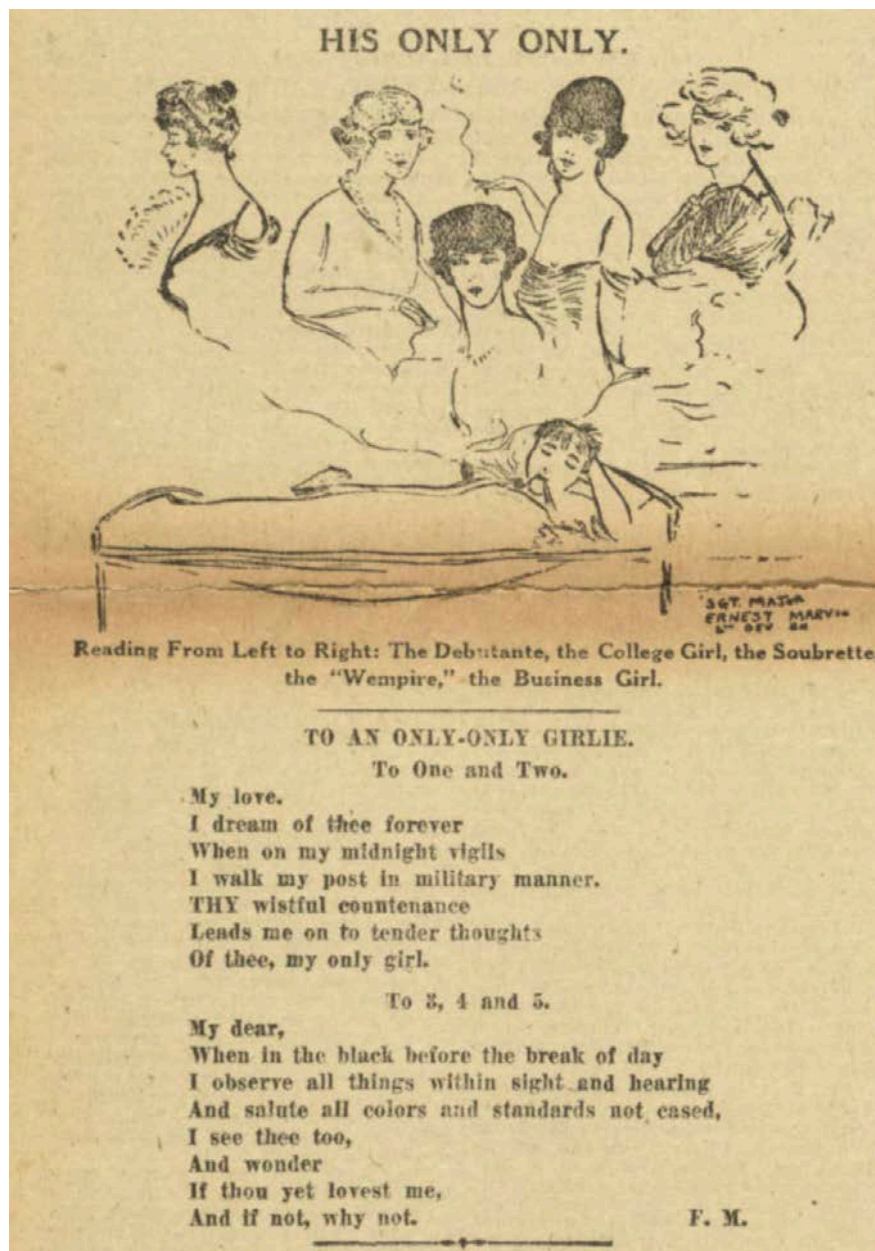


**Figure 2.8:** Two soldiers gaze at a woman in this July, 1918 *Trench and Camp* cartoon.

although they expressly forbid women from engaging in any activity that even hinted at immorality, sexual appeal remained the underpinning of programs in which women served as symbols of men's hopes and desires." The women hired for this work "had to be enticing enough alternatives to the temptations that awaited men just beyond their camps. Only the proper combination of moralizing and tantalizing qualifications could create the right blend of regulation and allure that would keep the men from trouble." Yet, as Vuic also points out, the women employed by the YMCA were not merely there to divert the attention of the soldiers away from the temptations of the French sexual landscape; YMCA leaders also saw them as an effective way to motivate the soldiers to embrace the fight. As she explains, "YMCA and military officials encouraged doughboys to think of themselves as fighting to protect women, and canteen women served as tangible motivation."<sup>98</sup> The YMCA was clearly aware of the effect that these

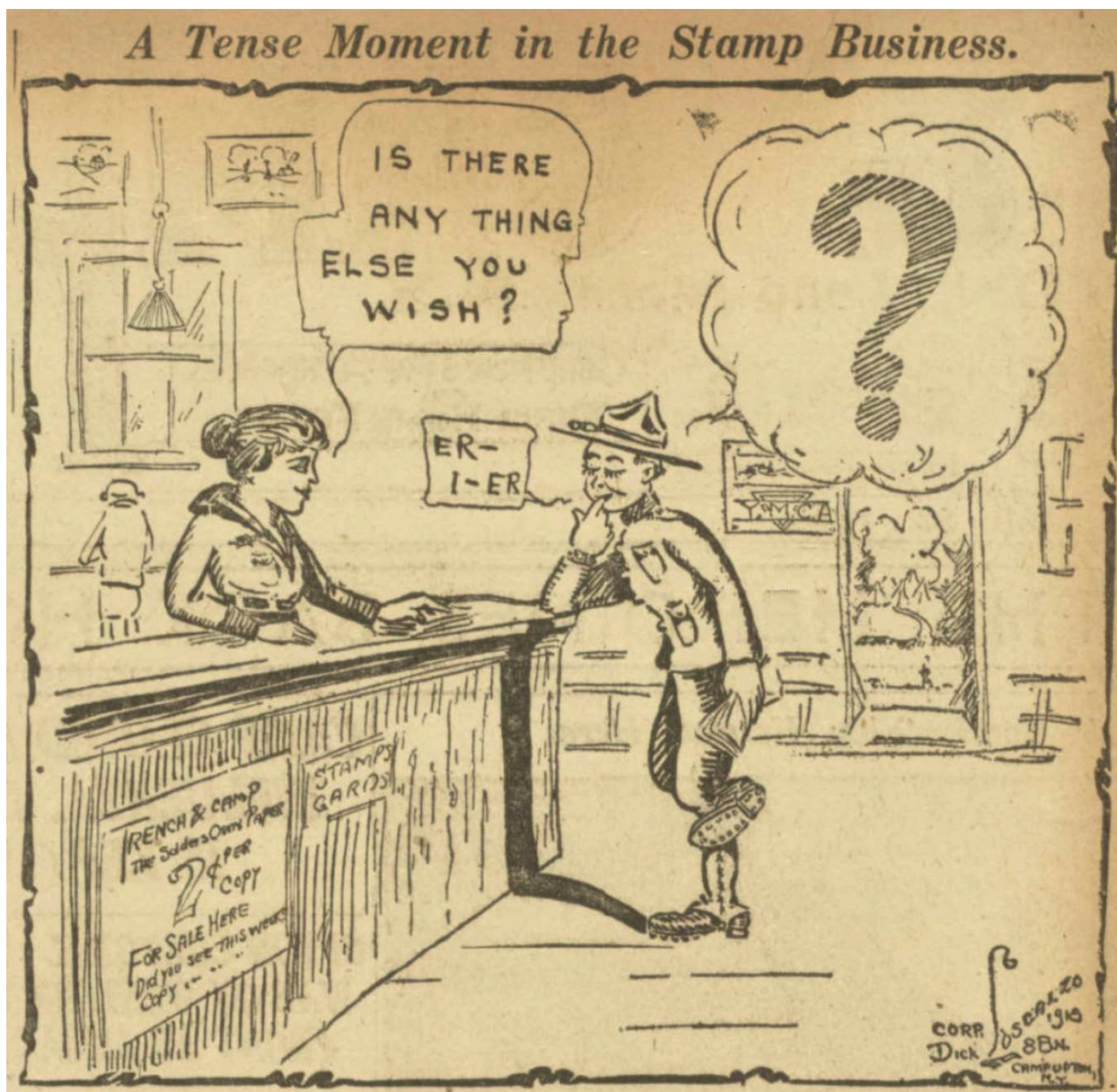
<sup>98</sup> Kara Dixon Vuic, *The Girls Next Door: Bringing the Home Front to the Front Lines* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2019), 19-23, 27, 35.





**Figure 2.10:** This September, 1918 illustration and accompanying poem in *Trench and Camp* depicts a soldier dreaming of women and finding meaning in his military activities through thinking about them.

reputation for the donuts that its female canteen workers (nicknamed "Lassies") served to soldiers, but it is clear that the women themselves were a major part of the comfort that the organization sought to bring to the soldiers. An image of a Salvation Army "Lassie" serving a donut to a soldier, published in a September issue of *Trench and Camp* demonstrates the interpersonal appeal that the organization was striving for. According to the caption beneath the image, the "regular American smile from an American girl" made soldiers want to linger. (See Figure 2.12) Like other CTCA organizations, the Salvation Army needed to appeal to the sensibilities of soldiers' families. In displays for the civilian public, therefore, the organization represented the influence of female workers on the soldiers as maternal, rather than sexual. A



**Figure 2.11:** A dazed soldier loses his words in an encounter with a female YMCA worker in this cartoon in a September, 1918 issue of *Trench and Camp*. The cartoon demonstrates that the allure of female canteen workers was an openly-acknowledged fact.

Salvation Army float at the 1918 Independence Day parade in New York City, for example, while featuring young and conventionally attractive “Lassies” serving donuts to soldiers on their horse-drawn platform, also displayed hand-painted signage proclaiming that the organization’s female workers were “Substituting For You American Mothers With Your Sons.” (See Figure 2.13)

The military encouraged nurses, the YMCA’s female staff, and Salvation Army workers to mingle with soldiers in designated “leave areas,” where American doughboys would spend their much-needed breaks from the combined stresses and boredom of warfare. These female workers would often attend dances and other social events where they would be greatly outnumbered, and where, on any given evening, they would have to dance with hundreds of



**Figure 2.12:** Image of a Salvation Army “Lassie” serving donuts and coffee to soldiers “in the front lines.” The caption highlights the appeal of the “American girl” and her “American smile,” rather than the donuts and coffee she served. As the caption suggestively concludes, “[t]his corporal looks as if he wanted to hang around awhile.”

men, often having to manage the men’s expectations and parry their advances, effectively combining the roles, in Vuic’s words, of “surrogate mother and comely dance partner.” Such roles could be emotionally and physically strenuous, and the women hired for such work reported to friends and family that they often felt tired, stressed, and, at times, conflicted.<sup>100</sup> A consistent theme in the personal accounts of both men and women in France was the men’s excitement at encountering American women. One American nurse serving with the AEF wrote to her sisters that “[s]ome of the nurses went to an American Y.M.C.A. hut last night and the boys there just about ate them up they were so glad to see them.”<sup>101</sup> Some women recalled

<sup>100</sup> Vuic, *The Girls Next Door*, 10, 38-40.

<sup>101</sup> Florence Edith Hemphill, transcription of letter to sisters Olivia and May, February 18, 1918, The National WWI Museum and Memorial archives, Kansas City, MO.



**Figure 2.13:** Salvation Army float at a New York City Independence Day parade in 1918. The banner on the side of the float reads: “MORALE: gunpowder of the Spirit; The Machine Gun of Character. Salvation Army War-Workers In War Zone Substituting For You American Mothers With Your Sons.” The accompanying caption, from the National Archives, states that “The Salvation Army is one of the ‘Morale Guardians’ of the troops abroad.”

feeling exhilarated by the amount of attention that they received in such a demographically skewed environment, while others, such as Ada Alice Tuttle, “who danced countless dances with eager young men . . . described the ‘trembling eagerness of these boys for a partner’ as ‘one of the most pathetic things I have seen.’”<sup>102</sup> What is clear from their collective experiences is the degree of alluring power these women’s presence had over the soldiers who they were expected to entertain and interact with—even if they themselves were highly constrained. In the sense that they were expected to reject soldiers’ advances, they were endowed—perhaps in unprecedented ways—with new powers of assertiveness *vis-a-vis* these men, but could only be assertive in highly specific ways that maintained an overall atmosphere of sexual restraint.

As Andrew Huebner has demonstrated, the American war machine made great use of private motivations to drive participation in the war, and organizations like the YMCA relied on a charged relationship between men and women to drive this process. Part of the reason that this worked is because the government had so thoroughly primed the civilian population with

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<sup>102</sup> Ada Alice Tuttle, quoted in Vuic, *The Girls Next Door*, 47.

propaganda designed to sell the war to them. The War Department, acting through the Committee on Public Information, circulated fliers, posters, pamphlets, newspaper articles and films that glorified the idea, in Huebner's words, that "[c]ivilized white men would demonstrate their personal character, love for family, and masculine mettle by defending women, children, and home from German militarism. This mission of chivalric rescue demanded men and women assume their traditional positions as protector and protected, so a war fought well would showcase, bolster, or redeem the health of the American family." Such a narrative drew upon late nineteenth century beliefs "that war could serve as an incubator of personal growth and familial health;" and "that those measures of private virtue, so central to national strength, required renewal." Such sentiments also colored the way that private service organizations saw their own roles in assisting during the conflict, as "they channeled the power of familial devotion and the war's chivalric meaning to serve those ends."<sup>103</sup> Huebner cites a YMCA poster that proclaimed that "Your Mother has been Unselfish and Devoted to you," and threateningly asked: "WILL YOU be Worthy of Her? Protect the honor of all women and girls."<sup>104</sup> The strategy of using chivalric hero narratives about the protection of women to cultivate a "will to fight" offers a more compelling explanation for the CTCA's approach to recreation than that given by much of the scholarship on the CTCA, which has taken the Commission at its own word, and concluded that the reason that these programs facilitated engagement between women and soldiers was because they needed to "distract" or "divert" soldiers from immoral or unhealthy sexual encounters with other women.<sup>105</sup> While there can be no doubt that this was an important part of the CTCA's strategy—especially overseas—it is clear that, as Huebner's recent scholarship has shown, the need to boost men's motivation to fight in a foreign and faraway war also played a significant role.

To properly wield both the moralizing and motivating influences of soldiers' private attachments, and to prevent any counterproductive, "demoralizing" or "dissipating" social conduct, the CTCA sought to mediate, as much as possible, between soldiers and their friends, acquaintances and families by structuring the conditions under which they visited and communicated. One of the ways that it did this was by establishing, in many of the larger

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<sup>103</sup> Huebner, *Love and Death in the Great War*, 1, 4, 100.

<sup>104</sup> Quoted in Elizabeth Alice Clement, *Love For Sale: Courting, Treating, and Prostitution in New York City, 1900-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 156, cited in Huebner, *Love and Death in the Great War*, 100.

<sup>105</sup> Brandt, *No Magic Bullet*, 59; Nancy Bristow argues that the CTCA made a strategic decision to allow men and women to interact in supervised and structured environments, such as dances, in YWCA Hostess Houses, and other chaperoned settings. If the CTCA and the various civic organizations that served under its command were willing to allow troops to interact with women, Bristow claims, this was as part of a harm reduction approach. Much to the dismay of more traditional members of the communities they worked in, she explains, rather than altogether banning the social interaction between troops and the women of the communities adjacent to war camps, the CTCA thought that "[i]t was the careful provision of recreation, with the orchestrated meeting of boys and girls in clean and wholesome leisure, that could best prevent disaster." Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 61.

training camps, YWCA-run “Hostess Houses” in which training doughboys could, in Fosdick’s words, “meet their families and their girls under normal homelike conditions.”<sup>106</sup> The houses were staffed by an average of five YWCA “hostesses,” who greeted visitors, served food and drinks, and, crucially, supervised the conduct of soldiers and their female visitors.<sup>107</sup> The controlled and supervised environments of hostess houses were the only place where soldiers could receive guests in the camps, as women were not otherwise permitted in military camps, unless they worked or volunteered for the service organizations. The CTCA, who were aware that the houses would likely be used by soldiers who were courting or visiting with women with whom they were romantically engaged, was anxious that the flirtations of soldiers and their female visitors not be permitted to be taken too far—a worry that the YWCA clearly shared.<sup>108</sup> Within the hostess houses, the YWCA explained in a statement on their war work, that “[n]o dancing is permitted, not any concerts or plays or entertainments given, because the Hostess House is not intended for entertainment. It is the place where the women who come to visit their men may find quiet and uninterrupted opportunity for conversation, and nothing should happen in the house to interfere with its service.”<sup>109</sup> As one poster exclaimed, the Hostess Houses brought “A bit of Home Within the Camps,” as they welcomed soldiers, sailors, and their “women guests.” (See Figure 2.14) According to Fosdick, the Hostess Houses had a “profoundly normalizing influence” on the men and women who visited them.<sup>110</sup>

Part of the effect of the Hostess Houses was their architectural design and decoration. The hostess houses were designed by female architects such as Julia Morgan, Fay Kellogg, and Katharine Cotheal Budd to look like idealized middle-class homes, and featured architectural and decorative signifiers of domesticity—design choices that the YWCA made deliberately.<sup>111</sup> (See Figures 2.15 & 2.16) The influence of these curated, exemplary domestic environments was, by design, to be a maternal one, and observers of the houses praised them for bringing a “traditional feminine treatment of environment” to the otherwise harsh male environments of the war camps, as Estelle Frances Ward glowingly wrote in the decorating

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<sup>106</sup> Fosdick, *Chronicle of a Generation*, 150; by August, 1918, there were hostess houses in forty training camps, eight aviation fields, and in thirteen American cities. “YWCA Hostess Houses,” August 3, 1918, Young Women’s Christian Association of the U.S.A. records, Box 703, Folder 16, Sophia Smith Collection of Women’s History, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

<sup>107</sup> “Statement of the Work of the War Work Council of the National Board of the National Board of the Young Women’s Christian Associations,” November, 1918; Y.W.C.A.; General Correspondence File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 24, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 10.

<sup>108</sup> Cynthia Brandimarte, “Women on the Home Front,” *Winterthur Portfolio*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (Winter 2008), 205-6.

<sup>109</sup> “Statement of the Work of the War Work Council,” 11.

<sup>110</sup> Fosdick, *Chronicle of a Generation*, 150.

<sup>111</sup> Brandimarte, “Women on the Home Front,” 207.

# SOLDIERS-SAILORS And Women Guests



## WELCOME To the Y. W. C. A. HOSTESS HOUSE

"A bit of Home  
Within the Camps"

**Figure 2.14:** YWCA poster promoting Hostess Houses to soldiers and sailors, and promising "A bit of Home Within the Camps"—a place to visit with "women guests."



**Figures 2.15 & 2.16:** These ca. 1918 images of the YWCA Hostess House at Camp Johnston in Florida show the lengths that the YWCA went to bringing domestic-style architecture into the training camps. For more extensive imagery of the Hostess Houses, see Brandimarte, “Women on the Home Front: Hostess Houses During World War I.”

magazine *The House Beautiful*.<sup>112</sup>

Another way in which the CTCA sought to mediate the relationships between soldiers and their friends, families and sweethearts was by encouraging a high volume, and a specific type of correspondence. The morale theorists believed that contact with “home folks” would have a beneficial effect on soldiers’ morale, especially because many of them had never been away from home before. The letter from home, in this thinking, and could restore the moral influences of the soldier’s familial ties and his community. G. Stanley Hall insisted that “the very closest relation be maintained with home and with friends”—a mandate that mostly implicated women. “Mother, sister, sweetheart, and wife now have the opportunity to make their influence more effective in keeping [the soldier] loyal and pure,” he reasoned. Through the use of “frequent and wise letters, gifts and reminders,” the women in the soldier’s life would remind the soldier of his familial ties.<sup>113</sup> Yet it was not merely a steadying effect that the morale theorists hoped contact with “home folks” would have. As Andrew Huebner has argued, “[h]ome folks gave war purpose,” and the morale theorists knew this better than anyone.<sup>114</sup>

The CTCA’s leaders hoped that correspondence would, in addition to keeping the soldier “straight,” continually motivate him to fight on behalf of those he left behind. In a November, 1918 address in support of a major fundraising campaign to support the soldiers through demobilization, Fosdick spoke directly about the influence that women’s letters had on the men fighting overseas. In his speech, Fosdick told the story of a time when he helped to bury three marines in France:

Those boys all lost their lives as they charged a German machine gun base. They had almost reached the place, they had almost reached the gun, when their lives were snuffed out. And I remember that the identification tag of one of the soldiers seemed to have been shot away, and the burial squad went thru [sic.] his pockets hunting for a mark of identification. The only thing they found was a letter so worn and torn and thumbed that it was almost illegible, and they gave it to me to decipher. It was a love letter, and it was signed simply with the name ‘Helen,’ and there was nothing in it that could identify either the writer or the recipient. And I remember that at the end the girl wrote: ‘I almost wish you had not told me you were in the front line trenches, and yet down deep in my heart I know I would not have you anywhere else. I pray constantly for your safety. You have my

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<sup>112</sup> Estelle Frances Ward, “Bringing Home to the Army Camps,” *The House Beautiful*, Vol. 45 (February, 1919), 76. While many military leaders were skeptical about the hostess houses, Fosdick reported, “based on a general dislike of having women ‘cluttering up the army,’ we tried it out at the training camp at Plattsburg, where it was an immediate and dramatic success. ‘Someday you will wear a halo,’ said a gruff old general to the Y.W.C.A. hostess, as he admitted his conversion to the ‘newfangled feminism’ which he had strongly opposed; and the news spread so rapidly that soon I began to receive indignant telegrams from commanding officers in the various camps, the general tenor of which was: ‘Where is my hostess house?’” Fosdick, *Chronicle of a Generation*, 150.

<sup>113</sup> Hall, *Morale*, 106.

<sup>114</sup> Huebner, *Love and Death in the Great War*, 103.

love always.' So we buried the young soldier where he fell, and we put back in his pocket the letter from Helen, that her love might glorify him in his grave as it had inspired him in his last fight. . . . Oh, you women of America, I don't believe that any women in the history of the civilization of the world have ever been as idealized as you are idealized tonight by the American Expeditionary Forces. Those boys over there are thinking in terms of you, they are dreaming about you, they are living for you, they have been fighting for you, they have been dying for you. And it is to you, the 'Helens' of America, that these boys are coming back home when the war is done, and you will have it in your power as women to make and shape the man-power of America for a generation to come."<sup>115</sup>

Fosdick's remarks vividly rendered what he and his agency saw as the ideal relationship between correspondence with women at home, and the men's motivation to take risks and make sacrifices as soldiers. The "thumbed" letter indicated the depth and frequency of the soldier's infatuation with the letter's writer. Her words, about how she "would not have you anywhere else" but on the front lines, indicated a relationship in which she expected the slain marine to be a hero. The soldier's final act of charging a German machine gun position, motivated—in Fosdick's imagination, at least—by love and an idealization of her, indicated a desperate attempt to live up to those expectations. Women, in the CTCA's chairman's perspective, were ultimately the thing that men were "dying for" in France.

Soldiers' actual experiences do corroborate aspects of this ideal. The personal accounts of soldiers serving with the AEF testify to the "steadying influence" and the motivational aspects of home correspondence. A soldier named Joseph Rizzi recounted the swaying power of correspondence in his war memoir, recalling that one evening, in the town of Gerardmer, he had "ended up in a place filled with soldiers, women and wine," and that he had felt tempted by the French women there, who "were not hard to look at." While some of his fellow soldiers proceeded to "cozay" with the women, he pondered whether he should do the same. "Fortunately," he explained,

a day or so before . . . received a letter from my sweetheart with her picture and as I sat there wondering, I recalled her picture and letter. All of this became repulsive to me and I became disgusted with myself, cussing myself for a fool. I immediately got up and excused myself from the gang.

After this, he reported "feeling good and was very much elated at myself for having conquered my feelings." He then went, sat atop a hill, "and took out my girl's picture and letter, kissing both. . . . As I think back at [*sic.*] that moment I still thank God for his grace of that evening for today I

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<sup>115</sup> Raymond Fosdick, "Address by the Hon. Raymond B. Fosdick," Liberty Hut, Washington, D.C., November 16, 1918; Raymond Blaine Fosdick Papers; Box 23, Folder 7; Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 7-8.

have two of the finest boys and an adorable girl that [*sic.*] any man can have.” Elsewhere in his memoir, Rizzi wrote of the motivation he derived from looking at images of his mother and his sweetheart.<sup>116</sup> Another soldier wrote in a letter to his sister that “I’ve got a bunch of letters in my pocket that are dirty and falling apart. They are the letters I have received from you, and the rest of the family. I almost know each one, word for word, ‘cause I’ve read and re-read them so often. They are the ones that have kept me going until new ones come.”<sup>117</sup> As another soldier wrote to his family, “it puts new life in us to know the folks back home are backing us up and appreciating the sacrifice we are making.”<sup>118</sup>

To encourage the soldiers to write home, YMCA huts and tents offered free envelopes and paper with the YMCA letterhead on it. Here, the CTCA’s leaders believed, female canteen workers in YMCA huts and cantonment played a salutary role as well. These officials believed that canteen workers acted as a cipher for the women back at home.<sup>119</sup> Luther Gulick—whose own daughter worked in an AEF cantonment—thought that the women working in the huts would remind the troops of the women he left at home. When a soldier would go to the huts to write letters home on YMCA-provided paper, Gulick speculated,

[m]ost of the time he isn’t writing, but he is thinking, an he is looking at the woman [working behind the counter of the YMCA hut], or rather I should say, he is looking beyond the woman to his own women for whom she stands, and he sees his mother, or the other one to whom he writes, through the lens of her personality. I know of no force so effective in maintaining the fine ideals of life as this one. . . . The main service that these women give is not handing out tea and coffee . . . it is just in the fact that they are there, and that they are wholesome, attractive women.<sup>120</sup>

All in all, the CTCA both encouraged, and exploited the soldiers’ controlled contact with women—whether through correspondence, in visits in the Hostess Houses, at dances, or in YMCA canteens. The soldiers, for their part, greatly valued this contact with women, and mentioned it

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<sup>116</sup> Joseph N. Rizzi, *Joe’s War: Memoirs of a Doughboy*, Richard A. Baumgartner, ed., (Huntington, WV.: Der Angriff Publications, 1983), 64-65, 140.

<sup>117</sup> Quoted in Monica J. Cronin, “U.S. Combat Morale in the World Wars: the European Theater of Operations,” (Undergraduate Honors Thesis, William & Mary, 2017), 50.

<sup>118</sup> George Waring Huston, letter to Nellye Huston, June 20, 1918, quoted in Huebner, *Love and Death in the Great War*, 126.

<sup>119</sup> Hubner, *Love and Death in the Great War*, 206.

<sup>120</sup> Gulick, *Morals and Morale*, 72.

frequently in their letters to family members—family members who themselves were, most of the time, women and girls.<sup>121</sup>

## Conclusion

According to Peter Bailey, the “managed arousal” of parasexuality holds the key to making sense of the “largely unexamined phenomenon of glamour.” Glamour, in his usage, describes “alluring charm or fascination, often based on illusion, that transforms or glorifies a person or thing.” Central to this conception is the enforcement of distance—a distance that tends to be produced and maintained by some form of mechanism: a stage or bar top; a shop window; a screen, etc. “Distance not only sustains and protects the magical property that is commonly recognised in glamour, but also heightens desire through the tension generated by the separation of the glamour object and the beholder, a separation that also functions to limit the expression or consummation of desire.”<sup>122</sup>

In his autobiography, Fosdick fondly recalled Woodrow Wilson, when he was the president of Princeton University, retorting to “the mother of one of his students [who] urged him to make Princeton a coeducational institution. ‘Why?’ he asked. ‘To remove the false glamor with which the two sexes see each other,’ she replied. ‘My dear madam,’ Wilson shot back, ‘that is the very thing we want to preserve at all costs!’”<sup>123</sup> While Fosdick did not relate this anecdote to his work with the CTCA, it is easy to see the connection. The morale theorists had emphasized how a certain degree of enforced distance between men and women, paired with controlled forms of contact, was likely to lead them to idealize each other. The logic here was simple. The social encounters and contact enflamed desire, while limitations prevented that desire from reaching a conclusion. Deprived of consummation, men’s and women’s desire for each other would become immense, profound, and quasi-spiritual—all because there was no release. As one theorist put it: “Why should we dream of that which we possess?”<sup>124</sup> Following the same logic, the CTCA brought men and women together in a highly controlled way in order to create a “false glamor” that the War Department could channel into a will to fight in the war amongst the men.

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<sup>121</sup> Any random sample of soldiers’ letters will reveal this, but the correspondence of George H. Rehn and Walter G. Shaw, both transcribed and digitally available by email with the archivists at the National WWI Museum and Memorial, Kansas City, MO., reveal that the women and girls that the men met at dances, as well as the women they knew before they enlisted, took up a large proportion of their attention while they were training and overseas.

<sup>122</sup> Peter Bailey, “Parasexuality and Glamour: the Victorian Barmaid as Cultural Prototype,” *Gender & History*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Summer, 1990), 152.

<sup>123</sup> Fosdick, *Chronicle of a Generation*, 49.

<sup>124</sup> Harold Goddard, *Morale* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1918), 109. See also Hocking, *Morale and Its Enemies*, 170.

This parasexual management of desire among the soldiers required, in the first place, a massive apparatus to police and control their access to sex, resulting in the imprisonment of thousands of women and girls, and a drastically expanded state apparatus for surveilling and controlling the nation's leisure spaces. The government's efforts to contain sexuality during the war fundamentally altered the recreational landscape of American cities, as red light districts permanently shuttered, and municipalities adopted strict regulations and permitting systems for establishing commercial venues.<sup>125</sup>

The military's parasexual motivational strategy also involved a remaking of sexual desirability standards, as the CTCA's civilian-run agencies idealized sexually self-restrained men and women. As men and women experienced the prolonged, and perpetually-frustrated pangs of desire, the morale theorists and some CTCA leaders hoped, they would come to expect and prefer partners who were physically unavailable to them. By encouraging men, and especially women, to be discerning about their partners, wartime leaders hoped to motivate effort and commitment among soldiers and civilians. What the YWCA's "social morality" program in particular demonstrates is that sexual gatekeeping has a history. Concerted effort went into the mass internment of nonconforming women, and the massive campaigns to encourage women to be more selective, and the reasons that leaders like Anna Brown gave for this may offer insight into why many women relate to sex and sexual advances through the prism of respect.<sup>126</sup> To have sex, in this logic, was to devalue oneself, and to proposition a woman for sex was to indicate that one did not see her as valuable. Relatedly, Brown's lectures offer insight into the importance of parasexual logic within sexual desirability standards and hierarchies among men and women. In the heterosexual economy of desire sketched out in these lectures, desirable women had to be both passive, and highly selective, whereas deserving men were not meant to proposition women for sex, and should put effort, commitment, and self-improvement on the line if he expected any success. These dictates offered the basic rules of a highly stratified and scarcity-oriented sexual economy.

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<sup>125</sup> Timothy J. Gilfoyle, *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790-1920* (New York: Norton, 1992), 313.

<sup>126</sup> For a theorization of sexual choosiness in contemporary society, see see Eva Illouz's reflections on so-called "architectures of choice." Here, Illouz argues that people are compelled to evaluate various risks, engage in emotional "self-consultation," weigh a wide variety of social and cultural considerations before engaging in sexual activity. The frameworks by which people do this are determined, to a large degree, by the social rewards and sanctions within one's community (and the "moral ecology" of that community), one's place in status hierarchies, and the status of their prospective partner(s). Eva Illouz, *Why Love Hurts* (Cambridge: Polity, 2012), 18-23, 90-97.

### Chapter 3: “The Eyes of the World Will Be Upon You”: The Morale Branch, Sexual Motivation and the Optics of Performance

From the beginning of the American entry into the conflict, military leaders insisted that it would take more than brute force to win the war, and that discipline, efficiency, and motivation on the part of the soldiers were just as important. As the Secretary of War Newton D. Baker stressed, no amount of equipment, weaponry or money could make up for a lack of mental vigor and determination among soldiers.<sup>1</sup> In the spring of 1918, War Department officials, military officers, and prominent academics and psychologists working for the Committee on Public Information (CPI) gathered in a series of conferences to create a dedicated morale agency that could standardize and direct the work of the Commission of Training Camp Activities (CTCA) and foster the development of both “civilian morale” and “military morale.” The resulting agency was the Military Morale Section (MMS), which was renamed the Morale Branch in October 1918, during the peak of American fighting.

The chapter explores how the agency developed a close relationship with other agencies, such as the CTCA and the CPI, utilizing both agencies to fulfill its objective of motivating soldiers to fight. The CTCA was especially helpful for the morale agency’s goal of bolstering soldiers’ morale, since the CTCA’s constitutive private organizations were able, through their on-the-ground presence, to curate social experiences, enforce sexual chastity, and disseminate propaganda to soldiers. The morale agency also directly produced propaganda, and this chapter analyzes in particular the newspaper content that the agency’s staff writers produced for the YMCA-produced military camp newspaper *Trench and Camp* and the transport newspaper *Going Over*—publications that the morale agency exercised increasing control over as the war progressed. At the heart of the military’s morale strategy was a parasocial and parasexual motivational strategy that sought to influence soldiers by making them see their future sexual and romantic prospects as being served by their bravery on the battlefield. This strategy sought to make the soldiers feel personally invested in the war by convincing the soldier that there would be social rewards if he played a heroic role in the war (and social sanctions if he didn’t)—leveraging his home community and promises of future happiness and fulfillment to get him to relate to the war in aspirational ways.

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<sup>1</sup> Newton D. Baker, “Introduction,” in George Creel, *How we advertised America; the first telling of the amazing story of the Committee on public information that carried the gospel of Americanism to every corner of the globe* (New York: Harper and Brother, 1920), xii, xiii.

## **“A systematic plan for the psychological stimulation of troops”: Origins and Contours of the Military Morale Section and the Morale Branch**

In May, 1918, more than a year into the American entry into the war, a group of officials from various military and civilian agencies came together to form a dedicated morale agency to lead the military’s motivational efforts. The establishment of this evolving morale agency began in the early months of 1918, when numerous military and civilian agencies and individuals approached the War Department’s Chief of Staff to suggest the founding of an agency explicitly dedicated to making the soldiers more driven, dedicated, resilient and efficient.<sup>2</sup> One of these parties was Colonel Edward Lyman Munson—a medical officer with a specialization in preventive medicine who would go on to become the Director of the agency’s final incarnation—the Morale Branch. Before the war, Munson had been an instructor of sanitation, and a pioneer of so-called “sanitary tactics,” exploring how the military’s medical apparatus could contribute to the psychological and motivational resolve of soldiers. In a pioneering 1910 book entitled *A Study in Troop Leading and Management of the Sanitary Service in War*, and coauthored with John Morrison—another of the men who suggested the formation of a morale agency to the War Department—the pair argued that “troops stood better under fire and fought more courageously” when they knew that there was a system of first aid that would look after them if they were wounded in combat. They also argued that first aid workers should “promptly” remove “the disabled away from the observation and knowledge of their uninjured comrades” so as to prevent “that sensation of gloom and foreboding which, once established among troops, would very materially contribute to panic and disaster,” undermining their will to fight.<sup>3</sup> Here, Munson and Morrison were already thinking about the fundamentals of a morale apparatus, which relied just as much on the optics of support as it did on the material provision of that support.

Munson went on to be stationed in the Philippines from 1913 to 1915, and, in 1916 was deployed on the Mexican border under General Pershing during the Mexican Expedition against Pancho Villa.<sup>4</sup> Being stationed in these locations likely made a profound impact on him—especially as a sanitary officer—since, particularly along the Mexican border in 1916, so-called

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<sup>2</sup> Capt. Randolph C. Shaw and 1st Lieutenant J. L. Bennett, “Military Morale Work: A History of Its Institution and Development in the United States Army,” enclosed in memorandum from R. J. Burt to the Chief of the Historical Branch of the General Staff, Sep. 20, 1919; W. D.—History of the Morale Branch; Records of the Historical Section Relating to the History of the War Department, 1900-41; Record Group 165; Box 131, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 9.

<sup>3</sup> Dale C. Smith, “Edward Lyman Munson, M.D.: A Biographical Study in Military Medicine,” *Military Medicine*, Vol. 164, No. 1: 1 (1999), 3-4; Edward L. Munson, *The Principles of Sanitary Tactics: a handbook on the use of medical department detachments and organizations in campaign* (Menasha, WI.: Press of Banta Publishing Co., 1911); John F. Morrison and Edward Lyman Munson, *A Study in Troop Leading and Management of the Sanitary Service in War* (Fort Leavenworth, KS.: Ketcheson Printing Co., 1910), 3-4.

<sup>4</sup> Smith, “Edward Lyman Munson,” 4.

“sexual immorality” was rife, venereal infection rates were high, and the War Department, newly headed up by the progressive reformer Newton D. Baker, became highly invested in eliminating prostitution and drunkenness in and around military camps.

In early March, 1918, Munson—now working in the Office of the Surgeon General as the Chief of the Training Division—first submitted a proposal to the Training Committee of the Chief of Staff insisting on the “need for a systematic plan for the psychological stimulation of troops.”<sup>5</sup> When that request went unanswered, Munson and military psychologist Robert M. Yerkes—who had endorsed Munson’s proposal to the Chief of Staff and who, as president of the American Psychological Association (APA), had been behind the APA’s own earlier petition to the Chief of Staff for a morale agency—held the first of three informal conferences on morale on April 12, 1918, which brought together an impressively credentialed cast of men to strategize about the importance of a dedicated morale agency, and how to establish one.<sup>6</sup>

In mid-May, Baker approved the proposal, but it took several more weeks before the Military Morale Section was finally established as part of the Training and Instruction Branch, and headed by Captain G. B. Perkins. In June, the Morale Section was transferred to the Military Intelligence Branch (a sub-branch within the General Staff of the army), and it was at that point that the work of the MMS truly got underway. A few months after this work commenced, on October 19th, the morale agency was reorganized and became its own branch of the General Staff, under the new name of the Morale Branch and headed by Munson.

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<sup>5</sup> Smith, “Edward Lyman Munson,” 4; Thomas M. Camfield, “‘Will to Win’—The U.S. Army Troop Morale Program of World War I,” *Military Affairs*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Oct., 1977), 125. There had already been several attempts to found a morale agency within the War Department: Munson himself had submitted his first proposal prior to the US entry into the conflict, in January 1917; the American Psychological Association had petitioned for a similar type of organization in April 1917; and, in February, 1918, Munson’s old colleague and collaborator Major General J. F. Morrison proposed a morale system based upon the German “Educational Service” system, whose basic contours had been revealed in an intercepted document. All prior proposals had been rejected or ignored, and by the time Munson’s proposal reached the Training Committee, it likely seemed to be a repeat of previously rejected plans, and therefore was not initially passed on to the the Chief of Staff. Camfield, “‘Will to Win,’” 125-126; Shaw and Bennett, “Military Morale Work,” 9.

<sup>6</sup> Among those present were Frederick P. Keppel, Assistant Secretary of War and “director of civilian relations” (and who would later go on to become president of the Carnegie Corporation); Raymond B. Fosdick, Chairman of the Commission on Training Camp Activities; Colonel Ralph H. Van Deman, Chief of the Military Intelligence Section, and informally known as the “Father of Military Intelligence”; Professor Guy Stanton Ford, historian and education expert with of the Bureau of Public Information; William Irwin, muckraker and Chief of the Foreign Department of the Bureau of Public Information; Arthur Bestor, historian and Bureau of Public Information official, and director of the Speaking Division, which was the committee in charge of YMCA lecturers; Walter Dill Scott, business psychologist and Director of Committee on Classification of Personnel in the Army (who would go on to be president of the American Psychological Association in 1919); Arthur U. Pope, philosophy professor and *pro tempore* secretary of the gathering, who would go on to lead the Committee on National Morale during the Second World War; and Munson and Yerkes—the latter of whom was Chief of the Division of Psychology of the Surgeon General’s Office. The Assistant Secretary of War Keppel recommended to the Assistant Chief of Staff General Graves that he should consider Munson’s proposal form the previous month. At this prompting, the Director of the War Plans Division, after reviewing the conference report and Munson’s proposal, forwarded the request to the Chief of Staff with an endorsement to proceed. The United States War Department, “General Orders No. 94,” October 19, 1918, W. D.—Morale Reports; Records of the Historical Section Relating to the History of the War Department, 1900-41; Record Group 165; Box 131 (Liason & Communication, Orders & Publications); National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

During its brief existence, the Military Morale Section, with its core staff of thirteen, engaged in a variety of activities to bolster troop morale. While their status as a subsection of the Intelligence Branch meant that the MMS had limited capacity to significantly affect military procedures or to place new personnel, they nevertheless managed to bring a rudimentary morale system to the war camps by endowing existing camp intelligence officers with morale-oriented responsibilities.<sup>7</sup> Intelligence officers ordinarily investigated threats of unrest, security threats coming from foreign agents, pacifist attempts to convince men to become conscientious objectors, the actions of disgruntled soldiers, and the sexual activities of soldiers and civilians in the towns adjacent to training camps. The MMS therefore likely assessed these men as being in an advantageous position to coordinate the local morale efforts among the soldiers in each of the various camps. The MMS also trained some commissioned officers on proper techniques for assessing and looking after the morale of the soldiers under their command.<sup>8</sup> They coordinated educational activities, directing and systematizing the activities of the CTCA service organizations. They worked with the Committee on Public Information, designing and disseminating propaganda directed at both soldiers and civilians. Perhaps most importantly, they intervened in the series of camp newspapers published by the YMCA.<sup>9</sup>

In the interim between the founding of the Military Morale Section and the Morale Branch, Munson trialed an expanded model for morale work at Camp Greenleaf in Georgia. From their arrival in camp until their deployment in France, Munson's morale program sought to shape enlistees' entire experience in the training camps by coordinating camp activities and social conditions with the CTCA, and the relationship that soldiers had with their families and the surrounding towns and cities. In this model, Munson placed local "morale officers" in charge of overseeing all aspects of camp life that he deemed could have a bearing on morale. These officers received reports on the conditions of morale in specific companies from "morale sergeants" who oversaw morale at the company level. These officers worked together to ensure that social conditions and training programs in the camps contributed to an "increase of contentment and efficiency of the individual soldier."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Fred Fisher, letter to Intelligence Officer, Eastern Department, Oct. 24, 1918, Eastern Department, 1918-1919; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs; Reports Received from Morale Officers in Territorial Departments and Other Commands, 1918-21; Record Group 165; Box 1; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>8</sup> Military Morale Section, "Morale in the Army," c. June, 1918, Morale Material for Bulletins in Preparation, General Correspondence ("Subject") File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs; Record Group 165; Box 8, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 2.

<sup>9</sup> Military Morale Section, "Weekly Report," July 12, 1918, Morale Material for Bulletins in Preparation, General Correspondence ("Subject") File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs; Record Group 165; Box 8, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 2.

<sup>10</sup> Shaw and Bennett, "Military Morale Work," 11-12.

With the founding of the Morale Branch in October, 1918, Munson implemented these systems generally across all of the camps. The Morale Branch dispatched to, and/or promoted local morale officers within, each of the camps, and instructed these officers to gather information in order to ascertain “the existing state of morale in the body of troops,” from sources such as the Military Police, officers in charge of athletics and intelligence, chaplains, inspectors and CTCA civic organizations such as the YMCA, and to report to the commanding officer of the camp “as to any conditions or tendencies arising in the camp or surrounding territory which may, if not corrected, affect morale unfavorably.”<sup>11</sup> The Morale Branch also instructed morale officers “to keep thoroughly informed as to the best available methods of forming and maintaining sound morale in an army,” with this information to be derived from the Morale Branch’s regular circulars, and to use this to instruct the military officers and the CTCA’s service organizations on how best to carry on their operations.<sup>12</sup>

The morale agency’s leaders viewed the CTCA as part of a broader morale apparatus, which it coordinated and controlled. For this reason, throughout their existence, the MMS and the Morale Branch worked closely with the CTCA, incorporating the work of its private organizations into their overall morale strategy. According to a memo on the morale agency, the MMS was preoccupied with “stimulating” morale, largely through “coordinat[ing] the efforts of all the non-military cooperating agencies which have a bearing on morale,” such as the YMCA, the Red Cross, the Knights of Columbus, the Salvation Army, and others.<sup>13</sup> The morale agency stipulated how these organizations were to work with and communicate to the soldiers.<sup>14</sup>

The directives coming from the Morale Branch were welcomed by the CTCA’s chairman Raymond Fosdick—who had been present at the first informal conference on morale, and who himself increasingly saw the CTCA’s role as being in support of morale. Fosdick voiced his support of military agencies directing the private organizations of the CTCA, and eventually even suggested that in the event of future conflicts, the military should provide for soldiers’ morale directly, and eliminate the role of private organizations altogether. Fosdick supported the

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<sup>11</sup> Morale Branch, “Morale Circular No. 1: Suggestions for Morale Officers”; Morale Circular # 1; General Correspondence File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 8, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 6-7.

<sup>12</sup> Military Morale Section, “Military Morale”; Morale Material for Bulletins in Preparation; General Correspondence File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 8, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 2. Shaw and Bennett, “Military Morale Work,” 17.

<sup>13</sup> Military Morale Section, “Military Morale,” 2.

<sup>14</sup> War Camp Community Service, *Keep ‘em Smiling! Handbook of War Camp Community Service: Policies, Fundamental Principles and Instructions* (New York: War Camp Community Service, Inc., 1910), National Recreation Association Records, Box 122, Playground Association of America—Publications, Social History Archives, University of Minnesota, 21. E. L. Munson, letter to the Liaison Officer of the CTCA, October 29, 1918, C.T.C.A., General Correspondence File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 17, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

Morale Branch's interventions into the Commission's affairs for two main reasons. The first was that he believed that competition between various private welfare organizations created wasteful redundancy (or "duplication of effort," as he called it). In a report to Secretary Baker on the performance of the CTCA organizations in improving morale among the American Expeditionary Forces, Fosdick lamented the prevalence of inter-agency competition (between, for example, the Protestant YMCA and the Catholic Knights of Columbus), and charged that this diminished the efficiency of the agency's mission of building up morale. Secondly, Fosdick was disparaging of these religious organizations' preoccupation with purity, which failed to resonate with soldiers (Fosdick thought that many of the men volunteering with the YMCA in particular were "utterly un-adapted" to the task of "mixing with our virile, red-blooded young soldiers") and, ultimately, missed the point of their work for the military. Fosdick's attitude toward the moralizing approach of the YMCA and Knights of Columbus points to the strategic—rather than moral—value that Fosdick believed sexual restraint and entertainment had within the military.<sup>15</sup>

The leaders of the morale agency looked upon all existing military officers and personnel as potential vectors of morale, and, with its newfound authority as a branch of the General Staff, the organization assigned morale-oriented tasks and responsibilities to these roles.<sup>16</sup> Finally, the Morale Branch instructed local morale officers to maintain a favorable representation of the camp, its soldiers, and its conditions in the local and military press.<sup>17</sup> Following the MMS, the Morale Branch continued to produce content and wield influence over the editorial policies and practices of the camp newspapers—an activity that the agency's leaders maintained as one of the most important activities that they were engaged in.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Raymond Fosdick, "Report to the Secretary of War on the Activities of Welfare Organizations Serving With the A.E.F.," enclosed in memorandum from Adjutant General Robert C. Davis to the Commanding General of the 3rd Army, February 14, 1919; G-3, G.H.Q., A.E.F. Library File; G-3 Library; Record Group 120; Box 75, 32, emphasis added. At Fosdick's suggestion, Baker elected to place control of the welfare, education and recreation activities directly into the hands of the army on September 15, 1919 by mandate of General Orders No. 109. Newton D. Baker, Circular No. 507, "Welfare of Soldiers"; October 18, 1919; Raymond Blaine Fosdick Papers; Box 23, Folder 7; Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University. Fosdick was not alone in viewing the CTCA's work as being fundamentally about supporting troop morale. In a letter to Fosdick, President Woodrow Wilson insisted on the centrality of CTCA organizations in aiding the "many essential matters of recreation and morale." "United War Work Campaign," October 21, 1918; YMCA; War College Division and War Plans Division, Subordinate Offices, Morale Branch; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 24, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 1.

<sup>16</sup> Morale Branch, "Morale Circular No. 2: Suggestions for Morale Officers: Description of Morale Agencies, and Their Coordination in a Typical Camp," December 1, 1918, W.D.—Morale Reports, Liaison & Communication, Orders & Publications, General Correspondence File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 131, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>17</sup> Morale Branch, "Morale Circular No. 1," 6-7.

<sup>18</sup> "It is apparent," the Morale Branch instructed in their second "Morale Circular," issued in December, 1918, "that the Morale Officer must maintain close and constant contact with whatever publications may exist at his camp. No other single agency available to him can be used so effectively to disseminate ideas or to exert a more direct influence upon the educational and informative aspects of morale work." Morale Branch, "Morale Circular No. 2," 17.

**“It is that which welds the souls of men in a common will to victory:” Definitions of  
Morale and the Cultivation of the Will to Fight**

In 1942, Fosdick exchanged letters with Cedric Larson—the author of the 1939 book *Words that Won the War* about the Committee on Public Information—in which Larson asked Fosdick about what his definition of morale was. While the dictionary defined it as “a condition affected by or dependent upon such factors as zeal, spirit, hope, confidence, etc.,” he answered, “the condition itself” was much more difficult to define. It was, he thought, a “psychological condition” affected by many factors in his physical environment, including food, communications from home, and leisure activities. But this was not all. “Another vital factor affecting morale has to do with the presence of women of one’s own kind,” he explained,

what the soldiers in France used to call ‘honest-to-God- American girls.’ Every Y.M.C.A. and Red Cross girl in France in the last war was easily worth twenty-five Y.M.C.A. or Red Cross men workers. I have seen the presence of a single Red Cross girl in an outfit of troops affect the entire psychological condition of the men, even when their only contact with her was a passing hello or a ‘Hi, Edith.’ The Army today, in bringing the girls into camps for dances, shows that it has grasped the significance of one of the fundamental psychological laws of men in training.<sup>19</sup>

While Fosdick’s response was vague about the actual psychological state of morale, he emphasized the importance of the men’s physical and social environments and sexual desire to instilling these feelings.

Fosdick’s answer resembled the various definitions that the Military Morale Section and the Morale Branch gave in their instructions for their morale officers during the First World War. As the MMS prepared for its new role as the military’s authority on issues concerning morale, the agency defined morale, like Fosdick, as an “elusive” and “intangible quality” that was “hard to define”—a quality that one recognized if they saw it, and whose absence was perhaps even more recognizable. And like Fosdick, they insisted that morale was more complex than standard dictionary definitions. The term, the MMS leaders explained, “is loosely used [to describe] any kind of good spirits.” Yet, they clarified,

[m]orale is not merely enthusiasm, or mental courage, or ‘pep,’ or the fighting spirit. It is all these things and more. It has a sterner element. It is that mental training and mental hardening which, in a body of troops, continues to function after everything else has broken. It is the quality which, in the trenches or in the charge, keeps things going at the

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<sup>19</sup> Raymond B. Fosdick, letter to Cedric Larson, June 9, 1942; Raymond Blaine Fosdick Papers; Box 3, Folder 14; Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University.

last desperate moment, when all of the external circumstances which would naturally create it have disappeared. In the individual we may call it 'sand,' or 'grit,' or 'backbone.' In the army it is the measure of group determination to succeed; it is that which welds the souls of men in a common will to victory; it is the mass consciousness of the high ideals of the cause and the eagerness to make any sacrifice to attain those ideals. It is not only the Will to Win, but it is the refusal to consider anything else possible. It is the collective character of the Army, made up of the Will to Win, the discipline which directs that Will, and the endurance necessary to carry it through to a conclusion.<sup>20</sup>

A later Morale Branch publication for local morale officers and other morale workers simplified this description into the following formula: morale was composed of a "triple chain of moral stamina, cheerfulness and willingness to suffer any sacrifice."<sup>21</sup> In a memo entitled "Plans for Control of Morale," the Military Morale Section claimed that "what constitutes ideal morale" was "Docility, Obedience [*sic.*], Patience, Cheerfulness" and a "[w]illingness and ability to see exactions and discomforts of military life as means to a great end." This, the authors thought, should result in "Bravery, Resolution, Energy in Offensive, Concentration on Ultimate Object, Faith in the Cause [and] Will to victory," as well as "Endurance, Willingness to Sacrifice, Unflinching determination to stick absolutely, even when apparently defeated."<sup>22</sup> These framings of morale describe it as much more than mood. In these definitions, morale combined mood, motivation, and a willingness to endure uncomfortable or dangerous experiences. Morale work, to be effective, could not simply lift spirits; it needed to both instill a deep determination to fight, and a form of attachment and aspiration that could be manipulated to direct this determination in specific ways.

The problem of wartime motivation was a major issue for all of the belligerent nations, but especially for the United States. Whereas the French and the British governments could mobilize their armies by pointing to the imminent threat of a German invasion, one of the morale planners, Arthur Upham Pope, wrote in a memo to the Assistant Secretary of War Frederick P. Keppel, the American population faced no such threat.<sup>23</sup> The American government needed an

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<sup>20</sup> Military Morale Section, "Military Morale," 1.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Kirby, "Morale Branch of General Staff of U.S. Army" for Haskin Syndicate, enclosed in letter from Thomas Kirby to Merlin Pew, February 14, 1919, Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications, 1918-21, Service Publications, Including Histories; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs; Record Group 156, Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 2-3.

<sup>22</sup> Military Morale Section, "Plans for Control of Morale," National Morale, B-File, M-N, General Correspondence ("Subject") File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs; Record Group 165, Box 22; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 1.

<sup>23</sup> Because the conflict was taking place so far away, "not all of our soldiers yet see how genuinely this is a War for national defense," the officers of the Morale Branch assessed to the Assistant Secretary of War as they made the case for a broad-reaching morale program. Arthur Upham Pope, memorandum for the Assistant Secretary of War, National Morale, B-File, M-N, General Correspondence ("Subject") File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs; Record Group 165, Box 22; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 2.

alternative means of moving men to lean into the war. Not only did the War Department need to overcome the hurdle of compelling young men to risk death, but they also had to grapple with the fact that many of these men were perturbed by the prospect of inflicting violence on others. The first *Morale Circular* diagnosed “cowardice,” conscientious objection and the “[f]ear of shedding blood” as three pervasive “individual maladjustments” that the morale agency would have to counter. “Most camps contain some supersensitive individuals,” the *Circular* explained, “who, though not lacking in passive courage, have an aversion for the sight of blood or for the idea of injuring or killing others.”<sup>24</sup> Another hurdle was that, among the soldiers, there was, as Raymond Fosdick lamented at the first Informal Conference on Morale in April, 1918, an “[i]gnorance and indifference concerning war aims”—a concern echoed by many of the other attendees. One conference participant—the author Will Irwin, of the Committee on Public Information—weighed in that many of the recruits were “[n]ot really sure [the] war has to be fought.”<sup>25</sup>

In a 1917 editorial for *The Military Surgeon* entitled “The Soul of an Army,” E. L. Munson laid out the problem, as he saw it, of grappling with the individual wills of soldiers when seeking to cultivate a “willingness to fight” in the army of a democracy. War demanded a subordination of individual will to that of the nation, and this tested the limits of the individualism touted by liberal democracies. Here, Munson confronted one of the central problems facing modernizing capitalist democracies: how to reconcile a democratic commitment to individual liberty and initiative with the complex demands of large organizations—military, governmental, civic and industrial alike—whose basic functioning required the subjugation of individual initiative to the dictates of complex, mechanistic cooperation.<sup>26</sup> On this matter, Munson was unequivocal: The requisite “cooperative efficiency” demanded what he called “mental standardization,” to be achieved through training, education, and propaganda, which would transform the individual’s will to align itself with the will of the nation’s leaders. This, he claimed, was the “proper state of mind” that “must be created before the individual man becomes part of the fighting machine. . . .

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<sup>24</sup> Morale Branch, “Morale Circular No. 1,” 15.

<sup>25</sup> Raymond Fosdick and Will Irwin, in “Report of Informal Conference on Morale,” April 12, 1918, W. D.—Description of Morale Agencies, and their coordination in a typical camp; Records of the Historical Section Relating to the History of the War Department, 1900-41; Record Group 165; Box 131 (Liason & Communication, Orders & Publications); National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 1-2.

<sup>26</sup> As Robert Westbrook has pointed out, the demand that men die fighting on behalf of a nation-state presents a paradox for liberal democracies. War stretches the liberal subject’s obligation to the state insofar as it asks him to fight and to potentially die protecting the state whose legitimacy derives precisely from its own promise to protect *him*. To get around this contradiction, the state must make “an appeal to go to war to defend *private* interests and discharge *private* obligations”—an appeal that it makes through media campaigns invoking “[t]he moral contract binding protective men and protected women.” During wartime, Westbrook explains, the government must engage in “the cultural construction of women as objects of obligation” to drive men to enlist, train and risk their lives in battle. Robert B. Westbrook, “I Want a Girl, Just Like the Girl that Married Harry James: American Women and the Problem of Political Obligation in World War II,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (Dec., 1990), 588, 589, 596, 601 & 611.

All must be mentally molded into acceptance of a general type of military ideal, thought and determination.”<sup>27</sup> Morale, as a sort of substrate of the will, was at the center of this problem. If the morale of soldiers could be shaped, they would become enthusiastic about the conflict and their role within it. If their sentiments were allowed to proceed unchecked, the morale agency’s leaders thought, morale would present a potentially insurmountable threat.

A variety of obstacles stood in the way of achieving what Munson called the “mental standardization” that would lead to “cooperative efficiency.” Munson feared that unchecked sexual activity had the potential of steering soldiers away from collective responsibility. During his time on the US-Mexico border, Munson had witnessed the sexual liaisons of the soldiers, but he interpreted the consequences of their behaviors differently than other observers (those whose understandings have informed how historians made sense of the military’s sexual control programs).<sup>28</sup> What he worried about, above and beyond venereal disease or morality, was a diminished willpower resulting from “self interest and self comfort.” The comfortable man lacked motivation and willpower, and would “never fight under conditions of adversity,” Munson reasoned, resulting in what he called “an army without a soul.”<sup>29</sup>

There was a particular temporality to Munson’s diagnosis of motivation (and its destruction). Comfort and pleasure are immediate, present-oriented feelings—instant gratification. What Munson and others who theorized morale preferred were future-oriented feelings, particularly aspirations—deferred gratification. The comfortable, pleased soldier would not be motivated to meet his responsibilities and perform his duties because he had no need for future rewards. If this “self-indulgence” could be held at bay, Munson and other morale planners thought, then most of the remaining hurdles to morale, such as the fear of death or injury, the separate but related aversion to wounding or killing others, and an overall ignorance about the reasons for the war, might be overcome.<sup>30</sup> The precondition for making the war’s stakes feel personal to the soldier was to delay his gratification by policing his access to pleasure—especially sexual pleasure. With that in place, the morale agency could depend upon the soldier having an appetitive well of feelings, which the military could shape and draw upon.

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<sup>27</sup> E. L. Munson, “The Soul of an Army,” *The Military Surgeon*, Vol. 40 (1917), 71-72.

<sup>28</sup> For this interpretation, see Nancy K. Bristow, *Making Men Moral: Social Engineering During the Great War* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 5-6; Allan M. Brandt, *No Magic Bullet: A Social History of Venereal Disease in the United States Since 1880* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 56-57.

<sup>29</sup> Munson, “The Soul of an Army,” 73.

<sup>30</sup> Morale Branch, “Morale Circular No. 1,” 15. Fosdick lamented at the first Informal Conference on Morale in April, 1918, that an “[i]gnorance and indifference concerning war aims”—a concern echoed by many of the other attendees. Another conference participant—the muckraker and novelist Will Irwin, who was serving on the Committee on Public Information—weighed in that many of the military’s fresh recruits were “[n]ot really sure [the] war has to be fought.” Raymond Fosdick and Will Irwin, in “Report of Informal Conference on Morale,” 1-2.

At the first conference on morale, held on April 12, 1918 in Washington, Munson highlighted the importance of emotions in the morale agencies' educational campaigns, explaining that "[a]ll statements of facts and purposes, printed or spoken, must carry 'heart throbs' with them," and insisting that appeals "must be made to stir men's feelings and catch their imagination," appealing to aspirations, even while obscuring that this was their ultimate purpose.<sup>31</sup> According to the first Morale Circular, unless the "citizen soldier of a democracy" both understood and believed in the "principles underlying the policy of the government which he is called upon to defend on the battle field," he would "always potentially [be] dangerous to the morale of the unit to which he belongs." What the morale agencies needed to instill, the circular continued, was "*Conviction*."<sup>32</sup> By using sentimental appeals to inculcate aspirations in the soldiers, the morale leaders hoped that they could cultivate within the United States' democratic culture an unrivaled will to fight. Following this line of thought, Munson insisted in a memo to Secretary Keppel on the "Necessity of Systematic Effort to Generate and Sustain the Fighting Morale of [the] American Forces" that "[w]e must train not only to kill efficiently but to know as clearly as possible why the killing must be done." If such conviction could be established, then the democratic fighting force would be far superior to that of the authoritarian Central Powers. "Let tyranny put all its trust in force," Munson's memo concluded. "The hope of Democracy is in understanding."<sup>33</sup> In "a competition in morale," democracy could only win through the creation of "enduring moral enthusiasm."<sup>34</sup>

In an effort to inform the soldiers about the reasons for the conflict, the morale agency coordinated what they called "educational" opportunities for training cadets, offering explanations for the war. The agency sought to educate soldiers about the ideals of democracy, and tied its defense to the Allied cause in the war. The first Morale Circular instructed morale officers in each of the camps to instill a sense of "Patriotism and Loyalty" among the soldiers in their camps, and urged them to speak to soldiers about "why we are in the war, what caused it, etc.," using materials given to them by the Morale Branch. These discussions should focus more on ideals than on geopolitical details—on "aims of war rather than causes," and the Circular put it. "The conviction to be desired is one which is produced by knowledge of the purpose of the soldier's efforts"—the "good" their fighting was doing, and especially "the evil to be averted" by

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<sup>31</sup> Munson, in "Report of Informal Conference on Morale," 5, 8.

<sup>32</sup> Morale Branch, "Morale Circular No. 1," 5.

<sup>33</sup> Pope, memorandum for the Assistant Secretary of War, 6.

<sup>34</sup> The memo asserted that no amount of equipment could compensate for a lack of morale. "Indeed those who have thought about it are agreed that the decision rests not merely with guns, men, shells, finance or even ships but more than ever with moral conviction and high purpose, for without those no material preponderance can win this battle of standards." Pope, memorandum for the Assistant Secretary of War, 1, 5, 6.

winning the conflict.<sup>35</sup> But another side of the “educational” efforts of the morale agency, as the following sections explore, involved sentimental appeals in simulated women’s voices, urging them to fight to protect their families, loved ones, and the women and children of France and Belgium.

### **“The Army of Encouragement and Enthusiasm:” Civilian Women’s Contact and Commendation and the Willingness to Fight**

Morale leaders thought that the best way to instill enthusiasm in the soldier was by reaching him through the civilians in his life. The MMS and Morale branch therefore coordinated with the Committee on Public Information and the Red Cross’s Home Service program to influence the way that civilians thought about the war and related to soldiers.

The officers who staffed the Morale Branch and the Military Morale Section made a distinction between what they called “civilian” and “military” morale, and insisted on the important interdependence of the two. A soldier’s morale could be greatly influenced by the encouragement of family and sweethearts in letters and visits in the training camps’ Hostess Houses. Because of this interdependence, there was an urgent need to create “the right attitude on the part of [the soldier’s] ‘home folks’.”<sup>36</sup> How to create this “right attitude”—what the morale planners called “civilian morale”—was the topic of the third conference on morale in June, 1918, and shortly after the conference, Keppel placed the historian Guy Stanton Ford—who headed the Committee on Public Information’s Division of Educational and Civic Cooperation (a wartime subdivision of the American Newspaper Publishers Association’s Bureau of Advertising that directed propaganda at schools and universities)—in charge of looking after this important mission.<sup>37</sup> Mirroring George Creel’s convictions on the subject, Ford thought that there was an “equally important battle” to be fought “[b]ehind the men and the guns, behind the great armies and navies,” and “behind the trenches, in the homes, and in the shops” of the homefront—a “battle for men’s opinions and for the conquest of their convictions.” “The thing,” he explained, “that had to be built up was the morale of the fighting nations,” and this would require “new instrumentalities” of propaganda, utilizing “the printing press, the platform, the public schools, the advertising columns, the poster, the moving picture, the telegraph, the cable, and the

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<sup>35</sup> Morale Branch, “Morale Circular No. 1,” 20-21.

<sup>36</sup> Morale Branch, “Morale Circular No. 1,” 8, 11.

<sup>37</sup> “Third Conference on Morale,” June 20, 1918, W.D.—History of Morale Branch, G-4 Liason & Communication, Orders & Publications; Records of the Historical Section Relating to the History of the War Department, 1900-1941; Record Group 165; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 1-2. Guy Stanton Ford, letter to George Creel, August 24, 1918, CPI 3-A2; Creel, George, Division of Civic and Educational Cooperation, Correspondence and Memoranda Between Officials of Other Divisions and G. S. Ford, Nov. 1917-Dec. 1918; Records of the Committee on Public Information; Record Group 63; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

wireless.” And it was, he said, the CPI’s responsibility to mobilize public opinion and “create and sustain morale and to arouse a patriotism that could be translated into action.”<sup>38</sup>

The CPI attempted to whip up civilian morale through a wide variety of propaganda techniques, but one of the most straightforward ways was through advertisements in magazines and newspapers. In a sustained advertising campaign backing up the Morale Branch’s mission of securing the epistolary support of the men’s “home folks,” the CPI urged civilians to write “cheerful” and “encouraging” letters to soldiers.<sup>39</sup> As part of this campaign, the CPI ran an ad in 20 newspapers and magazines with a total circulation of 4,271,780 readers, in the fall and winter of 1918-19, entitled “Write Him Cheerful Letters.”<sup>40</sup> “The man you love is fighting for your security and happiness,” the advertisement read. “He is doing something that HAS to be done for your sake. The *more hopefully* you write, the *easier* for him—and the *quicker* he comes back. . . . Do your part to maintain this spirit, this courage.”<sup>41</sup> Here, the CPI’s framing paralleled the Morale Branch’s own framings in the Morale Circular, where the agency urged the commanding officers of training camps to send letters to the families of the men under their command, requesting that they, in turn, send letters to the soldiers encouraging them to endure the grueling training and repetitive schedule of military camp life, as well as the myriad dangers, hardships and boredom of deployment. “If you are proud of him,” the letter from the commanding officers to families ought to say, “tell him so; let him know that you are back of him. You, too, are a part of this Army—you are the Army of Encouragement and Enthusiasm. Write

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<sup>38</sup> Guy Stanton Ford, “America’s Fight for Public Opinion,” *Minnesota History Bulletin*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Feb., 1919), 4. George Creel put the matter similarly when recalled in his book about that agency, that “the war was not fought in France alone. Back of the firing-line, back of the armies and navies, back of the great supply-depots, another struggle waged with the same intensity and with almost equal significance attaching to its victories and defeats. It was the fight for the *minds* of men, for the ‘conquest of their convictions,’ and the battle-lines ran through every home in every country.” George Creel, *How We Advertised America*, 3.

<sup>39</sup> To remind soldiers’ “home folks” to write them letters, the CPI published leaflets, posters and flyers and ran a major advertising campaign in newspapers and magazines urging civilians to write to their soldiers to lift their spirits and commend them for their bravery and heroism. One flyer, entitled “What you can do to make life cheerful in camp and trench,” urged that “a cheering word helps him to ‘carry on’ and gives him new determination to fight for your protection and for those ideals which we all hold dear.” Committee on Public Information Division of Advertising, “What you can do to make life cheerful in camp and trench,” Advertising; General Correspondence File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Subordinate Offices, Morale Branch, Record Group 165; Box 17, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. The CPI’s efforts to get civilians to write letters to the soldiers mirrored Munson’s thoughts on the subject, as reflected in a memo to the CTCA suggesting that the YMCA add slogans to the bottom of the free stationery that they provided to soldiers “as a stimulus to morale,” with messages for their civilian recipients such as “Write the men at the front letters full of home news,” “This is a good, healthy, red-blooded life in the open,” and “This Army is full of the ‘Will to Win—back us up.’” Memorandum from E. L. Munson to the Commission on Training Camp Activities, October 21, 1918, YMCA, War College Division and War Plans Division, Subordinate Offices, Morale Branch; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 24, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>40</sup> Committee on Public Information, Advertisement placement statistics, enclosed in letter from Clarence A. Hope to Lieutenant F. Keeler, November 12, 1918, Advertising, B-File, A-C, General Correspondence (“Subject”) File, 1918-21, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs; Record Group 165, Box 17; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>41</sup> “Write Him Cheerful Letters” (CPI advertisement), *The National Weekly*, Vol. 2, No. 7 (October 26, 1918), 33.

letters filled with those things to Your Soldier, and you will help us to help him.”<sup>42</sup> Another CPI advertisement, entitled “Make him smile all the while” insisted that letter writers refrain from putting stress or strain on their beloved soldiers.<sup>43</sup>

The CPI’s advertisements demonstrate the extent to which the morale planners hoped to bolster the fighting will of soldiers by enlisting the support of his family members. They also represent the way that military propagandists hoped to leverage gender to the cause of motivating soldiers to fight. In their representation of the interrelated distinction between civilian and military duty, these ads offered a highly gendered division of responsibility.<sup>44</sup> Another version of the “Write Him Cheerful Letters” advertisement, entitled “Don’t write him doleful letters,” played up a masculine hero narrative, and insisted that civilians should be grateful for his protection, and that they owed him equanimity in exchange:

He is playing a man’s part—doing his ‘bit’ cheerfully and resolutely in training camp ‘over there’, because he knows that is the only way to keep the Kaiser’s brutal, murderous crew over there and away from his loved ones. . . . He knows that the thing he is helping to do has to be done, and he is glad to do his share because he is the MAN THAT HE IS—because he knows you will be glad and proud in the years to come that he did his duty LIKE A HERO.<sup>45</sup>

The CPI’s insistence upon the civilian population writing encouragingly would have been a major source of support; not only of the soldier’s happiness, but of the military’s goals, since it would strengthen his resolve, and urge him to relate to his family, friends, and sweetheart as their defender.

For extra support in ensuring that the letters from home were positive, the MMS enlisted the help of the Red Cross’s Home Service—another relationship that the agency formalized the

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<sup>42</sup> Morale Branch, “Morale Circular No. 1,” 11.

<sup>43</sup> Committee on Public Information Division of Advertising, “Make him smile all the while,” Advertising; General Correspondence File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Subordinate Offices, Morale Branch, Record Group 165; Box 17, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>44</sup> It is notable that the CPI’s insistence that civilians not trouble soldiers with the stresses of home life parallels the marital advice offered by the American social hygienists Winfield and Jeannette Hall to wives: “Never forget that, whatever your annoyances and distractions within the home may be, those to which [Your husband] will be subjected in his business are probably many times as great as any that you have to bear; so cultivate the custom of keeping your little household annoyances to yourself. If there are cares and worries don’t let them show upon your face, keep all the care lines smoothed out, meet [him] at the door every night with a happy, cheerful welcome, and minister to his comfort. . . . If you can succeed in doing this you will be making a great contribution—the wife’s natural contribution—to the happiness in your home.” Winfield Scott Hall and Jeannette Winter Hall, *A Manual of Sex Hygiene*, (Chicago: The Howard-Severance company, 1913), 46-47.

<sup>45</sup> “Don’t write *him* doleful letters,” enclosed in letter from the Committee on Public Information to Captain G. B. Perkins, August 17, 1918; Advertising; General Correspondence File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Subordinate Offices, Morale Branch, Record Group 165; Box 17, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

Third Conference on Morale on June 20, 1918.<sup>46</sup> The Red Cross created the Home Service program to provide relief work for American families whose breadwinners or other important family members had left home for military service. The program offered advice and assistance to some 250,000 families—many with children—helping them to enroll children in schools and advising on medical treatments and other aspects of parenting. Yet, in addition to providing material support families, the program’s leaders also sought, at the request of the MMS, to improve the morale of these families, in the hope that this would improve the soldiers’ motivation and drive. According to the Red Cross’s *Manual of Home Service*, which advised Home Service volunteers on how to carry out their work, military morale was contingent on the reduction of hardship at home. “Men may be the best soldiers in the world, but if things are not well with their families at home they lose efficiency through worry, and the morale of the army—that all-important factor—begins to fail.” To prevent this, the Red Cross insisted that it was “the patriotic duty . . . of Home Service Workers of the American Red Cross to care for the lonely families of our fighting men. . . . They *must* be encouraged to ‘carry on’ without faltering. Their families must not be allowed to bear personal privation and so to double the willing sacrifices they have made.”<sup>47</sup> A representative of the organization evaluated at the Third Conference on Morale that their interventions actually did “sustain the morale” of soldiers. As evidence of this, he quoted “a letter from a soldier stating, ‘I have heard that you have helped my wife. I can soldier better now.’”<sup>48</sup>

MMS memos also clearly reveal that the morale agency hoped that Home Service workers could be used to deliver propaganda directly to civilians to improve public perceptions of the war. One memo suggested that Home Service workers inform civilian families about “the reliability of our gas masks,” with the hope being that this would reassure them that the soldier’s welfare and safety were being taken seriously.<sup>49</sup> This mirrored a similar tactic used by the CPI in their ad campaigns, which calculated that civilian morale would be shored up if the CPI could reassure them that their soldier was being treated well and looked after by the military. To ease the concerns of the civilian letter-writers, the “Write Him Cheerful Letters” advertisement assured the public that the soldier they loved, while “his life is no bed of roses,” was well taken-care of and supplied with “wholesome food” and adequate “fighting equipment.”<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> “Third Conference on Morale,” 5-8.

<sup>47</sup> The American Red Cross, *Manual of Home Service*, Second Edition (December, 1917), 3.

<sup>48</sup> “Third Conference on Morale,” 6.

<sup>49</sup> Military Morale Section, “Morale in the Army,” 3.

<sup>50</sup> “Write Him Cheerful Letters,” *The National Weekly*, 33.

In all of these ways, the military's morale agency vied for the loyalty of civilians in order to secure interpersonal encouragement of the soldiers. This was a core part of the agency's strategy for making the impersonal war feel personal to the soldier.

### **“One of the greatest powers for increasing morale:” Military Morale and Camp Newspapers**

Whereas the Military Morale Section assigned to the CPI and the Red Cross's Home Service the task of cultivating civilian morale among the wider population, the MMS and the Morale Branch focused their own campaigns on securing morale within the ranks of the military. The morale agency's propaganda worked symbiotically with the messaging of the CPI, both to support the latter's efforts to secure civilian morale, and to capitalize on the CPI's motivating narratives for civilians. Toward this end, the MMS and the Morale Branch encouraged the continued expansion of YMCA lectures and educational film screenings. But perhaps most importantly, the morale agency used newspapers to “educate” soldiers about the importance of the war, and to motivate them to embrace their roles in it. As the War Department assessed in the fall of 1918, “no single activity of camp life, apart from the actual training for military duty is susceptible of being made more useful to the creation of morale, in its widest and most effective aspects, than a camp paper that accurately expresses both the life of the soldier and the aims and ideals of the Army.”<sup>51</sup>

As the next few sections explore, the Military Morale Section and the Morale Branch used newspapers to encourage and incentivize the young men in the training camps and on the ships en route to France to embrace their roles in the conflict. These morale agencies wrote stories, advised on the logistics, composition, and editorial policies of the newspapers, and exercised increasing discretion over the syndicated material published in these newspapers. Newspapers, as Julia Guarneri has demonstrated of civilian papers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, were essential guides for helping urban denizens to navigate the dynamic and expanding metropolises that they inhabited. Similarly, the military's camp newspapers gave advice and information designed to give soldiers a means of making sense of their spatial and social surroundings; it make these intelligible. Here, newspapers, far from being mere records or “repositories of information,” were used by the morale planners to wield

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<sup>51</sup> Quoted in William Howard Taft, et. al., *Service With Fighting Men: An Account of the Work of the American Young Men's Christian Associations in the World War*, Vol. 2 (New York: Association Press, 1922), 358.

agency.<sup>52</sup> As the primary newspaper editorial writer for the Morale Branch put it, newspapers themselves were “morale agent[s]”—a deserved description, since the morale agency used them to instill the same gendered sense of obligation and duty that other morale programs sought to create.<sup>53</sup>

Scholars have cited the importance of newspapers in promoting patriotism and spurring support for the war.<sup>54</sup> Robert Nelson has pointed out that military leaders saw newspapers as a way to “maintain and/or boost the morale and mood of all members of the army,” and to provide “explanations and justifications for the context, both political and moral, in which these men found themselves,” and to offer “ways of relieving boredom.” According to Alfred Cornebise, the American military used newspapers to boost military and civilian morale, to convince “the boys . . . that the United States is a place really worth fighting for,” to encourage women to treat their men in the service as heroes, and to chastise “slackers” and pacifists who failed to participate in the war effort. Yet no historians have fully explored the relationship between the military’s morale agency and the camp newspapers, or the methods that this agency used in drafting newspaper editorials to manipulate soldiers by stimulating a sentimentalized (and sexually-charged) sense of obligation.<sup>55</sup>

At the core of the morale agencies’ use of newspapers to motivate soldiers to fight was a persistent use of gendered emotional appeals of belonging and obligation to communities (both military and civilian), and the use of diegetic narrative devices to cultivate a sense of self-consciousness that would encourage the heroic performance of soldierly duties within an imagined plot line. The morale agency’s writers clearly designed their newspaper content to give the war and its burdens and risks a sense of personal, and aspirational meaning for the soldiers, and gender provided the perfect relational framework for this aspirational meaning.

The American military had a great variety of newspapers during the First World War, but the morale agencies chose to use a particular newspaper for disseminating their propaganda:

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<sup>52</sup> For an exploration of how social groups used newspapers to wield agency, see Julia Guarneri, *Newsprint Metropolis: City Papers and the Making of Modern Americans* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 4. For a discussion of the co-constitutive relationship between newspapers urban life, see Guarneri, *Newsprint Metropolis*, 54-101.

<sup>53</sup> Captain Thomas Kirby, letter to Major G. B. Perkins, January 10, 1919, Correspondence, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>54</sup> C. Peter Ripley, “Intervention and Reaction: Florida Newspapers and United States Entry into World War I,” *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 49, No. 3 (Jan., 1971), 255-267.

<sup>55</sup> Robert Nelson argues these points about the military newspapers of the European belligerents. Robert L. Nelson, “Soldier Newspapers: A Useful Source in the Social and Cultural History of the First World War and Beyond,” *War in History*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (April 2010), 180. See also Alfred Emile Cornebise, *Ranks and Columns: Armed Forces Newspapers in American Wars* (Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 1993), 69-72, 77, 91. While Cornebise mentions that “camp papers were often under the supervision of morale sections” and “district morale officer[s],” he not explain the extent or nature of this influence.

the YMCA's camp newspaper *Trench and Camp*. *Trench and Camp*, which, at the peak of its existence, had a circulation of 500,000, was technically a series of local camp newspapers containing a combination of local news stories written by camp YMCA secretaries (and any former newspaper men who were among the drafted men stationed in a particular edition's camp), and nationally-syndicated content written and edited by a main editorial staff in the YMCA's International and War Work Council headquarters in New York City.<sup>56</sup> The YMCA founded the system of newspapers at the suggestion of George E. Vincent, president of the Rockefeller Foundation, which supplied a major portion of the funding for the YMCA's war work, and therefore had a large amount of sway over the organization's activities.<sup>57</sup> In September, 1918, there were 36 editions of *Trench and Camp*, each with its own blend of local and syndicated content and its own format and design. Each major training camp had its own edition of the newspaper (some of which went by a different name), and typically these newspapers were printed by commercial newspaper companies based in cities and towns located in the vicinity of the camps.<sup>58</sup> The Editor-in-Chief of *Trench and Camp* was John Stewart Bryan—a newspaper tycoon from Richmond, Virginia who had close ties with both the Secretary of War Newton D. Baker and the Third Assistant Secretary of War Frederick P. Keppel.<sup>59</sup> Working under Bryan as managing editor was Percy T. Edrop—a chaplain who had previously been a Day Managing Editor at the *New York American*; and, as associate editor of the newspaper was a man named Louis A. MacMahon.<sup>60</sup> It was through Edrop and MacMahon that *Trench and Camp* primarily worked with the Military Morale Section. The YMCA, which founded and continued to maintain formal responsibility for the papers, increasingly yielded control of their content and organization to the MMS and the Morale Branch, who used these to shape narratives about

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<sup>56</sup> Taft, et. al., *Service With Fighting Men*, 358-59.

<sup>57</sup> Captain Edmund Hackett, letter to E. L. Munson, January 31, 1919, *Trench and Camp*, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 2, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 3.

<sup>58</sup> Camp Hancock, Georgia, for example, published its edition of *Trench and Camp* under the name of the *Augusta Herald*, whereas the Camp Kearny, California edition of *Trench and Camp* was published as *Trench and Camp* by the *Los Angeles Times*. "Matrix Service or Proofs Sheets from TRENCH AND CAMP," Correspondence, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>59</sup> Lieutenant T. C. DeFriez, letter to G. B. Perkins, August 29, 1918, Publications, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>60</sup> "Going Over" (memo), Publications, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. Lt. T. C. DeFriez, "Report on Work With Camp Publications," September 7, 1918, *Trench and Camp*, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 2, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 1.

what the war was being fought for, and how the soldiers perceived themselves as the on-the-ground prosecutors of the war.

Alongside *Trench and Camp*, the YMCA's War Work Council—at the beckoning of the MMS and the Morale Branch—published a newspaper entitled *Going Over* and a similar paper entitled *Coming Back*—papers that the military issued to soldiers at their port of embarkation to be read during the two-to-three-week voyage across the Atlantic (on their way to Europe, in the case of *Going Over*, and on their way back, in the case of *Coming Back*).<sup>61</sup> These were both published out of the *Trench and Camp* editorial office in New York, but both were actually projects of the morale agency. Like *Trench and Camp*, whose various editions tended to be printed for free by local newspapers, the transport newspapers *Going Over* and *Coming Back* were “printed free of charge by the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*.”<sup>62</sup> In addition to these, the Morale Branch directly produced a paper for wounded and convalescing soldiers entitled *The Come-Back*. Each of these newspapers sought to shape morale in specific ways during specific phases of the war's prosecution and aftermath, and as such, each offered distinct themes and emphases, which the MMS and Morale Branch played a central role in shaping. The newspapers demonstrate the extent to which the morale agency relied upon the YMCA (in a similar manner to how they relied upon other CTCA organizations) to carry forward their plans.<sup>63</sup>

In a July 12, 1918 weekly report, the MMS claimed that

[t]he possibilities of ‘Trench and Camp’—the syndicated soldiers’ paper—can be made one of the greatest powers for increasing morale. At present it seems none too well edited, especially the ‘boiler-plate’ pages which are supplied in common to all editions. As soon as liaison is established with the publishers, inspiring articles, stories which teach lessons ‘under cover’, and much similar material will be supplied. An effort will be made to secure for ‘Trench and Camp’, short articles from foreign officers visiting Washington.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Lt. T. C. DeFriez, letter to G. M. Husser, August 31, 1918, *Trench and Camp*, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 2, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. Taft, et. al., *Service With Fighting Men*, 360.

<sup>62</sup> “Going Over” (memo). As this memo explains, “The composition and printing is done free of charge by the various labor unions of the Eagle, each man devoting an hour each week to the work as patriotic service.”

<sup>63</sup> *Going Over*, for example, included notifications to soldiers about activities of the War Camp Community Service and the American Red Cross's Home Service, and the holistic message of the YMCA—which was omnipresent in the columns of these newspapers—was highly supportive of the MMS and Morale Branch's intended motivational narratives. *Going Over*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (August 26, 1918), The National WWI Museum and Memorial archives, Kansas City, MO., 2.

<sup>64</sup> Military Morale Section, “Weekly Report,” July 12, 1918, Morale Material for Bulletins in Preparation, General Correspondence (“Subject”) File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs; Record Group 165; Box 8, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 2.

The morale agency's interventions into the paper were made easier by the fact that the national editorial staff of *Trench and Camp* had long been looking for ways to streamline and regularize the production of the paper.<sup>65</sup> It was through the ongoing effort to standardize and streamline the production of *Trench and Camp* that the Military Morale Section developed a close relationship with the newspaper's editorial staff. With the founding of the Section, MMS personnel became an important part of the standardization process, offering formatting guidelines, visiting both the New York office and local camp editorial offices to meet with writers and editors there, and developing a large proportion of the nationally syndicated content that appeared in the newspapers.<sup>66</sup> By the end of the war, and continuing on through demobilization, the relationship between Morale Branch and the newspaper continued to grow stronger, with the military agency playing an increasingly central role in providing content and editorial direction. Such interventions were not merely tolerated by the YMCA's staff; they were welcomed. Bryan believed that the Military Morale Section's opportunistic involvement was highly beneficial to *Trench and Camp*, and was rumored to have remarked that the MMS had "solved all their problems" by intervening in the management, and pushing for a consolidation of editorial policies in the paper.<sup>67</sup>

Within the MMS and the Morale Branch, the main figures working to influence and reshape the camp newspapers were two writers, both of whom had backgrounds in the newspaper industry. The first of these was a man named Thaddeus C. DeFriez, a Lieutenant working for the Military Morale Section, who played a key role in bringing the MMS and the editors of *Trench and Camp* into close collaboration from August 1918 until his death from influenza on October 8, 1918. Eventually replacing DeFriez in the Morale Branch was a man named Thomas Kirby, a former editor for the *Washington Times* (where he had been a co-worker to the *Trench and Camp*'s associate editor Louis MacMahon). Kirby, who had been injured during the war, became one of the main writers of nationally syndicated content for both

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<sup>65</sup> As early as November, 1917, the YMCA's National War Work Council headquarters in New York wrote to the local editors of the various camp editions of *Trench and Camp*, urging them to "standardize" their papers in conformity with a series of guidelines, including set word limits for YMCA-specific news, the publication and elaboration of general orders, a fixed and reliable sports section, "sprightly interview[s] with some of the instructing officers," a "questions and answers column," and a "prominent[ly] place[d]" section featuring news from the home towns of soldiers in the respective camps. Young Men's Christian Association National War Work Council, memo "To all Local Editors, Trench and Camp," November 27, 1917, *Trench and Camp*, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 2, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 1-2.

<sup>66</sup> In August and September of 1918, the Military Morale Section writer Thaddeus DeFriez spent two weeks visiting the New York office of *Trench and Camp*, where he worked closely with Percy Edrop to streamline the management and production of the many editions of *Trench and Camp* and other publications that he oversaw. During this time, DeFriez stayed with Edrop in his apartment, and reported in a memo to his superiors in the Military Morale Section that during this time, "I had many opportunities to talk with him most intimately about his manifold problems in regard to so many publications." DeFriez, "Report on Work With Camp Publications," 1.

<sup>67</sup> Letter from DeFriez to Perkins, August 29, 1918.

*Trench and Camp* and several other newspapers published by the YMCA, from late December, 1918 until at least early April, 1919, doing so as part of the Morale Branch's staff.<sup>68</sup> Both of these men—despite neither of them working for the YMCA or the *Trench and Camp* editorial office, advised the *Trench and Camp* editors how to reformat and standardize their newspapers, significantly influenced editorial policy, and wrote scores of editorials and news stories designed to bolster morale.<sup>69</sup>

Morale agency propagandists not only wrote their content for *Trench and Camp* and *Going Over* anonymously, but also controlled the editorial policies of the papers, so that only conforming content would be published. The editorial page of *Going Over*—a section where numerous editorials dealt explicitly with the matter of why the war was necessary, and why the troops should feel invested in fighting—featured a claim that “[e]very line on this page was written by a soldier in the service of the United States.” This was only true by technicality, since a large proportion of the editorials featured there were written by Military Morale Section personnel for the use of that paper and *Trench and Camp*.<sup>70</sup>

The MMS and Morale Branch writers were far from being ordinary soldiers. As Robert Nelson has pointed out, the editors of military newspapers during the war were typically “middle-class, low-ranking officer[s], with a teaching or otherwise belletristic background . . . reasonably well educated and . . . older than the average soldier, and thus typically ascrib[ing] to pre-war conservative politics.” These editors were also generally not at risk of injury or death from the war, since they worked well behind the lines, whereas “[t]hose younger, faster, and typically without their own families to take care of were more likely to be at the front, running, fighting, and dying.” The result was that these men, as owners of capital and leaders and managers in

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<sup>68</sup> Louis MacMahon, letter to Captain Thomas Kirby, January 21, 1919, Correspondence, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>69</sup> Lieutenant T. C. DeFriez, letter to G. B. Perkins, September 12, 1918, Publications, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 1. Captain Thomas Kirby, letter to Louis MacMahon, February 17, 1919, Correspondence, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. Captain Thomas Kirby, letter to E. L. Munson, February 17, 1919, Correspondence, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>70</sup> Drafts of a number of editorials published on this page of the newspaper were compiled in the Military Morale Section's file of articles and editorials that it produced in-office. In the August 26, 1918 issue of *Going Over*, for example, an editorial entitled “First Over the Top, Last At Home” was released by the MMS for *Going Over* and *Trench and Camp*, yet appeared on the page of *Going Over* that explicitly stated that all of its content “was written by a soldier.” “First Over the Top, Last At Home,” *Going Over*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 4. T. C. DeFriez, “Editorial content for *Trench and Camp* and *Going Over*,” Articles, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 4, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

society's institutions, generally had more to gain in victory, but less immediately at stake in terms of battlefield dangers, and therefore they were more inclined to push for maximum military discipline, effort and resolve.<sup>71</sup> The class and educational backgrounds of the morale writers fits this description. DeFriez grew up in leafy Brookline, Massachusetts, was the son of a notable Boston physician, and was a Harvard graduate.<sup>72</sup> Thomas Kirby, a Washingtonian, was educated at Georgetown University and worked as a writer and editor before enlisting in the army in 1917.<sup>73</sup> Edmund Francis Hackett, another officer with the Morale Branch who worked to shape the content of military newspapers, grew up in New Haven and was a graduate of the elite Phillips Academy.<sup>74</sup> By virtue of class and education, all of these men enjoyed social and economic advantages that the average soldier did not. Although, in at least Kirby's case, military service had been rendered and paid for in flesh, by the time he and the other editorial writers in the morale agencies took up their positions, they were far removed from the dangers of battle.

Despite their many contributions to the camp publications, neither DeFriez or Kirby was ever credited in the any of the newspapers, nor were the Military Morale Section or the Morale Branch mentioned on the mastheads of *Trench and Camp*, *Going Over*, or *Coming Back*.<sup>75</sup> Even the hospital newspaper *The Come-Back* that Kirby himself founded and which was entirely edited and produced by the Morale Branch had no mention of Kirby or the Morale Branch in its masthead.<sup>76</sup> This anonymity was intentional. In a January 22, 1919 letter to an acquaintance at the *Washington Times* who was looking for inspiration for his own columns in that newspaper, Kirby shared a story of his own from *The Come-Back*. In the letter, Kirby wrote "I want to ask you please not to mention my name in anything you might write about *The Come-Back*, as I am

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<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, Nelson explains, the content of newspapers was not a mere reflection of these editors' middle-class values; they needed to negotiate with the existing ideas, experiences and intrigues of their readers. While Nelson's analysis focuses on the European belligerents, his assessment was as true of the American military newspaper editors in the morale agencies as it was of their continental and British counterparts. Nelson, "Soldier Newspapers," 171-72.

<sup>72</sup> *Congressional Record, Appendix and Index to Parts 1-5 of The Proceedings and Debates of the Second Session of the Sixty-Fourth Congress of the United States of America*, Volume LIV (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1917), 158.

<sup>73</sup> *Congress of the United States, Seventy-Seventh Congress, Reduction of Nonessential Federal Expenditures—Hearings Before the Joint Committee on Reduction of Nonessential Federal Expenditures, First Session Pursuant to Section 601 of the Revenue Act of 1941*, Part 1 (Washington, DC.: Government Printing Office, 1942), 995.

<sup>74</sup> *Order of Exercises at Exhibition, Phillips Academy* (Andover: the Andover Press, 1901), 5.

<sup>75</sup> *Trench and Camp* mastheads, Reports of Morale Officers on Periodicals & Prospects, Answers to Circular of Nov. 18, 1919, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 5, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>76</sup> *The Come-Back* masthead, included in Morale Branch's "Service Publications" (mastheads and basic information report), Service Publications, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 5, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

in the background in the matter.”<sup>77</sup> When Captain G. B. Perkins of the Military Morale Section recommended an editorial for *Trench and Camp* to Percy T. Edrop, he stipulated that the MMS ought not be mentioned. “Needless to say,” he dictated, “its source should not appear.”<sup>78</sup> The secrecy about the interventions of the morale agencies even extended to DeFriez’s obituary in his hometown’s *Boston Post*, which not only neglected to mention that he worked for the Military Morale Section, but reported a fictitious description of his work.<sup>79</sup>

There were two main reasons for this. On the one hand, the newspapers sought to bill themselves as being not only for, but by soldiers. The idea that some branch of the General Staff, composed of elite and middle-class editors, was producing much of the content of the newspapers likely would have disillusioned the troops. Relatedly, the morale agencies worried that content designed to boost morale would be ineffective if soldiers thought that it was contrived, calculated or propagandistic. The morale officers working with the newspapers were also concerned that soldiers might find morale content to be boring, and would therefore opt not to read camp newspapers. Realizing that soldiers read papers in order to be both entertained and informed about goings-on in the civilian world, the Morale Branch explicitly endorsed filling the papers with local and entertainment-oriented content, within which morale-oriented stories, editorials and messages would be interspersed. Edmund Hackett conveyed in a memo to Munson that “[t]he camp newspaper . . . should aim first to surround with each issue the entire field of interest of its readers, to ‘play up’ the outstanding features in that field, and so to treat them editorially, pictorially and typographically that the results will be dignified and impressive, yet decorative or artistic, educational and inspirational, yet light and sympathetic.” An appropriate “editorial treatment” would feature both entertaining and “educational” content—especially on the front page of the various editions of *Trench and Camp*—“thus balancing the reader’s interest in purely local developments by stimulating his interest in all matters calculated to broaden his education and quicken his realization of his standing as a soldier.”<sup>80</sup> This is why many of the military newspapers had sports pages—a feature that the Morale Branch saw as an attractor to the young readers of the army. As Thomas Kirby explained to *Trench and Camp* associate editor Louis MacMahon in a letter, “[because] most of the readers of the various army papers are men of the age when they are most enthusiastic in supporting baseball and other

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<sup>77</sup> Captain Thomas Kirby, letter to Earl Goodwin, January 22, 1919, Correspondence, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>78</sup> G. B. Perkins, letter to Percy T. Edrop, July 22, 1918, *Trench and Camp*, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 2, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>79</sup> “Lieut. DeFriez Dies in Camp,” *The Boston Post*, October 10, 1918, 10.

<sup>80</sup> Hackett, letter to Munson, January 31, 1919, 2-3.

athletics, I think every effort should be made to make the sport pages most attractive.”<sup>81</sup> By having “attractive” content such as sports articles, soldiers would be more likely to be exposed to the “educational” content designed to motivate them.

In addition to interspersing “educational” content among “entertainment” content, the Morale Branch urged that articles written for the purpose of morale ought not be written “colorlessly,” but should instead be done “attractively”: they should, as Hackett’s memo explained, “be so written, captioned and typographically displayed as to capture first the attention and then the interest of the reader,” and in the case of editorials, “[t]he subject of the ‘leader’ should generally be the big news development of the week, (that is to say, the matter most closely affecting the soldier’s interest) and the underlying motive of the editorial should be morale.” He suggested the same guidelines for cartoons, which should be both “editorial in motif” and yet designed to positively affect morale.<sup>82</sup>

In all of these myriad ways, the Military Morale Section and the Morale Branch exercised significant influence over the content and editorial policies of the newspapers, all the while obscuring their involvement. As we shall see in the following sections, the actual content produced in these newspapers was very clearly designed to motivate soldiers by making personal appeals to them and in such a way that they would experience their military duties as being aligned with their own personal aspirations, rather than imposed externally as obligations. This mission was much better served by the anonymity of the content’s production and the obscurity of its intended purpose.

### **“His Own Dreams and Plans:” Newspapers, Morale, and the Investment of Private Interests in the War**

During the height of American engagement in the war between August and early November of 1918—the so-called “Hundred Days Offensive” that ultimately brought the war to an end—the Military Morale Section and, after October 19th, the Morale Branch, used newspapers to try to convince the soldiers of the importance of the conflict, and to motivate them to fight in it. The morale agency sought to do this by representing the war as being decisive for the men’s social horizons. As William Howard Taft explained after the war’s close, the main thing underpinning the editorial policy of *Trench and Camp* was the strategic need to

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<sup>81</sup> Thomas Kirby, letter to Louis A. MacMahon, January 29, 1919, Correspondence, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>82</sup> Hackett, letter to E. L. Munson, January 31, 3, 5.

“interpret to the soldiers the hope and enthusiasm of the nation behind them.”<sup>83</sup> *Trench and Camp* and *Going Over* provided explanations for the war that were couched in both political and, even more centrally, in aspirational and interpersonal terms, in order to cultivate an internalized interest in fighting.<sup>84</sup>

This is especially clear from the pages of *Going Over*. Running from August 5, 1918 to November 25 of the same year, and handed out at embarkation camps (mostly in Hoboken, New Jersey), *Going Over* was designed to be read by soldiers during their first exposure to the potential risks of conflict.<sup>85</sup> As the soldiers’ overcrowded troop transport ships made the treacherous approach to the European theater of operations, risking U-boat attack along the way, their copies of *Going Over* framed the conflict in what might be called, following Lauren Berlant, “juxtapolitical” terms that blended intimate appeals to chivalry and heroism, and political appeals for “making the world safe for democracy.”<sup>86</sup> An editorial entitled “Why We Are At War” offered a geopolitical explanation of the events leading up to the American entry into the war, and concluded with an excerpt from a highly sentimental speech by Woodrow Wilson. “[W]e shall always fight for the things we have always carried nearest our hearts,” Wilson appealed,

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<sup>83</sup> Taft, et. al., *Service With Fighting Men*, 357.

<sup>84</sup> For an analysis of how other newspapers, such as *Stars and Stripes* and various non-syndicated camp and divisional newspapers and magazines, sought to bolster morale, secure discipline, and motivate soldiers to fight in the war, see Corneise, *Ranks and Columns*, 65-110. In his investigation of “how Americans (including those in the government) explained, justified, lived, understood, or found *meaning* in [World War I],” Andrew Huebner has highlighted the centrality and “motivational power of personal appeals,” which “romanticized” American intervention and framed the conflict as a heroic, chivalrous battle for the protection of women and children. In his analysis, Huebner points out that the camp newspaper *Trench and Camp* was used to make claims that “[d]oughboys fought . . . for the benefit and appreciation of the home front family.” Andrew J. Huebner, *Love and Death In the Great War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 2-3, 103.

<sup>85</sup> The newspaper had a total weekly distribution of 64,000 copies in September, 1918, with 30,000 going to Hoboken, 5,000 going to Boston, 5,000 to Newport News, and the rest for mailing and distribution at service organization clubs and huts. Military Morale Section, “Distribution of *Going Over*,” September 1, 1918, Publications, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>86</sup> “Juxtapolitical” is a term that Lauren Berlant uses to refer to a kind of “textually mediated” practice in which an “intimate public,” with a “sense of belonging to a community” by virtue of vaguely shared “affective and emotional attachments” and a shared sense of struggle and “historical burden” feels itself to be engaged in collective action or politics, despite being steered away from the consensus-threatening active antagonisms that animate real public spheres. Here, personal identification lends itself to a sense of “collective sociality,” despite the fact that the group’s very understanding of “what is personal has been threaded through mediating institutions and social hierarchy.” In the search for an “emotional universalism” that serves “as the place where the body politic can find its unity even when political institutions are not adequate and even when the social field is rife with all sorts of antagonism,” Berlant highlights genres of sentimental attachment, which they privilege over traditional notions of rigid identity as a basis of community belonging. The result is what Berlant calls an “intimate public”—a sphere in which a “bloc” of people forms around a circulation of “texts and things,” and in which participants share a common set of feelings and experience “a subjective likeness that seems to emanate from their history and their ongoing attachments and actions.” A central pillar of emotional universalism, according to Berlant, is “the ideology of romantic love.” Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 10-11, 25-26, 15.

and “civilization itself . . . [is] in the balance.”<sup>87</sup> Other editorials spoke not about the soldiers as a mass, but about one, singular soldier, in an effort to make the stories relatable and personal—a practice that was common in the military newspapers. One such editorial speculated about the motivations of a soldier who died on the battlefield, who had written the words “for God and humanity” on his gas mask. “His dreaming of peaceful pursuits and proud parentage gave place to a new vision, a vision of a world made safe for democracy,” the editorial explained, and so “[w]hen the time came for his complete self-surrender he went willingly.”<sup>88</sup> Such editorials both personalized the conflict, and glorified the possibility of dying in the service of one’s country and flag.

*Trench and Camp*, too, ran editorials and news stories justifying the war in personal, aspirational terms and seeking to make sense of the conflict to the soldiers consigned to fight it. A July, 1918 article posed the question of “[w]hy . . . the young men of the country have been asked to give up everything for the present and devote themselves to the nation’s cause,” and then proceeded to offer answers to this question. According to the author, the explanation offered by President Woodrow Wilson—that they were called upon “[t]o make the world safe for democracy”—was perhaps too vague. “It does not always ‘connect up’ with the mind of the youth who has been occupied with his own dreams and plans.” The young soldier needed a more “concrete reason.” The answer that the military officer or leader should offer was to

[L]et the young soldier think of the things he dreamed of doing and of being before he was called to war. Let him think of the home he expected to establish and the life he expected to live. And then let him know this: It is for the right to labor to bring those fine dreams to realization, without interference from the tyrannical power that seeks to rule the world, that he goes forth to fight.

Not only did he fight “for the flag and for the national ideals which it represents,” but also “for his own dreams, for those who are near and dear to him, and for the right to live his own life in freedom. . . . And it will be well or ill with him when he comes back home again in accordance with how he conducts himself during this greatest struggle in all history.”<sup>89</sup> This editorial, in its depiction of the interpersonal and aspirational stakes that would be necessary to motivate the soldier to fight, offers a surprising amount of clarity into the way that the morale planners sought to make the men believe that their social horizons were dependent on how they performed in the war.

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<sup>87</sup> “Why We Are At War,” *Going Over*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 4. This sentiment—that the men had “always carried” certain things “nearest our hearts”—became a characteristic motif of the Morale Branch’s editorials, especially after the war. See chapters 5 and 6.

<sup>88</sup> “For God and Humanity,” *Going Over*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 4.

<sup>89</sup> Louis J. Wortham, “Why Do You Fight?” *Trench and Camp*, Charlotte, N.C. edition, Vol. 1, No. 40 (July 9, 1918), 6.

Giving a more concrete form to the way that the newspaper writers sought to compel soldiers to fight, a large proportion of the editorials in *Trench and Camp* and *Going Over* urged men to think of their military service as a form of chivalry. Many editorials of this variety contained anti-German tirades that played up the idea that the “Hun” were militaristic bullies who persistently victimized women and children. One exemplary editorial, entitled “Those Considerate Germans,” claimed that a recovered German diary revealed that soldiers were being ordered to “shoot the women,” including mothers with children, and, “[w]hen the mother was dead . . . to shoot the child so that the child would not be alone in the world.” Another editorial sensationally proclaimed: “WOMEN CHAINED TO GUNS: That the Germans are now using women to feed their machine guns and that the women are chained to the guns they are forced to serve is one of the discoveries made by American soldiers fighting along the western front.”<sup>90</sup> These editorials made frequent reference to women and children as helpless victims of the ruthless “Hun,” and their shift in emphasis of German “Kultur” instead of geopolitics was clearly calculated to conjure outrage among the soldiers, and to instill a sense of personal, chivalrous obligation to intervene.<sup>91</sup> While this depiction of the adversary as brutal and savage was not new, it was utilized with new degrees of tact and skill in the First world War.<sup>92</sup>

At the core of this strategy was an attempt to instill a sense of social responsibility among the soldiers—a sense that could only derive from a feeling of community belonging and a specific set of ideas about social roles, gendered expectations concerning heroic performance, and a self-perception and self-identification as a witnessed performer of heroic actions within a narrative plot that could make sense of wartime experiences. The newspaper industry of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries became increasingly self-conscious

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<sup>90</sup> Military Morale Section, “Those Considerate Germans” (article for *Trench and Camp*), Articles, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 4, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; “WOMEN CHAINED TO GUNS,” *Trench and Camp*, Charlotte, N.C. edition, Vol. 1, No. 46 (October 16, 1918), 2.

<sup>91</sup> As Huebner points out, with the American entry into the war, propagandists used gendered and sexual framing to describe Germany’s transgressions and to justify American intervention. The press cited “the rape of Belgium,” and journalists described Germany as having transgressed chivalrous codes of honor, and represented the country as engaging in an “unmanly” departure from acceptable forms of masculine self-control. Huebner, *Love and Death in the Great War*, 15-19. The war could only end, explained one editorial in *Going Over*, “when Germany no longer is able to bombard churches, put the torch to priceless libraries, torpedo vessels that are laden with wounded soldiers and avenge its defeats on the battlefield by torturing and killing feeble old women and helpless little children.” “The Persistence of Prussianism,” *Going Over*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 4.

<sup>92</sup> As Harold Lasswell explained in his 1927 book on *Propaganda Techniques In the World War*, “[w]hen the public believes that the enemy began the War and blocks a permanent, profitably and godly peace, the propagandist has achieved his purpose. But to make assurance doubly sure, it is safe to fortify the mind of the nation with examples of the insolence and depravity of the enemy.” “Stress can always be laid upon the wounding of women, children, and old people, priests and nuns, and upon the sexual enormities, mutilated prisoners and mutilated non-combatants. These stories yield a crop of indignation against the fiendish perpetrators of these dark deeds, and satisfy certain powerful, hidden impulses.” Harold D. Lasswell, *Propaganda Techniques in the World War* (New York: Peter Smith, 1938 [1927]), 77, 82.

about their capacity to convey and even construct a sense of community involvement.<sup>93</sup> In the case of camp newspapers, the MMS and the Morale Branch encouraged, modeled and even simulated community participation and social investment and expectation for the soldiers. By blending stories told from the soldier's point of view with top-down, syndicated editorial content developed by the morale agencies, these camp newspapers leveraged the appearance of community participation and negotiated exchange of ideas in this "soldier's own paper" as a cover for War Department propaganda designed to create norms, social expectations and instrumentally useful accolades.<sup>94</sup> As the wartime social control organization War Camp Community Service highlighted, "community"—especially when it was chaperoned, censored, and guided by principles of discipline, self-control and social obligation—offered an unrivaled "stabilizing" force that would prevent sexual deviance and bolster motivation.<sup>95</sup> For the morale agencies this was equally true, and newspapers—to the extent that they could instill a sense of community belonging in the soldiers—offered a means of getting soldiers to internalize obligations and a sense of soldierly responsibility as the protectors of those communities—especially as they deployed overseas.

The morale agency writers encouraged, modeled and simulated community on two basic fronts. In the first place, they made appeals in the camp newspapers that sought to create a sense of community allegiance and comradeship among the troops—a common tactic used in military newspapers, as Robert Nelson argues.<sup>96</sup> In an editorial entitled "Your Responsibility," for example, the *Trench and Camp* editors insisted that it was the responsibility of men who were already enlisted to extend "[t]he strong hand of real friendship" to newly drafted soldiers, in order to "fuse in their minds quickly the spirit of the ARMY."<sup>97</sup> Drills, exercises and division/company loyalty all offered opportunities for men to bond and develop a sense of responsibility toward

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<sup>93</sup> As early twentieth-century newspaper readers interacted with their fellow residents in and through a newsprint interface, as Julia Guarneri has shown, the papers themselves "consciously mimicked the in-person experiences of neighborly conversation, market bartering, sidewalk wandering, and restaurant eavesdropping." Benedict Anderson has demonstrated the centrality of print cultures in creating a sense of national belonging, and places special emphasis on the newspaper in creating these so-called "imagined communities." Guarneri, *Newsprint Metropolis*, 8. According to Anderson, the newspaper (and "print capitalism" more broadly) linked "fraternity, power and time meaningfully together" in ways that "made it possible for rapidly growing numbers of people to think about themselves, and to relate themselves to others, in profoundly new ways." Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2016 [1983]), 34-46.

<sup>94</sup> "[S]oldier's own paper" is the way that the Camp Upton, New York *Trench and Camp* described itself on its one year anniversary as a publication. This was characteristic of the *Trench and Camp* newspapers, all of which marketed themselves as being both by and for the soldiers of the camps. "Soldier's Own Observes Its Own Anniversary," *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, NY edition, Vol. 2, No. 1 (October 8, 1918), 7.

<sup>95</sup> See Robert Bertrand Brown, *War Camp Community Service Calls* (New York: War Camp Community Service, 1918), 9-48.

<sup>96</sup> Nelson, "Soldier Newspapers," 172-74.

<sup>97</sup> "Your Responsibility," *Trench and Camp*, Charlotte, NC. edition, Vol. 1, No. 43 (September 25, 1918), 6.

one another, and the camp newspapers, which regularly reported on these activities, described them in these terms.

Even more central to the media strategy of the morale agencies was their persistent and dedicated campaign designed to instill a sense among soldiers that they belonged to—and consequently had an obligation to defend—a civilian community back at home. Articles and editorials encouraged soldiers to correspond with their friends and families (and even insisted that they send copies of *Trench and Camp* home, where their family members might also be influenced by the newspaper), modeled the social modes of relating and roles that they should adopt in their relationships these civilians, and provided fictional interactions between family members and soldiers that simulated the transmission of social expectation and observation in ways that were clearly intended to shape how soldiers perceived themselves and conducted themselves.<sup>98</sup> Many *Trench and Camp* editorials used these strategies for evoking community belonging and stimulating social obligation.

The most straightforward means of encouraging a sense of community belonging for the soldiers was the newspapers' constant encouragement to write letters. Just as the public-facing campaigns of the CPI sought to encourage civilians to write to their sons, husbands and brothers serving in the war, the camp newspapers encouraged soldiers to write home. The morale agency writers clearly viewed correspondence—whether personally undertaken or vicariously experienced in the columns of military newspapers—as a means of motivating the men and giving meaning to their personal sacrifices. Rather than relying solely on newspaper editorials to instill a belief in the importance of the war, the morale writers wagered that soldiers' contacts could reinforce the narrative that their actions were both necessary and heroic. But if letters were highly consequential for the morale of soldiers, the newspaper played an important role in its reminders to soldiers and civilians alike that they ought to write them. “Have you written that letter home?” asked the Charlotte, North Carolina edition of *Trench and Camp* in its characteristic “pep talk” style. “If not send them a copy of this paper.”<sup>99</sup> Another issue featured an illustration—clearly targeting civilian readers—of a sullen soldier sitting on the “top” above the trenches, sulking because he had not received a letter in the latest mail drop. “Folks at home should write letters,” the caption read, “for, above all, the soldier appreciates a letter. . . . The ‘No Letter’ has its effect in the cantonments as well as in the trenches. Write today.”<sup>100</sup> (See Figure 3.1) “A letter from mother, sweetheart or a friend back home, is just as important as

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<sup>98</sup> Taft, et. al., *Service With Fighting Men*, 359.

<sup>99</sup> *Trench and Camp*, Charlotte, N.C. edition, Vol. 1, No. 42 (September 18, 1918), 4.

<sup>100</sup> “No Letter,” *Trench and Camp*, Charlotte, N.C. edition, Vol. 1, No. 48 (October 30, 1918), 7.



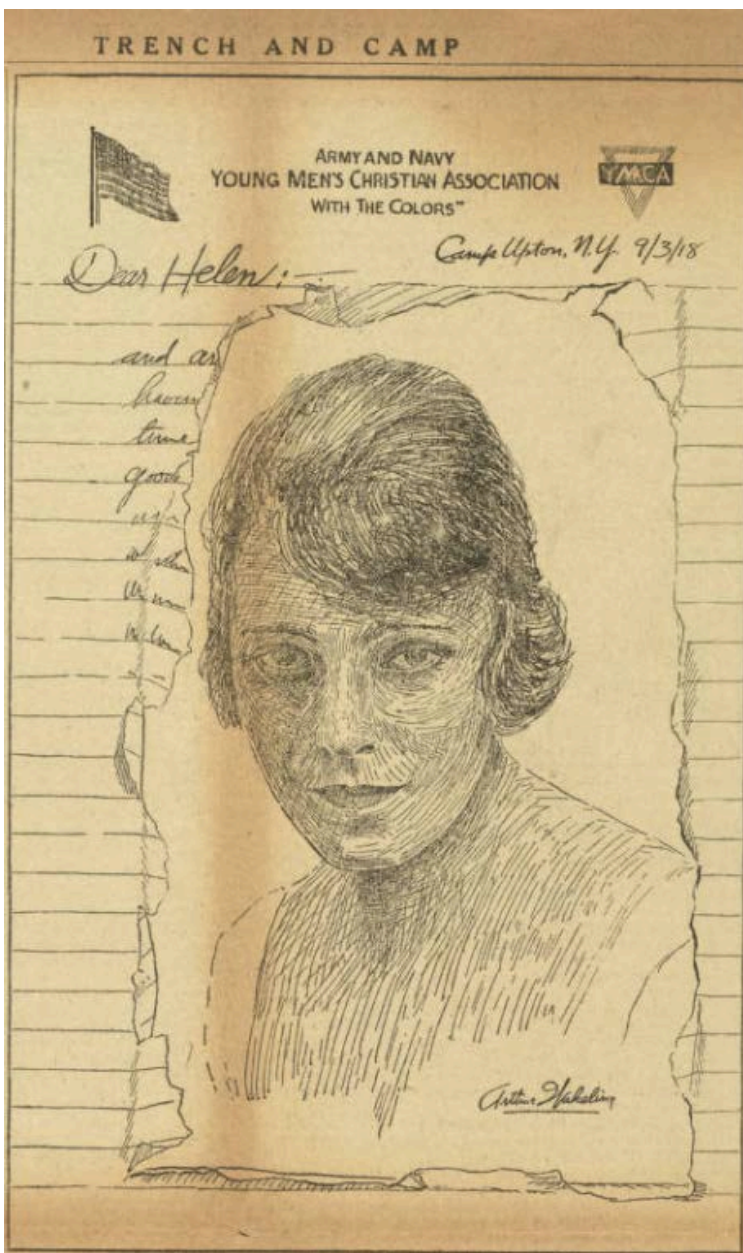
**Figure 3.1:** This *Trench and Camp* cartoon depicts a disgruntled soldier sitting atop a fortification moping because he did not receive a letter, as his fellow soldiers read letters in the relative safety of the trench.

payday," claimed another editorial.<sup>101</sup> The September 23 Camp Upton edition of *Trench and Camp* featured a drawing of a letter addressed "Dear Helen," out of whose page burst the attractive, expectant face of a young woman, and the October 22 issue also emphasized that men should write letters to women.<sup>102</sup> (See Figures 3.2 & 3.3)

In addition to encouraging communication with civilians, military newspapers modeled frameworks for relating to civilians by publishing fictional and historical correspondence from family members and lovers to soldiers. The August 26th issue of *Going Over* featured an editorial entitled "An Ideal Letter From the Front," which contained excerpts of a letter from a

<sup>101</sup> "Some Good Rules for Non-Coms," *Trench and Camp*, Charlotte, N.C. edition, Vol. 1, No. 45 (October 9, 1918), 2.

<sup>102</sup> Raymond Fosdick, "Address by the Hon. Raymond B. Fosdick," Liberty Hut, Washington, D.C., November 16, 1918; Raymond Blaine Fosdick Papers; Box 23, Folder 7; Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 7-8; Cartoon, *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Vol. 1, No. 51 (September 23, 1918), 3.



**Figure 3.2:** This *Trench and Camp* cartoon, featuring a women’s conventionally-attractive face bursting out of a letter, written on YMCA-supplied paper, addressed “Dear Helen,” bears a striking resemblance to a story that Raymond Fosdick—Chairman of the Commission on Training Camp Activities—told in his war drive speech in November, 1918, in which, on one of his tours of the Western Front, he had discovered in the pocket of a dead soldier a “love letter . . . signed simply with the name ‘Helen.’” Fosdick speculated that “love might glorify [the dead soldier] in his grave as it had inspired him in his last fight.” The cartoon signifies the sense that soldiers should, as they wrote letters home, feel connected to the women they typically wrote to.



**Figure 3.3:** This *Trench and Camp* cartoon underlines the extent to which *Trench and Camp* editors saw soldiers’ correspondence as being conducted with women.

Lieutenant F. S. Pearsall to his mother in Marshall, Texas. It reassured the mother that “all is O.K. and you have no reason to worry,” and insisted that “[a]s far as the Boche is concerned, we can handle them to the finish.” A line later, the soldier’s letter seemed to contradict this reassurance when it relayed the heroic events of a recent skirmish where they prevailed against the Germans, even when the odds were not favorable to them: “[t]here were about thirty of us, and a mob of them. We all got placed and let them have it.” The excerpted letter closed with the insistence that “[o]ur home people must back the army.”<sup>103</sup> Here, the “ideal” letter, which the authors explicitly named as a model for all soldierly communication, blended reassurance with a heroic valor that drew its meaning from being witnessed by the female recipient.

Editorials frequently featured the appeals of real and fictionalized family members conveying their expectations that soldiers play their part in protecting their families and that they fight with honor. In a “Memorandum for Committee on Morale” concerning “The Creation of Morale Among Our Fighting Men” presented to the Second Conference on the Control of Morale, the industrial psychologist Walter Dill Scott listed the soldier’s “[a]ttempt to make good in the eyes of his fellow soldiers, his officers, his best girl, his relatives, [and] the people at home” as a key reason for why he would stay at his post and keep pressing on in the face of adversity.<sup>104</sup> The morale agency clearly leveraged this pressure in their editorials. In one clear example, *Trench and Camp* published a letter written by Ebenezer R. Hoar to his enlisted son during the Civil War, which the editors judged “is just as good today as it was then.” In the letter, Hoar insisted that his son “be faithful to every duty you have undertaken,” and stated that his son ought not sully the honor of their family name

neither by cowardice, by falsehood, by impurity, by levity nor selfishness. Remember always your home and your friends—those who will welcome your return with pride and joy if you shall come back in virtue and honor; who will cherish your memory if, faithful and true, you have given up your life; but to whom your disgrace would cause a pang sharper than death.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> “An Ideal Letter From the Front,” *Going Over*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 5.

<sup>104</sup> Walter Dill Scott, “The Creation of Morale Among Our Fighting Men,” in “Second Conference on Control of Morale,” May 15, 1918, W. D.—War College and War Plans Division Subordinate Offices—Army War College Historical Section; Record Group 165; Box 131 (Liason & Communication, Orders & Publications); National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 16.

<sup>105</sup> “A Father’s Advice to His Soldier Son,” *Trench and Camp*, *El Paso Herald* edition for Camp Cody, Deming, New Mexico, Vol. 1, No. 48 (September 19, 1918), 5.

Here, the father figure served as a vector for conveying patriotic and civic duty—not only for bravery, but also for sexual self-control and self-sacrifice. Through the figure of the father, the editorial threatened social opprobrium for the would-be wayward and/or deviant reader, while promising social recognition and praise for the soldier who risked death and fought gallantly. The editorial was clear: far more intimately than the court martial or rank, the soldier could expect social rewards or sanctions for his performance to come from his community back at home.

In French, the feminine version of the term “morale” refers to the meaning or takeaway of a story or fable—what in English we call the “moral” of a story. In a related sense, the camp newspapers’ editorials encouraged the soldier to see himself as a protagonist in a heroic plot involving his defense of his family’s or sweetheart’s safety and honor. A clear example of this was the column “Letters From A Soldier’s Wife,” published in the YMCA-run and MMS-influenced weekly syndicated camp newspaper *Trench and Camp*, which featured letters written by a fictional wife to her enlisted husband. The letters, which all began with “My dearest John,” used a mix of praise and encouragement to convey a sense of expectation and obligation to the soldiers, and even offered geopolitical explanations for the war’s cause and justification for its righteousness. “I am glad you are wearing the uniform of the United States,” one of these letters characteristically read. “Since you went to the training camp and I commenced to study the war, I feel the justice of our country going into it.” In this same letter, the hypothetical wife recounted that she had explained her husband’s absence to their young daughters by telling them that he was one of “many brave knights” who had gone off to push “a wicked King who kills little children . . . back to his castle.”<sup>106</sup> In another letter, the wife wrote that she hoped that an Allied victory would create a “future without fear of [our daughters] growing up into social and moral conditions” that deviated from “long-established” norms. She inveighed against the “pariah nation” of Germany, and its supposed denigration of the sanctity of marriage, and insisted that, just as “Babylon fell . . . Berlin will fall.”<sup>107</sup> In another, the wife confessed that “[t]here’s a strain of old-fashion in my nature which seems to demand masculine protection. I’ve always had such protection; first father’s, then yours.”<sup>108</sup> In these editorials, the War Department’s official position was sold to soldiers as a threat to social stability and the nuclear family, through the performed sentiments and aspirations of a fictional wife. By placing their messages into the speech and expectations of fictional women, the morale agency’s writers—the men behind the “girl behind the man behind the gun” thought that they could be far more successful in affecting and ultimately motivating soldiers, by playing on their affections—affections that were, at least in the

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<sup>106</sup> “Letters From A Soldier’s Wife,” *Trench and Camp*, Charlotte, N.C. edition, Vol. 1, No. 42 (September 18, 1918), 3.

<sup>107</sup> “Letters From A Soldier’s Wife,” *Trench and Camp*, Charlotte, N.C. edition, Vol. 1, No. 47 (October 23 1918), 3.

<sup>108</sup> “Letters From A Soldier’s Wife,” *Trench and Camp*, Camp Cody, N.M. edition, Vol. 1, No. 46 (August 29, 1918), 3.

scheme of the morale strategists, particularly pliable among chaste soldiers. As Andrew J. Huebner has persuasively demonstrated in his analysis of soldiers' correspondence and intimate experiences, this mode of relating to one's "home folks" really was taken up by many soldiers, and it really did give the war purpose.<sup>109</sup>

### **“The eyes of all the world will be upon you:” Camp Newspapers and the Cultivation of Self-Aware Heroes**

A typical feature of the content published in the camp newspapers whose editorial policies and stories were shaped by the Military Morale Section and the Morale Branch was the use of diegesis (stories told through the eyes of an explicitly present third-person narrator), clearly intended to encourage a sense self-observation among the soldiers who read these newspapers. Editorials continually emphasized visuality and reinforced the narrative that soldiers were being watched and assessed, using images and descriptions that not only dramatized the heroism of soldiers, but did so through the eyes of onlookers. On the back page of the pamphlet *Keeping Fit to Fight* (where, due to the pamphlet's mass circulation, every soldier would likely have seen it), was an excerpt from a speech by President Woodrow Wilson addressed “To the Soldiers of the National Army,” which declared that

Everything that you do will be watched with the deepest interest and with deepest solicitude, not only by those who are near and dear to you, but by the whole nation besides . . . The eyes of all the world will be upon you, because you are in some special sense the soldiers of freedom. — Let it be your pride, therefore, to show all men everywhere not only what good soldiers you are, but also what good men you are, keeping yourselves fit and straight in everything, and pure and clean through and through.<sup>110</sup>

Military newspapers continually reinforced the narrative that soldiers were being watched and assessed, using images and descriptions that not only dramatized the heroism of soldiers, but did so through the eyes of onlookers. (See Figure 3.4) Often, the fictional witnesses depicted by the morale writers in *Going Over* and *Trench and Camp* were women, whose simulated observation was clearly designed to be internalized by the soldiers. By constantly reminding the soldiers of the way that they were being watched and judged by external observers, the morale agency's writers aimed to create an internalized “gaze” or mode of self-

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<sup>109</sup> Huebner, *Love and Death in the Great War*, 103.

<sup>110</sup> Woodrow Wilson, quoted in The American Social Hygiene Association and the Commission on Training Camp Activities, *Keeping Fit to Fight* (1918), 16.



**Figure 3.4:** This *Trench and Camp* cartoon depicts the soldier as being exalted and witnessed by his community at home.

observation that would simultaneously lift their spirits by making sense of their difficult experiences, and boost their performance, as they self-consciously strove to perform as heroes.

It has been well-documented how governments used images of women in the World Wars to advance the war effort. As Robert Westbrook has demonstrated, during wartime, images of women, far from merely “objectifying” women in the simple sense of portraying them as objects of desire and consumption, rendered women as “objects of *obligation*.”<sup>111</sup> Propaganda featuring woman’s images sought to motivate enlistment and other forms of engagement with the war apparatus. This wartime function of the image of women is clearly

<sup>111</sup> During the Second World War, pin-up girls were a state-sanctioned and state-commissioned reminder to men of their private obligation to protect American women, utilizing a blend of sexual and sentimental tropes and signifiers to appeal to men’s passions and sense of duty. While Westbrook’s analysis focuses on World War II, we see precisely the same basic strategy at work during the so-called Great War as well. Westbrook, “I Want a Girl, Just Like the Girl that Married Harry James,” 587-614.

demonstrated in Michele Shover's scholarship on British and American recruitment posters during World War I, whose "designs attempted with varying degrees of success to unite intimate private concerns . . . with public obligation," often "address[ing] women as controllers of the men needed to become soldiers." One Irish poster cited by Shover portrayed a woman (whose relationship to the soldier was intentionally left ambiguous—was it his wife? sweetheart? sister? mother?) gesturing toward a burning Belgium and demanding of a male loved one: "WILL YOU GO or MUST I?" A British poster—this one all text—appealed to women directly, asking: "If he does not think that you and your country are worth fighting for—do you think he is WORTHY of you? . . . ask him to JOIN THE ARMY *TO-DAY*." American examples included posters such as the Navy's "I WANT YOU—for THE NAVY," and "GEE! I WISH I WERE A MAN—I'D JOIN THE NAVY," featuring attractive young women urging men to enlist. Of these and similar posters, Shover explains that "[t]he role message to men was: your women expect you—as protectors of the home—to go to war." On the other side, "[w]omen were told: your home's security depends on your sacrifices for the war effort." Here, "'true men' prepare to give up their lives and 'true women' prepare to give up their men."<sup>112</sup>

In a similar fashion, *Trench and Camp* editorials rendered women as "objects of obligation" and purveyors of expectation too. But they also depicted women as encouraging witnesses of men's embodied valor. An October 23 issue of *Trench and Camp*, for example, featured "an excerpt from a letter written by a French woman" who reportedly observed that "[t]he Americans are built just right for [fighting] and they seem so courageous and always indifferent to danger."<sup>113</sup> In another one of the fictional "Letters From A Soldier's Wife," the wife proudly encouraged the militant bravery of her hypothetical husband by relaying a vivid vision of him: "I know you are out on the front, pressing ahead, steadily, grimly. I know as if I were there to see! Sometimes I do see: at night when my eyes are closed I have a vision of you, tall and proud, rushing forward. Others follow you and there are ragged jets of flame and sudden, vivid lights. Your chin is up and your arm thrown back—characteristic even in the turmoil."<sup>114</sup> Here, the writers anchored heroic visualization in physical posture—specifically in gestures of confidence and determination.

These witnesses gave adversity meaning, and placed the difficult experiences of the doughboys—their time in camps, on trains and ships, in trenches, on the battlefield, and in military hospitals and infirmaries—within a plot that rendered his personal experience significant and sentimental. In an editorial provided by the Military Morale Section for *Going Over* entitled

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<sup>112</sup> Michele J. Shover, "Roles and Images of Women in World War I Propaganda," *Politics and Society*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (December, 1975), 472, 474-475, 482.

<sup>113</sup> "Yanks Built For Fighting," *Trench and Camp*, Charlotte, NC. edition, Vol. 1, No. 47 (October 23 1918), 7.

<sup>114</sup> "Letters From A Soldier's Wife," *Trench and Camp*, Charlotte, NC. edition, Vol. 1, No. 46 (October 16, 1918), 3.

“The Great Adventure,” for example, the MMS writer Thaddeus DeFriez anonymously insisted that

[t]he men who sail on the American transports today embark on the greatest, most unselfish and most glorious adventure of all history. For thousands of years to come men will eagerly read and talk of the greatest enterprise in which Americans of today are privileged to participate. For thousands of years to come men, worthy of the name, will envy those who are permitted to fight for America’s splendid ideals in the epic struggle of all time.<sup>115</sup>

Here, as elsewhere, the represented witnessing and recollection of the soldier’s bravery gave it its meaning.

Like many other articles and editorials, “The Great Adventure” emphasized the visual dimension of memory. It conjured up vivid images of the soldier’s actions as experienced from the standpoint of an external observer—rooting the significance of his actions in the approval of others.<sup>116</sup> The editorial used the refrain “they will see,” which it repeated throughout to highlight observation as an essential component of heroism. The “men of all future time,” the editorial insisted, would “close their eyes and see” the triumphant bravery of the soldiers who fought in the Great War.

Think how men will be stirred, how they will thrill [*sic.*] and be uplifted, when they read of America’s Crusade. They will conjure it all up from the beginning, will see it unfold before them as some marvellous [*sic.*] and inspiring pageant. . . . They will see soldiers arise as by magic; see them trained and sent to the embarkation ports. They will see the transports move out, bearing the crusaders who go to risk all, with no hope of gain and no selfish motive. They will see the hard struggle, the triumphant end. They will see the transports bearing back to a new, ennobled, exalted America the valiant spirits who participated in the fight. They will see the years of happy peace that follow. They will see America’s young men, slowly growing old, ever more and more proud of their participation in the great struggle, ever more and more honored by the rising

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<sup>115</sup> Military Morale Section, “The Great Adventure,” Articles, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 4, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 1.

<sup>116</sup> Many examples of this can be found in the “Letters From A Soldier’s Wife” column, where, for example, the hypothetical wife reported telling her baby that his father—and the recipient of the letter—had been awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. “Listen carefully,” she reported telling the baby, “because this is one of your life’s big moments! Always you will look back to it with reverence. . . . Pride in him is for you to carry in your heart forever.” “Favver [the father’s pet name—a toddlerized pronunciation of “father”] waded into a river, with death roaring all around, and led his men into a city.” “There is no need to say how proud I am.” “Dear, you are going to be in for unlimited local hero worship when you return.” “Letters From A Soldier’s Wife,” *Trench and Camp, El Paso Herald* Edition for Camp Cody, Deming, New Mexico, Vol. 2, No. 6 (November 28, 1918), 5.

generations, looking back always to the unbelievably splendid days of their fortunate and wonderful youth.<sup>117</sup>

The article's playing-up of the soldiers being watched by future generations was really a device to get them to witness themselves as if through the eyes of these hypothetical admirers, and to perform their duties accordingly. The editors modeled this through the eyes of external witnesses, but it is clear that the ultimate goal was to encourage the soldiers to bear witness to themselves: "Generation after generation will remember and think of these experiences we are undergoing today," the morale agency anonymously reassured the soldiers on their desolate Atlantic crossing. "Let us determine to see the adventure as they will see it."<sup>118</sup>

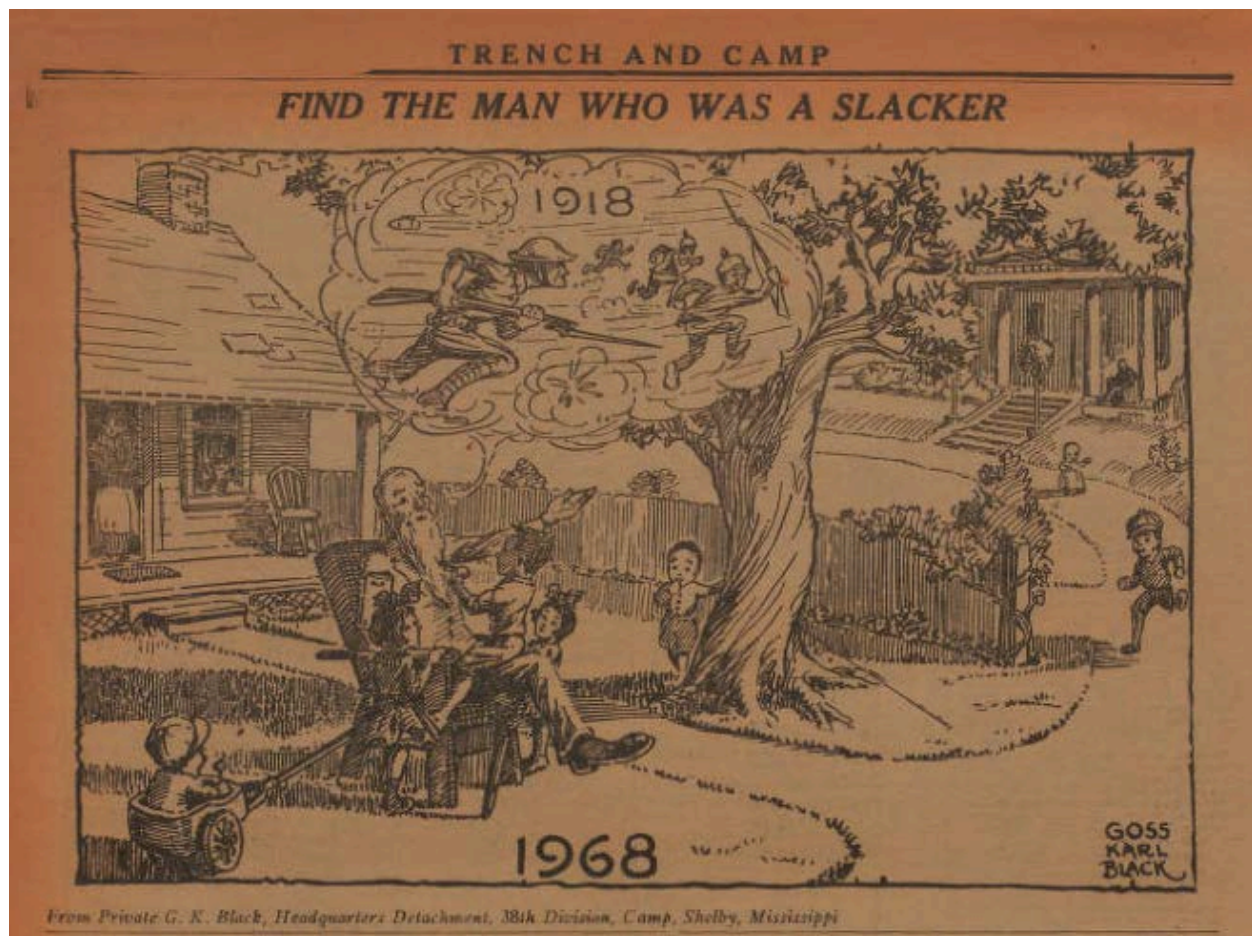
The temporality of the editorial's retrospective vantage point was key to its narrative strategy, and here, the name of the article—"The Great Adventure"—is highly illustrative of this. The word "adventure" was regularly used in soldiers' newspapers to weave the experience of war into a projected timelines of the soldiers' lives. Inherent in the meaning of "adventure" was the idea that the soldier would one day look back (always from the comfort of a bright, familial, healthy future) fondly and admiringly on the experience—essentially as a future witness of himself. This same logic was at work in a cartoon entitled "Find the Man Who Was a Slacker," which depicted a happy old man in the future year of 1968, basking in the admiration of his family, with a memory bubble back to a battle scene in 1918. (See Figure 3.5) In this approach to propagandizing the soldiers, the temporality of aspiration and deferred gratification, embodied by the images of a bright future full of admiring family, dovetailed with the temporality of self-expectation—the internalized judgment of a future self who would translate the difficult experience of war into an "adventure"; a key event in the "plot" of his lifetime. He could therefore imagine himself as a protagonist within a narrative, rather than a vulnerable, anonymous soldier in an industrialized mass war involving millions of disposable young men much like himself.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Military Morale Section, "The Great Adventure," 1-2.

<sup>118</sup> Military Morale Section, "The Great Adventure," 2.

<sup>119</sup> As William Howard Taft and others explained after the war, one of the things that the Morale Branch and service organizations such as the YMCA understood was that it was vital to cater to the "social" needs of soldiers, and to give them "religious, educational, athletic, entertainment, and practical personal activities" in order to cultivate and "conserve" a "sense of personality in the men"—something that was "essential to their conscious merging of themselves into the great common effort." Without this, "their lives and actions seemed to be dictated to them without apparent consideration of their personal likes or dislikes, abilities or disabilities, intellectual, moral, or social habits, ambitions or aspirations, or relationships to other persons. In the manner of their employment and management, in the administration of discipline, in their feeding, clothing, housing, transportation, and all the rest, they could not see that they were distinguished, in principle, from the horses and mules that the Army used. They also were war material, sentient but as persons non-existent; they lost not only their liberty but their individuality; they became units as satisfactorily identified by a number as by a name." Taft, et. al., *Service With Fighting Men*, 204-5.



**Figure 3.5:** In a projection of the year 1968, this *Trench and Camp* comic entitled “Find the Man Who Was a Slacker” depicts an old man sitting in a lawn chair in front of a house, conjuring memories of wartime bravery to a yard full of children who crowd around him admiringly. All of the children are looking at him—some racing toward him down a tree-lined path. A woman stands in the doorway of what appears to be his house, looking out at him as well. Fifty years after the war’s end, the veteran appears to be a community hero—the center of attention in his neighborhood.

### Conclusion

According to the affect theorist Ben Anderson, the temporality of morale, which “powers the war economy,” is based in an aspirational future—the hope for a future world that “enable[s] bodies to keep going *despite the present*.”<sup>120</sup> In order to motivate soldiers to train, fight, and generally endure their wartime experiences, the Military Morale Section and the Morale Branch went to great lengths to make the soldiers feel personally invested in the war. For the theorists and leaders who defined morale and set out to improve it among the soldiers, it was imperative to make the conflict feel personally relevant to the recruited young man. The way to accomplish

<sup>120</sup> Ben Anderson, “Modulating the Excess of Affect: Morale in a State of ‘Total War,’” in Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, eds., *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 173, 175.

this, they surmised, was by convincing him that his social horizons could be greatly improved or diminished by how he performed his military duties. Through the Committee on Public Information and the Red Cross's Home Service program, the morale agency sought to get the soldier's "home folks" to play along by sending encouraging letters and telling the soldier they were proud of him and approved of the job he was doing. At the same time, the morale agency used its own propaganda to encourage, model and simulate the proper kind of social relationships a soldier should have. To make him feel less alienated, the morale agency used propaganda to try to convince him that he was the protagonist in a heroic plot, because, if he could see himself as a protagonist, then his wartime experiences would feel more significant than if he viewed himself as an anonymous and inconsiderable part of a mass mobilization. To do this, the morale agency's propagandists simulated a kind of "female gaze" that they hoped the soldiers would internalize, so that they might engage in a critical form of self-observation—the benefits of which they might reap in the future. To observe oneself as a hero on a "great adventure," the morale agency's writers wagered, would be to view oneself from the perspective of a happy and abundant future—what Lauren Berlant calls a "manipulable . . . good-life fantasy" that spurs a form of "cruel optimism," wherein a person becomes exploited through their hope, and affectively attached to the very thing that harms them.<sup>121</sup>

For the morale agency's leaders, as for the theorists of morale, the foundation for this kind of manipulation was the men's deprivation of sexual pleasures in the present, because contentment in this area of life would undermine his inclination to look to the future for scenes of hope and enjoyment. The whole aspirational framework of morale depended upon the men being held back from "self-indulgence" in the present so that they would reach to the future.

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<sup>121</sup> Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 13-14.

## Chapter 4:

### **Inequality in the Ranks: Motivation, Morale, and Assessments of Sexual Self-Control in the Placement of African American Soldiers During the First World War**

A longstanding aspersion leveled by critics of the American military is that wars tend to be fought primarily by poor and working-class men in the interests of the nation's financial and political elite, leading to the designation, borrowed from deserters from the Civil War, of the conflict being a "rich man's war and a poor man's fight."<sup>1</sup> While the draft, implemented through the Selective Service Act of 1917, was supposed to level the playing field by indiscriminately conscripting men from all across American society to fill the ranks, wealthy men were often able to evade the draft, by claiming that their civilian professions were "essential occupations." Even more egregiously, the military was almost entirely racially segregated, with African Americans being relegated to separate units.

Drafted into the United States military at higher rates than White men, Black soldiers were almost exclusively relegated to labor battalions to load and unload ships, dig trenches, build roads, and to bury the dead. This chapter revisits the reasons why African Americans were sorted into labor roles during the war by considering how civic and military leaders evaluated their prospects for being motivated to fight—an evaluation that these leaders justified using controversial and deeply flawed intelligence and aptitude tests, and a pervasive belief that African Americans were sexually unrestrained compared to other soldiers. This chapter demonstrates how the belief that African Americans were sexually unrestrained directly informed military leaders' assessment of their capacity to be motivated to fight, since the various morale programs of the War Department relied upon a simultaneous condition of enforced chastity, social and sexual stimulation under controlled circumstances, and circulating narratives of women's expectation that men be chivalrous heroes to compel soldiers to fight. In addition to examining how this framing of morale informed the placement of African American soldiers, the chapter also considers how—especially in the wake of an August, 1917 uprising among African American soldiers stationed in Houston, Texas—African American leaders in the War Department sought to use the motivational framework of morale programs in their bid for assimilation and respectability.

### **Inequality in the Ranks**

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<sup>1</sup> Jeanette Keith, *Rich Man's War, Poor Man's Fight: Race, Class, and Power in the Rural South during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014). For an exploration of desertion in the South during the Civil War, see Bessie Martin, *A Rich Man's War, A Poor Man's Fight: Desertion of Alabama Troops from the Confederate Army* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003).

During the early twentieth century, the military, like businesses at the time, was in the middle of a managerial revolution that sought to maximize efficiency.<sup>2</sup> A cadre of noncommissioned officers who staffed the military's morale agencies, with backgrounds in political science, psychology, and advertising, insisted that the military must maximize its fighting strength not only by building up its arsenal and increasing the number of soldiers in its ranks, but also by carefully shaping the willpower of enlisted men. The soldiers must be made to be enthusiastic about the fight, and not only willing, but eager to pay the ultimate price (that is: to be willing to die, and/or to endure the horror of killing) on the battlefields of Europe. They called this enthusiastic willingness "morale."

The noncommissioned officers in charge of improving military morale were highly educated men, usually from elite backgrounds. The men who their morale efforts targeted, especially the men who made up the infantry, were predominately working class. Serving in the infantry, for many of these men, was a combination of uncomfortable, terrifying, dangerous, and psychologically devastating—all of which the morale planners needed to motivate these men to overcome. Military propagandists devised a hierarchical system of honor (with higher honor being attributed to some of the most dangerous and psychologically taxing roles) to compel young men to lean into becoming fighters. Government propaganda especially valorized the infantryman, who performed one of the most dangerous and trauma-inducing roles in the military hierarchy. Despite the physiological, psychological and phenomenological risks of combat roles, serving in this capacity carried with it a certain status and honor that wartime propagandists in the Committee on Public Information (CPI) and the Council for National Defense (CND) painstakingly sought to create in the minds of the population. Here, as in other dimensions of military motivation, gender played an important role. To become a warrior, much of the CPI's and CND's propaganda implicitly suggested, was to become worthy and valuable in the eyes of women—sweethearts and mothers alike.<sup>3</sup> Some men, under pressure from the women in their lives who CPI propaganda targeted, enlisted in the military in order to avoid being perceived as "slackers"—a designation that carried connotations about both a lack of work ethic, and a lack of masculine, sexualized bravery. As Joseph Rizzi put it, after months of

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<sup>2</sup> Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 234-247.

<sup>3</sup> Susan Zeiger, "She Didn't Raise Her Boy to Be a Slacker: Motherhood, Conscriptioin, and the Culture of the First World War," *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Spring, 1996: Women and the State in the Americas), 18; Michele J. Shover, "Roles and Images of Women in World War I Propaganda," *Politics and Society*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (December, 1975) 469-486.

being pressured by his sweetheart to enlist, “It was worth the going just to find out that my girl loved me.”<sup>4</sup>

The waging of a modern, expeditionary war in France required a massive apparatus of logistical and infrastructural support—an apparatus that employed a veritable army of non-combatant laborers. The United States Army used a large proportion of its enlisted men (roughly one third of the men deployed to France) in labor roles—building roads, laying bricks, digging trenches, loading and unloading ships, and to doing other manual labor that kept the invading Allied Expeditionary Forces fed, supplied, mobile, and housed. To fill these roles, the War Department used a mixture of discrimination and aptitude tests to sort the men it believed would make effective fighters from those who it believed would be better suited for labor. Among those who they selected for labor roles were disproportionate numbers of immigrants and non-English speakers, and, especially, African Americans.

### **The Place of Motivation in the Relegation of Black Soldiers to Non-Combat Units**

By war’s end, only one fifth of the Black soldiers deployed to France actively participated in combat, whereas two thirds of the American Expeditionary Forces in general actively fought.<sup>5</sup> What’s more, the War Department barred Black men from joining the marines, the navy only placed them in limited roles, and in the army, camps and divisions were racially segregated, with only two combat divisions being composed of African Americans. The majority of the roughly 380,000 enlisted Black men were assigned to labor battalions and reserve labor battalions, where they built roads and railways, dug trenches, loaded and unloaded ships, and buried the dead.<sup>6</sup> The fact that Black soldiers were drafted, against their will and in disproportionate numbers, to carry out hard labor, evokes some unsettling parallels with other forms of compulsory labor that African Americans have been forced to perform in American history.<sup>7</sup>

The two primary explanations that historians have given for the War Department’s assignment of segregated African American units to non-combatant roles are that White society feared that armed Black military regiments posed a risk to civil peace, and that racist biological

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<sup>4</sup> Joseph N. Rizzi, *Joe’s War: Memoirs of a Doughboy*, Richard A. Baumgartner, ed., (Huntington, WV.: Der Angriff Publications, 1983), 3.

<sup>5</sup> David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004 [1980]), 162.

<sup>6</sup> Chad L. Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 6; Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 36; Kennedy, *Over Here*, 159.

<sup>7</sup> Christopher Capozzola points out the similarity between Black labor battalions and the “convict labor [chain] gangs” and sharecroppers of the South, who labored in similar attire (since Black draftees were often deprived of uniforms), and “within earshot” of one another. Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 34.

claims about the inherent inadequacy of Black soldiers prevented military leaders from believing that they would make decent soldiers.<sup>8</sup> As for the first of these reasons, fear certainly played an important part in the War Department's decision to place African American soldiers in non-combatant positions—a decision that was influenced by the outbreak of a deadly riot in Houston on August 23, 1917, when a group of over one hundred soldiers from Company I of the Third Battalion of the all-Black Twenty-fourth Infantry, stationed at Camp Logan participated in a rebellion against racist mistreatment and provocation on the part of the nearly all-White Houston police. Roused by a combination of insults from White police and civilians, witnessing the mistreatment and brutalization of Black civilians at the hands of the police, the beating and arrest of two African American military personnel (one of whom was attempting to intervene when the police were brutalizing and arresting a Black civilian woman), and the circulation of rumors that the police had killed one of the arrested soldiers, and that a White mob was descending on the camp, a group of over one hundred soldiers marched into downtown Houston with rifles intending to engage the Houston police in combat. Seventeen people were killed in the firefight that ensued; only four of which were the rebelling soldiers.<sup>9</sup> The violence, besides horrifying White civilians, many of whom—especially in the South—were already uneasy about the idea of having armed, combat-trained African American regiments stationed in and near population centers, also had the effect of solidifying defensive plans for Black troops among the War Department leadership.

Even before the riot, many White southerners had been deeply apprehensive about what they saw as the insurrectionary risks of arming and training Black soldiers and stationing them near White communities.<sup>10</sup> The riot seemed to vindicate their fears and provided the material needed to turn prejudice into policy. According to Chad Williams, “[t]he Houston violence produced a seismic shift in [the] national debate on the potential place of African American soldiers in the U.S. military,” and helped to solidify plans—which were already underway—to use Black soldiers primarily as laborers during the war.<sup>11</sup> David Kennedy has pointed out that the violence had the effect of “scrambling” the calculations of War Department officials, who had been looking for tenable ways to draft, train and utilize Black soldiers in the war. In the wake of the violence, the War Department temporarily suspended all Black enlistment (a policy that many White southern leaders pushed to be made permanent), and in late September, 1917, implemented a policy whereby Black soldiers would be scattered to many different camps, with

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<sup>8</sup> Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy*, 6; Keith, *Rich Man's War, Poor Man's Fight*, 121.

<sup>9</sup> Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy*, 32-36.

<sup>10</sup> Keith, *Rich Man's War*, 121.

<sup>11</sup> Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy*, 36; 53-54.

assurances given that there would be two White soldiers for every one Black soldier stationed in any given camp, in order to deter and/or quell any potential insurgency. What's more, the one and only Black combat division was divided into seven parts, each of which was based at a different camp—presumably to prevent any further unrest.<sup>12</sup> As Emmett J. Scott—the War Department's key advisor on race relations—reported at the end of the war, “after the Houston riot . . . [t]here was a fear, ill-concealed in the North as well as in the South, that if Negro soldiers, in large numbers, were sent into any particular camp they would be a menace to the surrounding population and to peace and order.”<sup>13</sup>

The second reason historians offer for why the military leaders placed African American draftees primarily into non-combat units is biological racism and the related and pervasive belief in White supremacy. According to Jeanette Keith, “white supremacy on the national level had the . . . effect of delaying the induction of black conscripts into the army and of relegating them to noncombatant service,” producing in a situation in which “[t]he prerogatives of white power, manifested through the power structures of the rural South, . . . meant that black men under white patronage were less likely to go to war in 1917 than poor whites or aspiring middle-class blacks.”<sup>14</sup> Chad Williams cites military officials' desire “to replicate the practices, customs, and hierarchies of White supremacy as closely as possible in the army” as a reason for segregation in the army, and points out that military leadership used “[a] combination of biological racism and historical fears of armed black men . . . to consign the majority of African American draftees to labor and service units.” According to Williams, such reasoning was behind the suggestion of the army's Chief of Staff Tasker H. Bliss to the Secretary of War Newton D. Baker that Black soldiers be used primarily for labor. “The recommendation,” Williams explains, which Baker approved and implemented—no doubt influenced by the recent events in Houston—“reflected a belief that just as in civilian life, Black men, especially southerners, were best suited for work that maximized their supposed natural physical abilities.”<sup>15</sup>

These views are certainly confirmed by the historical record—perhaps nowhere more clearly reflected than in medical studies, whose spurious findings concluded, for example, that “in many respects . . . colored troops show themselves to be constitutionally better physiological machines than the white men.”<sup>16</sup> Such reports were uncritically used by War Department

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<sup>12</sup> Kennedy, *Over Here*, 159-61.

<sup>13</sup> Emmett J. Scott, *Scott's Official History of The American Negro in the World War* (Chicago: Homewood Press, 1919), 75.

<sup>14</sup> Keith, *Rich Man's War*, 111.

<sup>15</sup> Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy*, 6, 53-54.

<sup>16</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel A. G. Love and Major C. B. Davenport, “A Comparison of White and Colored Troops in Respect to Incidence of Disease,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (March 1, 1919), 60.

leaders to justify the particular uses that the military made of Black enlistees. In addition to such medical asseverations, White supremacist notions of the general psychological inferiority of African Americans as combatants were commonplace among White military leaders, many of whom thought that Black men were incapable of serving as effective soldiers or leading as officers. As Williams explains, “[t]he War Department believed that African Americans lacked the requisite attributes of manhood—mental sturdiness, self-control, objectivity—to become quality officers. Moreover, it paternalistically assumed that only white officers could effectively manage black troops and instill discipline.”<sup>17</sup>

Yet, the precise meaning and function of this latter White supremacist view concerning African American soldiers’ psychology demands further explication. Historians have not fully explored the degree to which military leaders’ perceptions of Black soldiers’ incapacity as soldiers was grounded in a broader assessment that they were not able to be motivated to fight, since they supposedly lacked the sexual self-restraint that constituted the cornerstone of the War Department’s morale programs. It is only by grasping the relationship between sexuality and morale in the War Department’s thinking that one can make sense of the placement of African American soldiers. The War Department’s assessments of the susceptibility of men to motivational campaigns, which relied heavily upon sexual racism, played a key role in Black soldiers’ exclusion from combat roles. This is evident in the published findings and statements of the Morale Branch and its predecessor agency, the Military Morale Section.

As the Morale Branch’s first, widely-distributed “Morale Circular” explained that, while African American soldiers were generally affected by the same problems that affected White soldiers and their morale, “the colored recruit [also] has his own peculiar difficulties.” The two chief reasons cited by the morale agency were the belief that African Americans lacked discipline (and especially sexual discipline), and that they were not supported by their communities the same way White soldiers were. As to the first of these, the Circular claimed that,

[b]ecause of his habits of life and environment, the gap between civil and military life is likely to be greater in his case than in that of the average white soldier. The negro is frequently not accustomed to orderliness, sanitation and the degree of moral or physical discipline required in the army.

The stresses of military life “interfered with easy-going habits and may lead to resentments,” the circular continued, and this was unique among Black soldiers as compared to their White counterparts. Here, the Morale Branch echoed a May, 1918 memo addressed to the War Department by Colonel E. D. Anderson of the army’s General Staff, which stated that “[t]his will

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<sup>17</sup> Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy*, 39-52.

be the first time in their lives that 9 out of 10 negroes ever had any discipline, instruction, or medical treatment, or lived under sanitary conditions.” For this reason, Anderson claimed, Black soldiers ought to be withheld from combat roles and instead placed in labor roles.<sup>18</sup> The Morale Branch’s emphasis upon “moral discipline” was a thinly-veiled reference to Black soldiers’ supposed promiscuous sexual habits, which would have been anathema to the leaders who founded and ran the War Department’s morale agencies, and who, as earlier chapters have demonstrated, saw the foundation of their entire motivational apparatus as being based on a parasexual condition of sexual deprivation paired with stimulating-yet-constrained female presence and female appeals to heroism.

The second factor that military officials believed made Black soldiers liable to suffer lower morale was intersubjective: the supposed lack of support from their communities. “He does not have the support of his home people to the same extent as does the white soldier,” the circular asserted. This was perhaps due to several reasons. In the first place, African American communities were deeply divided in their support for the war—a fact that was reflected in the press, as African Americans debated the desirability of fighting for a country that failed to protect them and their rights.<sup>19</sup> Secondly—and explicitly stated in the circular—officials believed that Black soldiers would simply have trouble communicating with their families: “For a large proportion [of the colored population],” the circular asserted, “the mental and physical strain of the act of writing is too great to make the interchange of letters between the soldier and the home ties frequent and satisfactory in character.”<sup>20</sup> The military believed that illiteracy and unintelligence both threatened the morale of soldiers because, as previous chapters have demonstrated, the morale agencies depended on soldiers’ correspondence with their “home folks” to provide a “steady” and motivational effect. But in addition to literacy, and as evidenced by the phrasing “satisfactory in character,” Morale Branch officers worried that soldiers’ families and social contacts would not sufficiently impress upon them the sense of dutiful obligation to perform as heroes. This reflected a pervasive stereotype about Black women that held that they were sexually permissive, and this would have also undermined, in the minds of military leaders, the prospects of using parasexuality as a means of motivating soldiers to lean into their roles in the war, since morale planners believed that sexually satiated soldiers would be both less pugnacious and less susceptible to exhortations that they prove

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<sup>18</sup> Colonel E. D. Anderson (chairman of the Operations Branch, General Staff), “Disposal of the Colored Drafted Men” (memo), reproduced in Arthur E. Barbeau and Florette Henri, *The Unknown Soldiers: African-American Troops in World War I* (Cambridge, MA.: Da Capo Press, 1996 [1974]), 193.

<sup>19</sup> Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy*, 75-77.

<sup>20</sup> Morale Branch, “Morale Circular No. 1: Suggestions for Morale Officers”; Morale Circular # 1; General Correspondence File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 8, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 11.

their worth as chivalrous protectors on the battlefield.<sup>21</sup> In all of these ways, the charge that African American soldiers did not have the support of their “home people” would have been devastating to their prospects for developing “good morale,” since the morale agencies, and the theories behind them, placed significant emphasis on the necessity of social and familial pressure and encouragement.

Even key medical reports that lent pseudoscientific support to biological racism were more concerned with the supposed psychological failings of Black draftees than they were with physiological findings. A study entitled “A Comparison of White and Colored Troops in Respect to Incidence of Disease,” presented to the National Academy of Sciences in November, 1918, which used data gathered from 531,445 White soldiers and 15,186 African American soldiers who had been treated for illness within the US military camps, reported that Black soldiers were “19% more liable to go on sick report than the white troops,” and that this was partially due to a higher incidence of venereal disease (differences that the researchers chalked up to “a difference in social pressure” and “a difference in ability to control the sex instinct”). Nevertheless, the study concluded that African American soldiers were more “resistant to diseases of the skin, mouth and throat,” and had “more stable nerves, . . . better eyes and metabolizes better”—characteristics that led them to claim that they were generally in better physiological shape than White men.<sup>22</sup> As this admission makes clear, while the medical officers certainly worried about the physical health of Black soldiers, their larger concern was with Black soldiers’ social and psychological constitution. These medical reports concluded that a higher incidence of venereal infection in black soldiers, rather than being a physical impediment, was evidence that these would-be soldiers lacked the social and psychological foundations necessary for combat.<sup>23</sup>

These anxieties were reflected in Colonel Anderson’s memo to the War Department concerning the “Disposal of the Colored Drafted Men,” in which he emphasized that his primary concern was not the physical health of Black soldiers, but instead their lack of “moral sturdiness” and “mental stamina,” which he believed would make them ineffective “in the line against opposing German troops who consist of men of high average education and thoroughly trained.” In Anderson’s formulation, good health on the part of African American soldiers did not fundamentally change the role that they should play in the war; it merely changed where they

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<sup>21</sup> Edward L. Munson, *The Management of Men: A Handbook on the Systematic Development of Morale and the Control of Human Behavior* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921), 198.

<sup>22</sup> The study also cited drug addiction, “hysteria,” tuberculosis (and pneumonia), smallpox, and chickenpox as being more prevalent among Black soldiers. Love and Davenport, “A Comparison of White and Colored Troops in Respect to Incidence of Disease,” 59-60.

<sup>23</sup> These reports did not, however, consider that many Black enlistees—especially those from rural areas of the South—lacked access to the basic healthcare and chemical prophylactics that their White control population likely had access to.

should play it. If a Black draftee was physically healthy, Anderson thought, he should be sent overseas as a laborer, whereas if a man was infected with venereal disease, he would not “be sent over seas either as combatant troops or labor or Engineer Service Battalions,” but instead would be kept in the United States “in reserve labor battalions, put to work at useful constructive labor that furthers the prosecution of the war”—an assignment that had the added advantage of freeing White men from doing menial “day labor work,” allowing them “to spend their entire time being instructed for combat service.”<sup>24</sup> Here, the thinking went, White combat preparedness was contingent upon Black relegation to labor, and such a dynamic was justified by the military leadership’s assessment of moral and psychological dispositions, of which poor physical health was merely a symptom.

The primacy of this concern about social disposition and psychological capacity is evident in the aptitude testing programs that draftees were subjected to upon arriving in training camps. From the beginning of the draft, new arrivals in the camps were screened for physical fitness, skills and qualifications, to determine where to place them as personnel. Six months after the United States’ entry into the conflict, the War Department added psychological testing to its personnel screening process, and by January 1, 1919, 1,726,000 soldiers had been evaluated using these so-called “intelligence tests.”<sup>25</sup> Intelligence tests were designed by psychologists in the National Research Council’s Psychology Committee—specifically the subcommittee on the Classification of Army Personnel—an agency that was headed by Walter Dill Scott. Scott was an applied psychologist whose research before the war centered on the use of psychology in advertising to manipulate consumer suggestibility, and one of the key attendees at the Informal Conference on Morale that eventually led to the founding of the Military Morale Section and the Morale Branch. The program for intelligence testing was expanded under the leadership of Robert M. Yerkes, who was head of the Psychological Committee (a committee that included Walter Dill Scott and G. Stanley Hall), and who, under the auspices of that organization, initiated, with E. L. Munson, the Informal Conference on Morale in April, 1918 that led to the founding of the Military Morale Section.<sup>26</sup>

Like medical examinations and skill qualification exams, these noncommissioned officers believed psychological tests would “increase military efficiency and . . . lessen the cost of training and maintenance,” as Yerkes put it. They would achieve this, he explained, by

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<sup>24</sup> Anderson, “Disposal of the Colored Drafted Men,” 191-193, 195.

<sup>25</sup> Robert M. Yerkes, “Report of the Psychology Committee of the National Research Council,” (Washington, D.C. : National Research Council, 1919), 90.

<sup>26</sup> Yerkes sold the idea of intelligence testing to the military leadership by assuring them that it could be executed quickly and efficiently, leading to a classification of soldiers that would help them win the war. Jennifer Diane Keene, “Intelligence and Morale in the Army of a Democracy: The Genesis of Military Psychology During the First World War,” *Military Psychology*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (1994), 240-42; Thomas Camfield, “‘Will to Win’—The U.S. Army Troop Morale Program of World War I,” *Military Affairs*, Vol. 41, No. 3 (October, 1977), 126.

detecting, in particular, “intellectual deficiency, psychopathic tendencies, nervous instability, and inadequate self-control.”<sup>27</sup> While the actual impact of intelligence tests on how draftees were assigned within the ranks was negligible, according to Stephen Jay Gould, the primary impact of the testing program was the meaning that leaders made of the data both during and after the war.<sup>28</sup> The tests, designed as they were to “aid in segregating the mentally incompetent,” as Yerkes put it in his 1919 report on the tests’ findings, offer insight into the thinking of the noncommissioned officers who founded, advised, and staffed the War Department’s morale agencies.

Yerkes devised three tests: Alpha (for literate draftees), Beta (for illiterate and non-English speaking draftees), and an individual test, modeled on Lewis Terman’s adaptation of the Binet scales (which was a precursor to the modern IQ test), which would evaluate the intelligence of draftees who scored exceptionally low on either of these tests.<sup>29</sup> Very few Black draftees were tested using the Alpha test, but some Black soldiers from Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, North and South Carolina, and the District of Columbia were tested with Alpha, however, and the findings of these so-called “intelligence” tests, like those of the medical tests, showed a large disparity between White and African American soldiers—disparities that Yerkes asserted that he believed were “inborn.”<sup>30</sup> Yerkes concluded from this finding that “[a]ll officers without exception agree that the negro lacks initiative, displays little or no leadership, and cannot accept responsibility.”<sup>31</sup> This perspective would have been completely anathema to the

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<sup>27</sup> This wording is from the “preamble to plan first submitted to the Surgeon General,” quoted in Yerkes, “Report of the Psychology Committee,” 89.

<sup>28</sup> Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1981), 224-225. As Arthur E. Barbeau and Florette Henri explain, the key significance of the tests is the use that their flawed findings were put to during and after the war by “[t]hose who opposed equality for black people.” Barbeau and Henri, *The Unknown Soldiers*, 44.

<sup>29</sup> Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, 224.

<sup>30</sup> Barbeau and Henri, *Unknown Soldiers*, 45.

<sup>31</sup> Gould, *Mismeasure of Man*, 227.

idea that the military should arm them, train them, and send them to the front lines—especially when the military had such a great demand for basic labor.<sup>32</sup>

One immediate and indisputable finding of the intelligence tests was the high rate of illiteracy among rural African Americans from the South.<sup>33</sup> This discovery had a major impact on the assessed prospects of Black soldiers to fight effectively. As the military historian Jennifer Keene has explained, literacy mattered much more in the First World War than it had in the past because reading and writing skills were necessary for “communicating within an increasingly bureaucratic organization,” where orders and intelligence so often were communicated in writing. But, from the standpoint of morale, illiteracy presented another important problem. Illiterate soldiers, as Keene explains, “were more isolated from their families than soldiers who could write letters home and more insulated from camp morale workers who used camp newspapers to distribute wartime propaganda among its civilian soldiers”—concerns that the “Morale Circular” raised.<sup>34</sup> Newspapers, bulletins, and other vectors of instruction and propaganda that the morale agency designed to have a cumulative positive effect on the morale of soldiers would have been unavailable to the illiterate soldier. Without the ability to read and write, all of these means of influencing the morale of soldiers would have been ineffective.

Military intelligence tests, in addition to evaluating reading and writing competency, also tested for self-control. In a chapter assessing the efficacy of the intelligence tests, G. Stanley Hall asserted that, while the tests did not explicitly “measure courage, personal leadership,

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<sup>32</sup> Both Yerkes’s methodologies and conclusions have been thoroughly discredited by subsequent analysis. The conclusion that test score disparity was due to inborn qualities was overturned by Ashley Montagu in 1945, when, using Yerkes’s same data, he demonstrated that, while in general, Black test-takers scored lower than White test-takers, Black draftees from northern states outperformed White draftees from several southern states, suggesting that environment, not biology, was the critical determining factor affecting scores. M. F. Ashley Montagu, “Intelligence of Northern Negroes and Southern Whites in the First World War,” *The American Journal of Psychology*, Vol. 518, No. 2 (Apr., 1945), 161-188. Yerkes’s hereditarian theory of intelligence was further discredited in a subsequent study by John Rury in 1988, which, in an effort to pinpoint concrete reasons for the poor performance of African Americans (and southern Whites) on the Alpha test, identified high coefficients between educational attainment and test scores, and identified urban living and industrial (as opposed to agricultural) work as predictors of higher test scores. As Rury explains, “in the last analysis northern blacks may have tested better than southern whites simply because they were better educated, and overall black scores were probably lower because of racism and pervasive discrimination against black education in the South.” John L. Rury, “Race, Region, and Education: An Analysis of Black and White Scores on the 1917 Army Alpha Intelligence Test,” *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 57, No. 1 (Winter, 1988), 51-65. Stephen Jay Gould has demonstrated that, in addition to altogether ignoring environmental factors in his conclusions, Yerkes did not account for the strained environmental conditions in which the tests themselves were performed. Tests were regularly administered in crowded rooms without furniture and with poor lighting, where instructions were sometimes inaudible. In addition to this, the tests, which supposedly measured intelligence, contained many questions that required specific cultural knowledge (such as an understanding of what a particular brand of shortening was, or who a particular writer was)—a fact that almost certainly impeded the attainment of high scores among test-takers whose backgrounds were less culturally-integrated than the average White, urban, middle-class draftee. Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, 230-31.

<sup>33</sup> Literacy was not just a problem among African American soldiers. It was estimated that around 20% of draftees were illiterate to some significant degree. Keene, “Intelligence and Morale in the Army of a Democracy,” 243. Besides African Americans, war planners also worried about non-English-speaking immigrant soldiers, who, like Black draftees, were similarly often relegated to labor battalions. Kennedy, *Over Here*, 158.

<sup>34</sup> Keene, “Intelligence and Morale in the Army of a Democracy,” 244; Morale Branch, “Morale Circular No. 1,” 11.

loyalty, [and] the emotional traits that make men ‘carry on,’” that “superior intelligence” was “perhaps the most important single factor” in predicting the presence of these motivation-giving traits in a soldier. Hall endorsed what he called “nature’s aristocracy of the ablest and the best.” It was on this basis that he endorsed placement tests: “It is in the light of such considerations that we must rate very highly the value of all such tests, not only in war but in all departments of life in times of peace.”<sup>35</sup> In the framing of other military psychologists, too, there was a close relationship between “intelligence” and capacity for self-control (and especially sexual self-control)—a relationship that was, in many ways, inherent in the meaning of “intelligence” as used by these experts. Intelligence tests were designed, in part, to determine whether recruits possessed adequate “self-control,” and toward this end, centered much of their attention on the perceived capacity of soldiers to absorb moral messaging, and to resist “sex suggestion.” As Jennifer Keene explains, psychologists would observe the effects of “social hygiene” materials on draftees to check for their capacity to attain the preconditions of good morale, recording whether or not “they are . . . susceptible to social hygiene instruction,” as one report from Camp Grant put it. This report, entitled *Study Value of “Damaged Goods” as a Morale Agent*, not only conflated sexual restraint with intelligence, and sexual suggestibility with unintelligence, but also associated the latter of these with African Americans, who the report’s authors clearly regarded as less civilized than their White peers. “[T]he colored men being more primitive and of lower intelligence [are] more easily distracted and excited by sex suggestion and less permanently impressed with moral and social restraints,” the report concluded of one set of experimental test subjects.<sup>36</sup> Not only did this report collapse the distinction between mental capacity and sexual motivational capacity, but it also demonstrated how military psychologists’ and morale agents’ definitions of intelligence were designed around specific cultural values. African Americans’ exclusion from the highly-regarded combat units was, therefore, to a significant degree, determined by perceptions of their sexual dispositions, and the degree to which White, elite war planners believed that this would compromise their combat motivation and stamina.

### **The Fragility of White Chivalry**

Officers in the Morale Branch worried that racial hostilities in general might affect the morale of both Black and White soldiers. In the first place, they worried that racial tensions might affect the performance and motivation of soldiers. As the “Morale Circular” explained, “[t]he mixture in a training camp of colored soldiers and officers from different sections of the

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<sup>35</sup> G. Stanley Hall, *Morale: The Supreme Standard of Life and Conduct* (1920), 160, 169.

<sup>36</sup> First Lieutenant Paul Terry, *Study Value of “Damaged Goods” as a morale agent*, cited in Keene, “Intelligence and Morale in the Army of a Democracy,” 238-39.

country and a contact of white and colored soldiers . . . constitute conditions favorable to misunderstanding and trouble,” and on these grounds, the Branch justified racial segregation.<sup>37</sup>

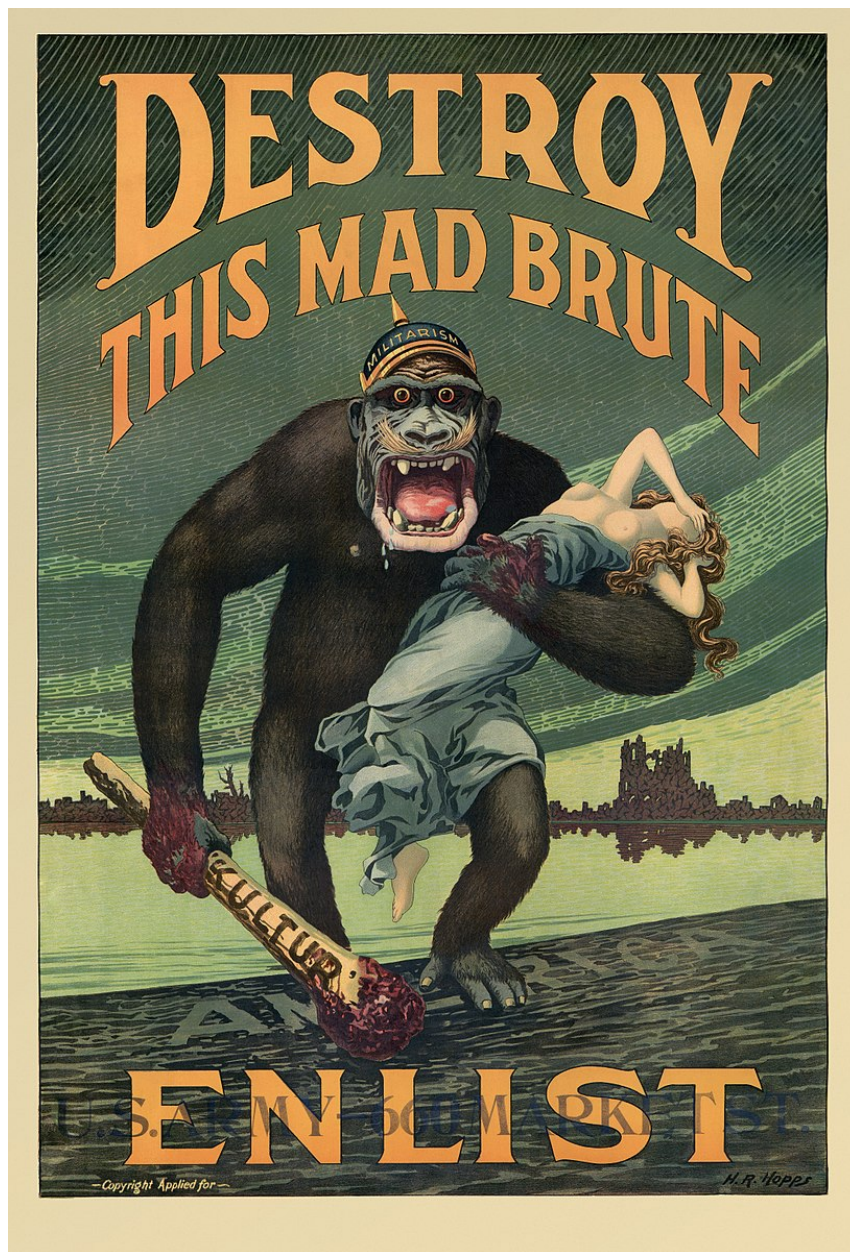
The mere presence of African American soldiers—while strategically necessary for filling the ranks of the military—complicated narratives that the War Department used to motivate White soldiers to participate in the war. As Adriane Lentz-Smith has argued, “[a]s an ideological system, Jim Crow tried to settle gender roles for White people by diminishing black humanity,” and this was just as true in the ranks of the military as anywhere else.<sup>38</sup> In their efforts to establish both military and civilian morale, the War Department’s propagandists—in the Committee on Public Information, the morale agencies, and in the service organizations of the Commission on Training Camp Activities—used the racialized and sexualized terminology of the “Hun” to describe Germans and to justify the righteousness of American belligerency. The racial dimensions of wartime propaganda’s “Hun” framing can be seen in a popular poster from the time, which depicts German militarism as a violent, dark-skinned ape-like creature, clutching a half-naked White woman in his arms as he stomps into American territory. (See Figure 4.1) Such framings and imagery not only had parallels with the way that African Americans were frequently described by White racists, but also would have made the full inclusion of Black soldiers in the racialized struggle against the Germans seem contradictory, since the presence of Black soldiers would have subtracted from the mobilizing sense of racial supremacy. War Department leaders and morale planners described morale as relying upon soldiers’ self-perception as heroic and chivalrous, and, as Andrew Huebner has pointed out, Black chivalry was perceived by many White military figures as “threatening . . . to white social space and comfort.” In a stratified world where Whiteness defined its virtue in direct opposition to Blackness, Huebner demonstrates, “the black soldier’s masculine prerogative to gain was the white man’s to lose.”<sup>39</sup> Where the morale agencies motivated White soldiers to lean into the war by playing up the narrative that to do so was to defend women, chivalry among Black soldiers was commonly perceived to be threatening, because African American women were so often victimized by White individuals and institutions. The cascading incidents that led to the uprising in Houston were, after all, initially triggered by a Black soldier’s protectiveness over an African American woman who was illegitimately being arrested by the White police. As Williams explains, Lee Sparks—the leading White police officer in the incident—arrested Sara Travers on unfounded suspicions that she was harboring two Black teenagers who had allegedly been

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<sup>37</sup> Morale Branch, “Morale Circular No. 1: Suggestions for Morale Officers”; Morale Circular # 1; General Correspondence File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 8, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD., 11.

<sup>38</sup> Adriane Lentz-Smith, *Freedom Struggles: African Americans and World War I* (Cambridge Ma.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 82.

<sup>39</sup> Andrew J. Huebner, *Love and Death In the Great War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 71.



**Figure 4.1:** “Destroy this mad brute. Enlist.” This widely-circulated recruitment poster demonstrates the racialized and sexualized overtones of anti-German themes within American wartime propaganda.

illegally gambling. When “[s]he professed her innocence,” Lee Sparks “responded by demeaning [her] womanhood and respectability” with a slew of racist and sexually-demeaning derogations, slapping her in the face, and “forc[ing] her into the street only partially clothed” as he arrested her. When the young private Alonzo Edwards intervened in front of a “crowd of black onlookers who witnessed the disturbing scene” (resulting in Sparks pistol-whipping Edwards and placing him, too, under arrest), the man’s actions were simultaneously an act of chivalry and a threat to White power and prerogative.<sup>40</sup> Here, as in so many other cases, White and

<sup>40</sup> Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy*, 33-34.

Black masculinity and chivalry were at utter odds with each other—a fact that proves that morale, as conceptualized by military and military-adjacent civilian leaders, was not a universal good in which all could partake, but rather a relational status requiring moral superiority over an ‘Other,’ and existing in a zero-sum affective universe.<sup>41</sup> As Kimberley A. Reilly states in an article on the sexual politics of citizenship during the First world War, “[t]he exclusion of African Americans was fundamental, not exceptional, to the constitution of a unified national identity.”<sup>42</sup>

As the previous chapter demonstrates, morale was based not only in acts of chivalry, but also in symbols of virtuosity and heroism. Salient among these was the military uniform: a costume that anchored soldiers’ elevated perceptions of themselves as witnessed and admired heroes. The meaning of this symbol was meticulously inflated, guarded and defended from what were believed to be tarnishes on, or subtractions from its symbolic power. The morale agencies were at the forefront of maintaining the symbolic potency of the uniform, guarding and defending its dignity in numerous articles and editorials both before and after the armistice was signed.<sup>43</sup> For this reason, there was much White consternation about the prospect of African American men wearing the uniform. Likely for this reason, the army General Staff’s Colonel E. D. Anderson proscribed enlisted African American laborers from wearing uniforms. Black soldiers—both stateside and in France—performed their military duties in the typical sharecropper outfit of blue overalls.<sup>44</sup> When Black soldiers did get placed in military uniforms, their reception by White civilians and officers frequently improved. “Clothes did make the man with them,” recalled one officer from Camp Travis, Texas, “and in uniform [Black soldiers] stepped straight with pride and a solemn smile, if such an expression is possible to a negro.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Testifying to the extent to which Black chivalry likely really was a threat to White racial domination, Andrew Huebner has shown that the Houston incident was viewed favorably by many African Americans, who “saw [in these events] an inspiring defense of black womanhood.” “‘You dared protect a Negro woman,’ a schoolteacher in Texas wrote. This was the ‘most sacred thing on earth,’ she said, echoing national standards of masculinity that in part underpinned intervention in the European war. But here whites were the enemy, what one woman of color called ‘Southern huns.’” Some African American men saw Wilson’s fight for democracy as beginning on the home front: “‘You are going to fight for Democracy,’ exhorted a man named Ely Green. ‘This is where you should start, at your own doorstep, to defend your women.’” Huebner, *Love & Death in the Great War*, 70-71.

<sup>42</sup> Kimberley A. Reilly, “‘A Perilous Venture for Democracy’: Soldiers, Sexual Purity, and American Citizenship in the First World War,” *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (April 2014), 237.

<sup>43</sup> Maryland’s Camp Holabird’s camp newspaper, *The Holabird Spark*, ran an editorial written by the Morale Branch that explicitly stated that “[a]ny man in uniform is conspicuous wherever he goes and in whatever he does, therefore he should be careful of his acts and conduct while in uniform.” “Conduct While In Uniform,” *The Holabird Spark*, February 27, 1919, 4. Another editorial, entitled “The Discharged Soldier and the Uniform,” urged men recently released from military service to “[r]emember that the people of the country are watching you,” and that these men ought to “make your conduct and your habits and your associates such that you will bring honor on the uniform as the other men who are wearing it.” “The Discharged Soldier and the Uniform,” Morale Office, Camp Lee, VA., Editorials, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 2, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>44</sup> Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 33-34.

<sup>45</sup> E. B. Johns, *Camp Travis and its part in the World War, Texas, 1918* (New York: E. B. Johns, 1919), 27.

The mission of motivating White soldiers to fight by instilling morale in them depended upon a fundamentally racist social logic, since the promise of social legibility was fundamentally underpinned by Black subjugation, and because the looming threat of social illegibility (which a White soldier would be confronted with if he became a so-called “slacker” or failed to fight gallantly) was modeled and demonstrated by the unappreciated Black enlistee. In this way, the Black soldier’s lowly status simultaneously gave a competitive meaning to White morale, and served to mobilize anxiety concerning his status—especially in the eyes of the judging female at home.

### **Morale, Racial Uplift, and the Aspirations of “Race Men”**

If morale and its preconditions offered some of the pretext for excluding Black soldiers from combat units, for some African American community leaders, intellectuals, and advocates, it was a quality that African American soldiers might vie for in a process of self-improvement, and a starting point for redeeming themselves in the eyes of White society. This was a view held especially by the man who the War Department brought in to ease tensions and provide for the welfare of African American soldiers after the uprising in Houston—a man named Emmett J. Scott.<sup>46</sup> On October 5, 1917, Scott was appointed Special Assistant to the Secretary of War—an advisory role that a War Department Official Memo announcing his appointment described as “confidential advisor in matters affecting the interests of the 10,000,000 Negroes of the United States, and the part they are to play in connection with the present war.”<sup>47</sup> Prior to his appointment, Scott had been Booker T. Washington’s personal assistant and head advisor at the Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute of Negroes (typically referred to simply as the Tuskegee Institute)—a role he played for eighteen years, until Washington’s death in 1915. His appointment was recommended by Dr. Robert R. Moton, who replaced Washington as the Principal of the Tuskegee Institute in 1915 (a role that Scott himself had been slated for). The Institute itself was a bastion of assimilationist politics, and this assimilationist approach to racial uplift made its leadership singularly appealing to War Department officials, who were eager to embrace and employ the most accommodating and least disruptive solution to racial tensions available. Scott had a long history of participation in racial “betterment” work, seeking to “uplift”

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<sup>46</sup> Kennedy, *Over Here*, 160.

<sup>47</sup> War Department “Official Bulletin” of October 5, 1917, quoted in Scott, *Scott’s Official History of The American Negro*, 40.

and improve the lives, prospects and character of African Americans through a mixture of reform, education, and what can only be described as “respectability politics.”<sup>48</sup>

The War Department’s appointment of Scott testifies to the degree to which White military officials saw the events in Houston through a defensive prism of morale. The War Department’s approach to morale among African American enlistees was less about motivation than it was about pacification. Scott’s primary role was to placate Black soldiers, and make them feel looked after, even though the military did not invest in the kinds of social programs that it used to motivate White soldiers. Throughout the war, and especially early on, educational and entertainment facilities and services were severely lacking for African American soldiers. The CTCA had a stated commitment to provision for both White and Black soldiers equally, but in practice, this commitment was rarely adhered to. Whereas the YMCA sought “to provide one hut for every 3,000 soldiers,” an October, 1918 report on the situation addressed to the Morale Branch’s Chief E. L. Munson admitted, “[t]he Y.M.C.A. has not been able, in many instances, to reach this standard of equipment for the colored soldiers.”<sup>49</sup> Inside the training camps, the welfare organizations that were placed in charge of erecting and operating recreational huts—the YMCA, the Knights of Columbus and the Jewish Welfare Board—struggled to provide an adequate number of huts for African American trainees, especially when camp facilities were strictly segregated according to race. Part of the reason for this was that, after the uprising in Houston, the War Department delayed the drafting and permanent placement of many African American soldiers, and, by the time Black draftees were finally called up in September of 1917, many camps had already developed their recreation systems without provisions made for these soldiers. In addition to this, because of the War Department’s protective strategy of spreading out Black soldiers to ensure that they were significantly outnumbered by White soldiers in each camp, and because many camps varied in size, equal provisions in the segregated facilities for African Americans were often lacking in size and/or quality, if they existed at all.<sup>50</sup> The CTCA’s welfare organizations lacked the resources to construct and staff entirely separate huts for Black soldiers in all of the camps where they were present, without compromising the services

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<sup>48</sup> Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, writing of the practices and politics of African American Baptist women in the same period defines the “politics of respectability” as discourses and advocacy that resist “self-perceptions as hapless, impotent victims of racism and sexism,” insist “upon blacks’ conformity to the dominant society’s norms of manners and morals,” condemn “what they [perceive] to be negative practices and attitudes among their own people,” and internalize “their own representations.” Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *Righteous Discontent: the Women’s Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 186-87. For more on the history and politics of racial uplift, see Kevin K. Gaines, *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Hazel V. Carby, *Race Men: The W.E.B. Du Bois Lectures* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1998).

<sup>49</sup> J. E. Cutler, “Memorandum for the Director, Military Intelligence Division, and the Chief, Morale Branch, Executive Division, General Staff,” December 23, 1918, quoted in Nancy K. Bristow, *Making Men Moral: Social Engineering During the Great War* (New York: New York University, 1996), 148.

<sup>50</sup> Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, 146-47. Williams, *Sidelights*, 96.

rendered to White soldiers. Many smaller camps consequently went entirely without welfare huts for their African American soldiers for much of the war.

Scott saw the improvement of morale as a means of racial “uplift,” seeking to instill “a healthy morale” that would be the motivational fuel for personal responsibility and militant striving among Black soldiers.<sup>51</sup> The War Department’s main concern, however, was to prevent insubordination and violence such as what had occurred in Houston—in spite of their relegation to uncelebrated labor roles, frequent mistreatment by White officers and civilians, and often blatantly inferior accommodations and recreational prospects as compared to those given to White soldiers. In the face of this multi-dimensional mistreatment, the War Department needed a way of calming the seething resentments of Black soldiers and civilians, and this called for a defensive type of morale work that was less concerned with motivating them to strive and to fight than with pacifying any potential dissent. However, as Chad Williams has argued, Scott’s “role in the War Department . . . remained largely symbolic and was used by the government to boost the fragile patriotic spirits of African Americans, as opposed to truly addressing their concerns.” In carrying out these duties, Scott not only intervened to bring programming and propaganda to soldiers in the camps; he also worked with the Committee on Public Information to improve public relations for the War Department (and U.S. government generally) in the eyes of African Americans.<sup>52</sup> As William A. Sweeney explained in his 1919 *History of the American Negro in the Great World War*, morale officers “had many problems to meet and much smoothing over to do,” and consequently “they became known as ‘fixers.’”<sup>53</sup> As the “Morale Circular” explained, “[u]nder all circumstances, the presence of colored soldiers in the camp requires the particular attention of the Morale Officer”—a concern that, from the War Department’s perspective, was likely more about preserving order than looking out for the welfare of African American cadets.<sup>54</sup>

## Conclusion

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<sup>51</sup> Scott, *Scott’s Official History of The American Negro in the World War*, 61, 92.

<sup>52</sup> Williams, *Torchbearers of Democracy*, 72-73. Scott himself acknowledged his role in using propaganda to influence the outlooks of Black soldiers and civilians alike. As he explained in his book, he cooperated “with the Committee on Public Information, . . . conducted a systematic campaign of publicity through the negro press, the Official Bulletin, leading white newspapers and magazines, etc., . . . [to keep] the colored people and the country at large fully informed as to the aims and policies of the Government and especially as to the attitude of the War Department with reference to opportunities offered and treatment accorded colored draftees and soldiers.” Scott, *Scott’s Official History of The American Negro in the World War*, 65.

<sup>53</sup> William Allison Sweeney, *History of the American Negro in the Great World War* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1969 [1919]), 235.

<sup>54</sup> Morale Branch, “Morale Circular No. 1,” 11.

In all of these ways, the charge that Black soldiers were sexually unrestrained compared to White soldiers played an important role in their placement in labor battalions. Historians have already demonstrated how the indictment that African Americans were less sexually restrained than White Americans served to justify segregation and violence against Black men, women, and children, but as the above analysis suggests, racialized conceptions of the susceptibility to be motivated also served as one of the main bases for discrimination against African Americans, who were excluded from combat service partially because of the perception that they lacked the prerequisites for good morale. In addition to this, White military leaders worried that their presence within the ranks would threaten the morale of White soldiers, whose performed identities as chivalrous heroes depended in part upon their place within a racialized hierarchy. Given the extent to which War Department officials saw sexual self-control as an indispensable prerequisite of military morale, and the pervasiveness of stereotypes about the sexual deviance of African Americans, these judgements are unsurprising. And in a war effort that measured manliness in terms of the ability to control sexual urges, and imagined fighting efficacy to be the product of diverting sexual energy into strenuous activity, these stereotypes would have been devastating to the perceived prospects of Black soldiers' military performance, as well as a convenient vindication of the discrimination that they suffered.

Like race itself, morale proved to be a condition that was both socially constructed, and materially consequential; imposed by powerful institutions, yet also claimed and occupied as a point of pride and a means of recognition. While it may be true, then, that many Black soldiers possessed low morale, the most likely reason for this is that they were systematically excluded from sexual status hierarchies, marginalized in the war camps, and deprived of public representation as heroes. In the "intimate public" of the training and war camps, relatable media representation and modes of belonging—as manipulative as these things were for those who were included in them—were withheld from African American enlistees, in ways that severely undermined both their mood and their motivation.<sup>55</sup> In the cultivation of the White, affirmative version of morale, as we have already seen, soldiers were offered pathways to desirability, and an aspirational fantasy of social recognition, and the consciousness of themselves as observed, admired, would-be heroes—all of which had tangible effects on how they both moved through the world, and how others in the world related to them. To be excluded from the programs, spaces, modes of representation and affirmation—however manipulative and exploitative these were—was to be excluded from full social, political and cultural participation. It is in this way that morale—as a sexually-hierarchical mode of evaluating motivation susceptibility—must be taken into consideration in our analyses racialized disparity during the First World War.

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<sup>55</sup> For a description and theorization of "intimate publics," see Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 13.

**Chapter 5:**  
**“Chevrons of Honor”: The Morale Branch’s Appeals to Symbols, Insignia, and Legacy  
Protection During the Long Demobilization Process**

With the onset of the negotiated peace that came with the signing of the armistice on November 11, 1918, the goal of American military leaders shifted from mobilizing armaments, men, and psychological states to win a war, to coordinating the transportation of men back to the United States, planning their transition back to civilian life, managing a military occupation of Germany, and maintaining the spirits of the men in the military as they waited for the War Department to send them home. By the end of the war, there were over two million American soldiers deployed in France, and an additional two million enlistees training or otherwise serving the war effort back in the United States. Because of the logistics involved, the War Department realized that they would need months to get the soldiers serving in France back to the United States and discharged from military service. Moreover, there would need to be a remaining occupying force in Germany whose discipline and activity would require active maintenance. As military leaders began to approach these new missions and constraints, they also increasingly realized that there would need to be a major campaign to maintain morale among the exhausted and impatient soldiers. For the motivational leaders of the Morale Branch, the purpose of maintaining morale shifted from winning the war to preventing unrest. Morale agents referred to this as “the Battle of Brest”—named after the port city where most soldiers spent months waiting for their turn to go home.

This chapter traces the efforts that the Morale Branch undertook to contend with the new challenges facing the discipline and motivation of the soldiers after the armistice, focusing especially on the ways in which that agency altered their propaganda strategy to secure and extend the men’s loyalty and compliance after the fighting stopped. Demobilization called for new motivational strategies that would prevent unrest and encourage the men to shoulder responsibility—both during the end of their military service and when they reentered civilian life. Part of what made the “Battle of Brest” challenging for morale officers and agents was that, after the armistice was signed, a major component of the Morale Branch’s and CTCA’s motivational framework for American soldiers collapsed, since in peacetime, there was no longer a heroic mission for the men to participate in. Whereas during active conflict, sexualized heroism narratives offered compelling reasons for men to subordinate themselves to the uncomfortable, dangerous, and terrifying requirements of the military, after the cessation of hostilities, the ongoing tasks, duties and sacrifices asked of them no longer could be justified on the basis of the glory these might bring to the men in the eyes of female observers. Because of this, the

Morale Branch's in-house historians reflected in September 1919, the so-called "Battle of Brest" involved the fullest and most advanced deployment of the War Department's morale apparatus. The Morale Branch was unable to achieve a full-scale implementation of "widespread systematic stimulation of morale," they reported, until after the war was over.<sup>1</sup>

This full-scale "widespread systematic stimulation of morale" entailed more than an expansion of morale efforts. It also entailed a change in the messages of the morale agency's propaganda—one that would keep the soldiers motivated even with the conflict over. What the propagandists of the Morale Branch needed to do was to instill a sense, among the soldiers, that they had created a legacy for themselves through their military service, and to indicate that this legacy could be undermined by undisciplined or insubordinate behavior. If before and during the war, the implicit message of propaganda was that the men lacked anything that would be valuable or interesting to women and girls until they had proven themselves through military service, the implicit message of post-armistice propaganda was that the men could lose what they now had that made them valuable and interesting to women and girls. Behind much of the Morale Branch's propaganda loomed a threat that soldiers could, through insubordinate behavior, undermine their legacy and lose the admiration of the people (and especially the women) back at home.

There was a familiar temporality to the Morale Branch's postwar strategy—specifically, a demand for deferred gratification and an aspirational investment in the future. According to the affect theorist Ben Anderson, efforts to instill morale always deploy temporality in this way. Morale, in Anderson's framing, describes the process whereby an individual may become invested with a personal sense of obligation, hope, honor, fraternity, and valor, animated affectively to subordinate their personal will to that of the group or nation, coaxed to endure and persevere through an intolerable set of conditions in the present by "a perpetually deferred promise on the horizon."<sup>2</sup> Like the prolonged wait to discharge from the military, the morale agency's insistence that the men protect and defend their legacy moved the goalposts for the demobilizing soldiers, many of whom had already done the hard and dangerous work of fighting. Now, the Morale Branch presented them with a new responsibility: to maintain and protect the legacy of this earlier effort and sacrifice. In order to convince the men of this, the Morale Branch's propagandists needed to shift their narratives about the war, the men's place in it, and what had motivated them to participate in it. Here, the propagandists retrospectively asserted

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<sup>1</sup> Capt. Randolph C. Shaw and 1st Lieut. J. L. Bennett, "Military Morale Work: A History of its Institution and Development in the United States Army," enclosed in letter from Major R. J. Burt, Acting Chief of the Morale Branch to Chief, Historical Branch, War Plans Division, General Staff, September 20, 1919; W. D.—History of Morale Branch; Records of the Historical Section Relating to the History of the War Department, 1900-1941; G-4 Liason & Communication, Orders & Publications; Record Group 165; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 18.

<sup>2</sup> Ben Anderson, "Modulating the Excess of Affect: Morale in a State of 'Total War,'" in Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, eds., *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 161-77.

that the cause had always been civic and patriotic (rather than personal), and that the men were virtuous for stepping up to meet their duties. In addition to this, the Morale Branch propagandists needed to paint a more inclusive picture of the war's honor, in order to instill a similar urge to protect one's legacy among the millions of men who never went "over" to France, as well as among those who were severely injured in the war. This requirement resulted in some highly contradictory messaging. The Morale Branch tried to simultaneously convince the men that their honor and status were derived from their heroic bravery on the battlefield, and also that their honor was secured by merely being willing to go—whether or not they actually made it "over." The agency also insisted that the key signs of a soldier's status were his upright stature and ability to work, while at the same time, the agency invested symbolic significance and attributed sexual appeal to the wounded soldier (and the insignia that the military issued to wounded men). All of this demanded a certain backpedaling on the part of the morale agency, because of the narrow parameters that the agency's writers and propagandists had previously set for achieving honor in the war.

### **Threats to Morale Within the War Department's Demobilization Strategy**

The armistice presented the War Department with a decision: on what basis should it proceed with demobilization? Specifically, should it demobilize soldiers in a slow, careful way to prevent economic problems in domestic industries, or should it return soldiers as quickly as possible to avert a crisis of military morale? A demobilization strategy that prioritized industrial considerations would have released men from military service in a planned way based upon what industries they intended or were suited to working in, so as to avoid causing gluts in the labor market. Such a policy would have delayed the discharge of many men, and slowed down the demobilization process overall. A demobilization strategy that prioritized military considerations, on the other hand, would discharge soldiers based, mostly, upon whether or not the military had a need or a use for them. With the war over, the military only had limited use for soldiers, and this strategy would therefore entail discharging men as quickly as possible. In the end, Secretary of War Newton D. Baker elected to pursue a rapid demobilization strategy that favored military, rather than industrial, priorities. Here, he and other American military leaders were influenced somewhat by their observations of a mass mutiny that arose in the British army due to a slow demobilization process in that country's armed forces that was part of an economic strategy of maintaining industrial order.<sup>3</sup> Rather than risking a similar breakdown in military morale (and a resultant crisis of civilian public opinion), Baker and the generals decided

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<sup>3</sup> E. Jay Howenstine, Jr., "Demobilization After the First World War," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (Nov., 1943), 92-98.

to risk potential disruptions in labor markets. While this trade-off was calculated to minimize the prospect of strife among the soldiers, military leaders nevertheless still worried that economic turmoil could precipitate its own crisis of morale—a consequence that they relied upon the Morale Branch to help mitigate.

With a general plan for demobilization in place, the Morale Branch's leaders needed to formulate their own specific strategy for handling men's morale during the process. Despite the fact that the War Department's demobilization strategy was designed to prioritize the maintenance of military morale, the leaders of the Morale Branch cited several compounding factors that the agency saw as threats to morale. The first of these was the length of time that demobilization was necessarily going to take.<sup>4</sup> While Baker opted for as rapid a demobilization process as possible, limited American shipping capacity presented a major bottleneck for returning soldiers home. During the mobilization, roughly seventy-five percent of the two million A.E.F. soldiers had been brought to the European theater of operations on British and French ships. With the end of active fighting, those countries needed to use their shipping capacity to return their own soldiers, including to British and French colonies where major troop reserves had been drawn from.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the American vessels that had been used for troop transportation purposes were in desperate need of servicing and repair. To bring soldiers back, the War Department needed to charter and convert commercial ships to make them suitable for transporting soldiers—a process that took an average of forty-one days to complete once a contract was signed with a dockyard company for the conversion work.<sup>6</sup> In the end, it took months for American leaders to overcome the bottleneck in shipping, and it was not until June of 1919 that the flow of soldiers back to the United States reached its full swing (with a fleet of 174 operating vessels capable of transporting a total of 419,000 troops at once).<sup>7</sup> It took until August for the War Department to reach 80% demobilization of the A.E.F., and still 156,000 soldiers remained in Europe. In the meantime, military officials faced enormous political pressure domestically to get soldiers home sooner, as well as pressure from the soldiers themselves, who felt restless and disenchanting with how long they needed to wait before their chance to make the Atlantic crossing.<sup>8</sup> Even once a soldier's unit was cleared to sail, as a Morale Branch chart mapping out the morale provisions for demobilization estimated, it would take an average

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<sup>4</sup> Shaw and Bennett, "Military Morale Work: A History of Its Institution and Development in the United States Army," 21.

<sup>5</sup> Howenstine, "Demobilization After the First World War," 101.

<sup>6</sup> Benedict Cromwell and Robert Forrest Wilson, *Demobilization: Our Industrial and Military Demobilization After the Armistice, 1918-1920* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921), 34-35.

<sup>7</sup> Cromwell and Wilson, *Demobilization*, 36.

<sup>8</sup> Howenstine, "Demobilization After the First World War," 101-103.

of forty-five days to get him home, as he made his way through quarantine and de-lousing (taking 14 days on average), onto his troop transport ship across the Atlantic (10 days on average), through a debarkation camp (5 days on average), onto a train to the nearest demobilization camp to his home (3 days on average), his stay in the demobilization camp (10 days on average), and onto a train home (1 day on average).<sup>9</sup>

Another factor that morale leaders cited as being likely to drive down morale was the fact that military leaders were unable to give the soldiers a clear date or plan for their demobilization and discharge. In a February, 1919 report to the Secretary of War, the CTCA's chairman Raymond Fosdick pointed to the deleterious effect that "[u]ncertainty of plans for returning home" had on troop morale. "This question dwarfs all others," he insisted. "[I]t is the indefiniteness of their status that seems to worry the men almost as much as their enforced sojourn in France."<sup>10</sup> Without clear timelines for when they could expect to return home, soldiers could not make plans for work, social engagements, or even set their sights upon something concrete to look forward to.

A third factor that morale agents cited was the fact that the war camps were becoming less comfortable and less healthy, especially as winter set in. The Pontanezen camp, where soldiers waited to embark troop transports back to the United States from Brest, was described by two historians of demobilization as "a morass of quaking mud," featuring "continual rains, lack of strong drainage, and heavy traffic of men, animals, and trucks."<sup>11</sup> On February 3, 1919, Baker wrote to General Pershing, informing him that he was receiving reports of "a great depression of morale" and "a feeling on the part of many soldiers of bitterness toward the A.E.F. and the War Department" because of the "depressing conditions surrounding them."<sup>12</sup> According to Baker's biographer, despite the fact that unprecedented amounts of American foods and entertainment were being brought to France on the otherwise empty transport ships that the government was sending to bring soldiers back to the United States, soldiers still "had a feeling that they were confined in a corral" as they sat in the vast processing and transfer center of Le Mans, and in camps outside of the port cities of Brest, Bordeaux, and St. Nazaire, waiting for their turn to go home. At Le Mans alone, there were, at any given time during demobilization, at

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<sup>9</sup> Morale Branch, "Morale Program for Men Returing From A.E.F."; Chart of Typical Organization of Morale Agencies Within and Without; Records of the Historical Section Relating to the History of the War Department, 1900-1941; Record Group 165; Box 131; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>10</sup> Raymond Fosdick, "Report to the Secretary of War on the Activities of Welfare Organizations Serving With the A.E.F.," enclosed in memorandum from Adjutant General Robert C. Davis to the Commanding General of the 3rd Army, February 14, 1919; G-3, G.H.Q., A.E.F. Library File; G-3 Library; Record Group 120; Box 75; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 10.

<sup>11</sup> Cromwell and Wilson, *Demobilization*, 16.

<sup>12</sup> Frederick Palmer, *Newton D. Baker: America at War* (New York: Dodd & Mead, 1931), 405.

least 100,000 men camped, waiting to be transferred to seaports.<sup>13</sup> (See Figures 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 & 5.4)

These conditions clearly diminished the morale of soldiers. In a cablegram to Pershing, Baker mentioned the “mud and rain of France,” but also the “discomforts growing out of strict adherence to minor regulations, in spite of conditions which would seem to justify abatement of them,” such as an uncompromising enforcement of impractical uniform regulations banning the turning up of collars in spite of the frequent rain in northwestern France.<sup>14</sup> “Our men,” Baker wrote to Pershing,

in the long winter nights in their billets in French villages, and in their day’s drilling in the mud, had a conviction that, with the winning of the War, their part as citizen soldiers was finished. It was puzzling; why should they still be put through the military paces? And each one wondered when his turn would come for a day in Paris.<sup>15</sup>

Baker’s letter testifies to the combined effects of boredom, physical and psychological discomfort, and restlessness among the soldiers as they sat in the limbo between wartime duty and the familiarity of home. It also describes a sense of betrayal on the part of the soldiers, as they came to the what many of them believed was the end of their duties, only to discover that they still faced months of military service.

Part of the issue was that, despite the armistice, the commanding officers of the AEF, seeking to fill the men’s time and expend their energy, and compelled to do so by General Order No. 207 (which prescribed twenty-five hours per week of drilling), continued to put soldiers through extensive drills and training. Fosdick opposed this practice, insisting that most men were civilians, “not looking forward to any career as soldiers,” and therefore should not be forced to train as if they were going to continue to pursue careers in the army. Fosdick highlighted the temporal dimensions of the soldiers’ discontent, explaining that, in “the time of crisis,” they had “answered the nation’s call,” but that, with the crisis over, they were “impatient” with the military’s continued insistence that they continue to drill and maintain the disciplined lives of soldiers. Whereas before the Armistice the men were eager to train for their military roles, after the Armistice, the drilling exercises of “ramming an empty shell into a gun for hours at a stretch, or training the sights on an enemy that does not exist” seemed to “wilt” the spirits of the soldiers. In the camps, he described seeing men who would “trudge listlessly and without spirit.” To push them too hard, he explained, was to risk making them “disgruntled or out of

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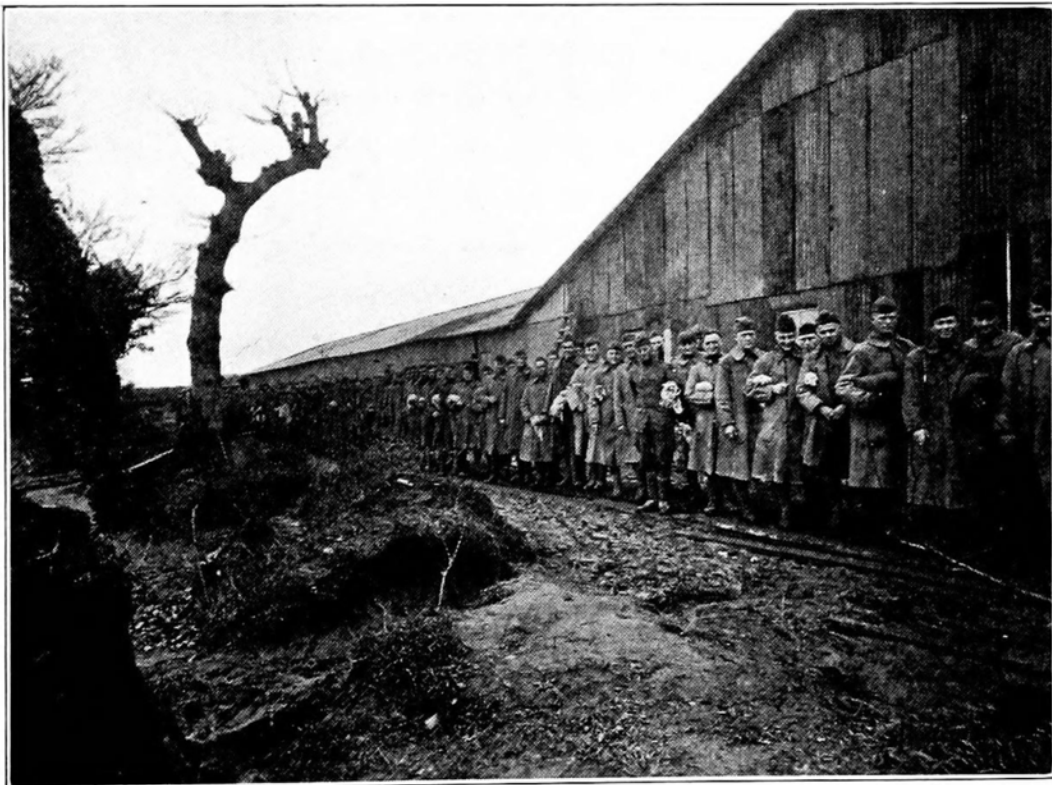
<sup>13</sup> Palmer, *Newton D. Baker*, 406, 409; Burl Noggle, *Into the Twenties: the United States from Armistice to Normalcy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 17.

<sup>14</sup> Palmer, *Newton D. Baker*, 405.

<sup>15</sup> Newton Baker, quoted in Palmer, *Newton D. Baker*, 404.



**Figure 5.1:** "Camp street in Le Mans area," depicting wet and muddy conditions.



**Figure 5.2:** "Bath house at Brest," depicting long lines for the use of bathing facilities.



**Figure 5.3:** “In Camp Pontanezen,” showing the standard bell tents that demobilizing soldiers inhabited.



**Figure 5.4:** “Street in Le Mans area no. 5,” showing muddy conditions along a street of bell tents in Le Mans.

sympathy with the principle of military training.”<sup>16</sup>

Another factor contributing to the “wilting” of the men’s morale was the fact that, with the war over, the cause for which soldiers had mobilized and endured the hardships of deployment, seafaring and camp life evaporated. As Munson explained in his book about morale, the loss of a “common aim” resulted in the subsequent disappearance of the “voluntary obedience, cheerfulness and patience” that had existed before the armistice was signed. Because “[s]atisfaction within a group can only come through subordination of self to well understood purposes,” the Morale Branch’s leader elaborated, “[w]hen definite, common aims do not exist, . . . [e]ach man will tend to be for self, with clashing interests, friction in relations, and discontent because the personal desires which are paramount are not satisfied.”<sup>17</sup> In his February 1919 report to Secretary Baker, Fosdick confirmed that this loss of purpose was affecting morale among the men deployed in France, among whom “the motive has gone out of the whole business [of soldiering].”<sup>18</sup> This is evident in a report on the men working in the Transportation Service, which managed and crewed the ships returning American soldiers to the United States from Europe, and who, at war’s end, faced many long months of work moving food, supplies and soldiers across the Atlantic. Whereas before the armistice, troop transports had been crewed by navy sailors who, as two historians reflected in a 1921, were motivated by “danger and adventure,” these perks disappeared in “the work of operating a collection of prosaic ferry-boats across the now safe Atlantic.”<sup>19</sup> Once the cause of winning the war was achieved, the motivation for enduring this mundane and unpleasant work dissolved.

The armistice undermined the disciplining hero narratives that the military’s morale apparatus depended upon to motivate soldiers to fight and to cope more generally with adverse circumstances, since a core part of the “common aim” that the War Department used to motivate drafted men was a sense of duty to protect women. According to Nancy Bristow, reformers in the CTCA believed that “[t]he end of the war . . . had removed the primary motivation for cooperation with their programs. Freed from the responsibilities of their overseas campaign, the soldiers were likely to shed their invisible armor”—that self-imposed sense of restraint that was supposed to derive from their self-image as witnessed and gallant heroes. The CTCA chairman Raymond Fosdick mused that whereas “[t]he army has been keeping itself fit to fight overseas, because there was a fight to wage,” that this condition would not hold up in

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<sup>16</sup> Fosdick, “Report to the Secretary of War on the Activities of Welfare Organizations Serving With the A.E.F.,” 2, 11, 12.

<sup>17</sup> Edward L. Munson, *The Management of Men: A Handbook on the Systematic Development of Morale and the Control of Human Behavior* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921), 252.

<sup>18</sup> Fosdick, “Report to the Secretary of War on the Activities of Welfare Organizations Serving With the A.E.F.,” 2.

<sup>19</sup> In the end, the War Department alleviated this problem by discharging the navy sailors and hiring civilian crews to operate the troop transports. Cromwell and Wilson, *Demobilization*, 33.

peacetime conditions. “[N]ow with the battles all won,” he continued, “the incentive is gone, and the temptation will be to break training just as a foot-ball team breaks training at the end of the season.”<sup>20</sup> Here, Fosdick’s example is telling, since, as the strategists of the morale programs theorized, athletic discipline was clearly predicated on a motive force that they described with the interchangeable metaphors of “hydraulic” sexual tension and “energy.”<sup>21</sup>

Even after the victory, the CTCA, provost guard, and law enforcement agencies continued to police sexual activity in and around the camps, as evidenced by the field service reports of the Interdepartmental Social Hygiene Board and the Committee on Protective Work for Girls. In city after city, the expanded police and corrective powers of the state continued to make arrests and to enforce sexual abstinence in all the ways that they could.<sup>22</sup> The arrest reports admittedly offer evidence that violations of the War Department’s policies against liquor and prostitution continued to occur, but the low numbers of arrests, paired with the CTCA’s ongoing control of the spatial conditions in which discharging soldiers lived—particularly in the concentrated and streamlined demobilization camps in the United States—indicate that the control of sexuality continued to be a core part of the lives of soldiers and the civilians living near the camps.

Nevertheless, because of the centrality of heroism within the Morale Branch’s parasexual motivational framework, the agency needed to rapidly alter its approach in the new context of peace and demobilization. This was especially true of the narratives that the agency used to convince soldiers that fulfilling their military duties and enduring the harshness and boredom of their continued deployment was in some way in service of their own interests and ambitions. Because it would take many months of continued effort and patience before most of the men would be able to rejoin civilian society, and many men’s wartime experiences did not

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<sup>20</sup> Quoted in Nancy K. Bristow, *Making Men Moral: Social Engineering During the Great War* (New York: New York University, 1996), 181.

<sup>21</sup> Luther Gulick, for example, emphasized his belief that sports teams, like the military, must maintain sexual continence in order to conserve their sexual energy and maintain “supreme endurance, nerve, power of the will, and speed.” Luther H. Gulick, *Morals and Morale* (New York: Association Press, 1919), 36. According to Munson, who shared this hydraulic understanding of performance and drive, sports in a military training context offered an important surrogate for fighting, since “[c]ompetition in sports, especially in rough games, such as football, gives expression to the fighting spirit which is inherent in all males.” Munson, *Management of Men*, 126.

<sup>22</sup> See, for example, Interdepartmental Social Hygiene Board Department of Women and Girls Field Service, “Summary of Reports of Field Staff Covering period from March 1, 1919 to April 1, 1919”; Committee on Protective Work For Girls; Education & Recreation Branch, Correspondence of the Education Section, 1918-1920; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 39, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. Major James H. Buell, Letter to Delphine Dodge Ashbaugh, January 6, 1919; Committee on Protective Work For Girls; Education & Recreation Branch, Correspondence of the Education Section, 1918-1920; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 39, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. Committee on Protective Work For Girls, “Weekly Report of Supervisor” (covering from February 17th to February 24th, 1919); Committee on Protective Work For Girls; Education & Recreation Branch, Correspondence of the Education Section, 1918-1920; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 40, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

match up with the heroic framing whose logic they had constantly been bombarded with during training, the morale agency needed new narratives and new appeals.

The personal accounts of soldiers testify to the validity of the concerns cited by the Morale Branch. With the end of their heroic cause, these men lost their tolerance for the many kinds of adversity that they faced in the war camps. In a January 14, 1919 letter to his sister, a homesick AEF soldier named LeRoy W. Meek, of the 127th Infantry, described the “miserable” conditions of post-armistice military life. “Conditions were bad on the lines,” he explained, “but no one complained for that’s what we expected and were fighting for. But now that the battles are fought and victory is ours, we are living under worse conditions.” For many American soldiers in the AEF, the winter of 1919 was miserable, and this soldier’s experience captures much of that misery. After being exposed to German poisonous gas in battle and then later contracting influenza and subsequently developing pneumonia (which “kept me delirious for thirteen days,” as he put it), he was billeted in a drafty, doorless, abandoned brick kiln “with nothing to sleep on but the tile floor.” He was then moved into a tent, which he described as “worse, for mud is ankle deep.” Like many others, he complained about the relentless rain in France that winter, which he insisted came down every day for the entire seven weeks he was stationed there. Because of the rain, “it was impossible to keep your feet dry,” and as a result, his feet—presumably infected with the infamous condition known as “trench foot”—would “swell and pain [*sic.*] at night so it bothers one to sleep.” To make matters worse, sanitary conditions in the camp were deteriorating, and he reported that “[w]here we eat now smells as rotten as a garbage can.” His mail had not been delivered since early September, he needed to stand in line for an hour to receive dinner, and he expressed that he was “getting disgusted with everything,” and that his “hope is just about exhausted.” “I don’t know how much longer I can stand it,” he confessed. “I don’t know what they intend to do with us here.” Clearly present in the soldier’s letter was a sense of injustice: “I did not stand back when my country called for help in her hour of need. I still honor the old flag and am ready to do my part at any time again, but why this treatment after a man has done his bit?”<sup>23</sup>

Another low-ranking soldier—Joseph Rizzi of the 110th Engineers Regiment—described the elation and roistering of his company when the armistice was announced by the Colonel of their regiment. “Soon, however,” he explained in his autobiography, “we were disillusioned.” Like many other soldiers, during his two month wait in Brest Rizzi saw other units getting the call to board transport ships heading back to the United States, and felt antsy for his own turn. “Would our turn ever come?” he asked himself. Whereas Meek had been billeted in a tent in the mud, Rizzi was billeted for much of November and December of 1918 in what he described as “four-

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<sup>23</sup> LeRoy R. Meek, Letter to sister, January 14, 1919; Cases for Investigation, February—Complaints; Morale Branch General Correspondence File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 8, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

year-old dugouts,” which were infested with rats and lice. “The rats weren’t so bad,” he recalled, though “[t]hey would wake you up by running across your face once in a while, but those damned cooties had us scratching in our sleep. It was terrible.” Like Meek, Rizzi complained about the relentless rain, as well as persistent mistreatment by officers. Despite the Allied victory, the officers marched and drilled the men in the rain and the cold for long hours, and, as Rizzi explained, “[o]ur spirit was slowly but surely being broken.” Homesick, ailing, and frustrated, Rizzi and the other men began to defy their Lieutenant in what Rizzi referred to as “open rebellion”—and this was less than month after the armistice. Rizzi described his company’s time in a subsequent camp in the town of Lerouville as “some of the most miserable days of our lives,” and little did they know that they would not leave France until mid-April—more than four months later. In February, Rizzi and his company were transported via boxcar to the port city of Brest, where he spent what he described as “probably the worst and longest two months of my life”—an experience marked by constant rain, hard, “boresome and tiresome” work building roads, long lines for food, and the frustrations of having his social and sexual life restricted by the paternalism of the military police and the YMCA, as they prevented him from entering a brothel in Brest. Finally, on April 11, Rizzi boarded a ship bound for New York, and arrived a little over two weeks later, receiving his honorable discharge on April 30, 1919—a full five and a half months after the armistice was signed.<sup>24</sup>

### **From Winning the War to Preventing Unrest**

With the war won, a more complex set of objectives arose to replace the previously singular goal of attaining victory that had preoccupied War Department officials. It was not necessarily the “wilting” or discomfort of the soldiers in themselves that the War Department feared, so much as the unrest and “open rebellion” that Rizzi described in his autobiography. There were two main types of rebellion that the War Department fretted about, each of which presented a clear danger to societal order. The first was unrest among the soldiers, and the second was unrest among civilian workers.

Morale planners saw both of these as interrelated, and as falling within their purview—to be addressed as matters of morale, through intervention by their newly-built morale agency. Munson and others pointed to the way in which demobilization after wars had a way of bringing disorder—not just to the military, but to entire societies—when not managed properly. For this reason, he insisted, “[d]emobilization must be accompanied, not only by military and economic

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<sup>24</sup> Joseph N. Rizzi, *Joe's War: Memoirs of a Doughboy*, Richard A. Baumgartner, ed., (Huntington, W. Va., 1983), 122-23, 125, 126, 129, 137, 140.

considerations, but psychologic considerations as well.”<sup>25</sup> In a March 1919 memo that Munson sent to local morale officers, the chief of the Morale Branch requested that they provide “Evidence of Efficacy of Morale Work,” to be determined by, among other criteria, whether soldiers went AWOL less often, the extent to which “morale work in your camp promoted discipline, good order and contentment,” the “extent . . . it improved the state of mind toward the military service and ideals of good citizenship on the part of men being discharged from the service,” and “the effects of morale work in the decrease of men confined to the guardhouse.”<sup>26</sup> Munson’s metrics of efficacy, which were primarily concerned with preventing misbehavior, departed from the Morale Branch’s wartime mission of instilling affirmative motivation on the part of soldiers to accomplish combat objectives. In a retrospective report, the Morale Branch cited “allaying unrest and maintaining high devotion to duty among units and individuals” as key difficulties during the demobilization period, especially “where discharge for various reasons was postponed.” Achieving success in these two areas, according to the report, “became more and more difficult” as the delays in shipping soldiers home and discharging them from the armed forces wore on.<sup>27</sup>

This shift from motivating gallantry to preventing unrest required a new approach to morale. Officers in the Morale Branch were realistic about the fact that demobilization would take many months, and that this would require perhaps a greater effort and degree of organization within the agency. As the Morale Branch’s retrospective report explained,

it was certain that the coming months of demobilization would require from Morale Officers complete understanding of the mental and emotional states of men, who—suddenly relaxed from the grimmest tension—would find themselves, each with great personal problems and difficulties to solve.<sup>28</sup>

With the “common incentive” and glory of conflict over, and facing months of lackluster waiting to be shipped back to the United States, the American soldier in France could no longer be

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<sup>25</sup> Munson, *Management of Men*, 573.

<sup>26</sup> E. L. Munson, Memorandum to Morale Officer on “Evidence of Efficacy of Morale Work,” March 7, 1919; Education of E.W.; A-File, D, Morale Branch records, General Correspondence (“Subject”) File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs; Record Group 165, Box 5, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 1-2.

<sup>27</sup> Shaw and Bennett, “Military Morale Work: A History of Its Institution and Development in the United States Army,” 22.

<sup>28</sup> Shaw and Bennett, “Military Morale Work: A History of Its Institution and Development in the United States Army,” 19.

motivated or comforted by the same heroic fantasies or responsabilization narratives about protecting women.

Responding to these circumstances, in addition to those described above by figures in the Morale Branch and CTCA and the soldiers themselves, the morale agency took a variety of actions in order to shore up the motivation of demobilizing soldiers and to prevent unrest within the ranks. By January 2, 1919, the Morale Branch had a basic plan for the “Morale Program For Men Returning from A.E.F.” as a chart with that title from that date put it. According to the chart, the Morale Branch planned to intervene more heavily into military newspapers, distribute posters, facilitate talks in quarantine camps, aboard ships, and in the demobilization camps that would “inculcate good citizenship,” organize entertainment and activities through the CTCA’s affiliated organizations, reassure soldiers that there were economic opportunities available to them when they returned, and urge the improvement of the physical conditions of camps.<sup>29</sup>

According to a wide variety of sources, the Morale Branch followed through with these plans. The agency urged the improvement of conditions in camps, especially through supplemental entertainment and educational activities. In his report on the morale of soldiers in France, Fosdick urged, in addition to a ramping up of the activities of “non-military Societies, such as the Y.M.C.A., the K. of C. and the Red Cross,” that the army itself improve billets, grant longer leaves to soldiers, and encourage more sports—suggestions that the army and the CTCA enacted.<sup>30</sup> At Fosdick’s urging, the generals reduced the hours of military training and substituted these with sports and other activities.

In addition to these basic measures, the Morale Branch further consolidated its control and influence over the military’s newspapers—especially the *Trench and Camp* syndicate.<sup>31</sup> Following a lapse in the Morale Branch’s active direction of the publication after the signing of the armistice, the agency took a renewed interest in the newspaper in January.<sup>32</sup> As the editor of *Trench and Camp* Louis MacMahon explained in a letter to the Morale Branch’s key newspaper editorial propagandist Thomas Kirby in early January, the newspaper was “very anxious to have the Morale Section cooperate with us and furnish us with material for our columns, as the War

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<sup>29</sup> Morale Branch, “Morale Program for Men Returing From A.E.F.”

<sup>30</sup> Fosdick, “Report to the Secretary of War on the Activities of Welfare Organizations Serving With the A.E.F.,” 1.

<sup>31</sup> James E. Edmonds, Letter to E. L. Munson, April 28, 1919; Coming Back, Editorials, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 2, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>32</sup> As MacMahon explained, “[u]p to the time the armistice was signed we were receiving good quantities of editorials, articles, cartoons and suggestions from Morse and other officers in the Morale Section, but since then we have received nothing except an article by Lieutenant Winston, which Major Perkins sent us, and which was promptly used, and the cartoons which Captain Gordon Grant draws.” Louis A. MacMahon, Letter to Captain Thomas Kirby, January 4, 1919; Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

Department knows best what character of matter it wishes to print for the eyes of the returning soldiers and those about to be demobilized.”<sup>33</sup> Kirby affirmed the centrality of “discrediting unrest during the demobilization period” in a later letter to MacMahon—a goal he sought to achieve with the newspaper content that he wrote.<sup>34</sup> In another letter written on the same day, Kirby explained his role in the Morale Branch as “writing editorials” and “directing . . . service papers in all camps and hospitals to stimulate the morale and spirit of the soldier during demobilization and kill off unrest generally.”<sup>35</sup>

For this purpose, the Morale Branch and the *Trench and Camp* editorial staff in the YMCA’s National War Work Council founded an additional newspaper entitled *Coming Back* to replace their deployment newspaper *Going Over*. A MacMahon wrote to Kirby shortly after the release of the first issue of *Coming Back* on January 1, 1919, the War Department thought that the newspapers would be especially useful to “the maintenance of morale and discipline” during demobilization.<sup>36</sup> By late January, the Morale Branch was providing a steady supply of editorials and articles to the newspapers, much of it written and/or sourced by Thomas Kirby himself.<sup>37</sup> A local morale officer at Camp Upton, Long Island wrote in a March, 1919 letter that, in his estimation, “[t]hree-quarters of the work of the paper is performed by two enlisted men detailed to the Morale Office.”<sup>38</sup>

The Morale Branch did not merely furnish content, but also censored materials that its staff believed would negatively impact morale. In mid-February, Kirby wrote to MacMahon to express disapproval of a cartoon recently published in the Camp Kearny *Trench and Camp*, because Morale Branch officers believed it could contribute to the disenchantment of the soldiers.<sup>39</sup> To combat unrest among restless soldiers waiting to be discharged, the Morale

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<sup>33</sup> MacMahon, Letter to Kirby, January 4, 1919.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas Kirby, Letter to Louis A. MacMahon, February 13, 1919; Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas Kirby, Letter to Clark Griffith, February 13, 1919; Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>36</sup> MacMahon, Letter to Kirby, January 4, 1919.

<sup>37</sup> Louis MacMahon, Letter to Captain Thomas Kirby, January 27, 1919; Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>38</sup> H. D. Fryer, Letter to Captain Edmund Hackett, March 3, 1919; *Trench and Camp*, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 2, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>39</sup> Thomas Kirby, Memorandum to E. L. Munson on “Offensive Cartoons in ‘Trench and Camp,’” February 17, 1919; Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

Branch sent a circular to all local morale officers, instructing them not to use cartoons or illustrations that highlighted soldiers' frustrations with the slowness of demobilization. In a report on the incident, Kirby stated that the local news columns and content of the various *Trench and Camp* editions would need to be even more tightly regulated and brought in line with the newspaper's editorial policy, which, of course, the Morale Branch had shaped.<sup>40</sup>

In the articles and editorials of *Trench and Camp* and *Coming Back*, as well as other military publications that the Morale Branch contributed to, one can see the contours of the Morale Branch's efforts to find new grounds upon which to manipulate and motivate soldiers. The incident concerning the cartoon published in the Camp Kearny *Trench and Camp* betrayed the Morale Branch's concern that soldiers (and civilians, for that matter) believed that demobilization was being mishandled by the War Department. To mitigate this belief, the Morale Branch briefed its personnel on the reasons behind the military's choice of demobilization strategy, in order to assure them that "demobilization was conducted in an efficient and well-planned manner," as one unsigned and undated memo put it—a sentiment that the agency tasked morale officers and propagandists with spreading. Indicating that the agency was on its back foot, the memo's author insisted: "I have written at this length because I wish to make it clear that demobilization is not proceeding haphazardly, but in accordance with a very definite policy."<sup>41</sup> In a similar vein, Kirby explained to MacMahon that such information—which would be contained in circulars from Munson—was an important way of combatting "the many stories from different sections complaining against alleged slow demobilization."<sup>42</sup>

In addition to making sure that all Morale Branch personnel were briefed about the military's demobilization strategy and its reasons, the agency's propagandists penned a variety of editorials for the military newspapers seeking to reassure soldiers that demobilization was proceeding as smoothly and as rapidly as possible. "Return To States Will Be Speeded," declared a headline on the front page of the first issue of *Coming Back*.<sup>43</sup> "Process Of Demobilization Here An Efficiently Organized One," declared another headline on the front page

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<sup>40</sup> Thomas Kirby, "Weekly Report of Newspaper Section," February 18, 1919; Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>41</sup> Untitled editorial; Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 3.

<sup>42</sup> Thomas Kirby, Letter to Louis MacMahon, February 7, 1919; Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>43</sup> "Return To States Will Be Speeded," *Coming Back*, No. 1, January 1, 1919; *Coming Back*, Editorials; Morale Branch records; Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 2, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 1.

of the March 18 issue of Camp Upton's *Trench and Camp*, which assured that the camp was operating "a far more intricate and carefully organized demobilization machine than the casual onlooker would suspect," and described the various logistical hurdles faced and steps involved in the demobilization process.<sup>44</sup> Editorials like these aimed to inform soldiers of the intricacies of demobilization: the challenges transporting, disembarking, quarantining/sanitizing, medically examining, and all the while feeding and sheltering and entertaining, millions of men. If the soldiers waiting to be discharged could be made aware of the challenges, morale officers hoped, then perhaps they would empathize with how long it was taking the army to release them back into the civilian population.

In order to reassure the men that the War Department had a definite plan, and to soothe the sense of uncertainty that Fosdick had insisted was a key detriment to troop morale, the Morale Branch's writers produced editorials providing basic information about the military's demobilization plans.<sup>45</sup> This goal that was augmented by a widely-circulated War Camp Community Service informational pamphlet for the discharging soldier entitled *Where Do We Go From Here?*, which featured a variety of practical information concerning the plan for demobilization and the various things a soldier should do to prepare for it.<sup>46</sup> Newspapers also sought to combat misinformation and despair on the part of the soldiers. One cartoon made light of the various rumors and worries that circulated around the camps, placing statements such as "There are no jobs left," "They are going to put us in labor battalions," "Our insurance stops when we are discharged," "We'll be in Siberia next October," and "We'll all be discharged tomorrow" inside of bubbles being blown by the characters "Dame Rumor" and "Old Man Gloom." (See Figure 5.5)

Other editorials in *Trench and Camp* were clearly designed to reassure soldiers that great care was being taken to look after their comfort and happiness, and that their futures would be bright. The February 4, 1919 issue of the Camp Upton edition of *Trench and Camp* featured the following headlines, for example: "'To Make Military Life As Pleasant As Possible' Is New Commander's Philosophy," "Go To Officers With Grouches New Commander Tells Soldiers," "Can Stay In Army 'Till Job Is Ready," etc. A headline in the second issue of *Coming*

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<sup>44</sup> "Process Of Demobilization Here An Efficiently Organized One," *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Vol. 2, No. 24 (March 18, 1919), 1.

<sup>45</sup> "Demobilization Policy," *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Vol. 2, No. 22 (March 4, 1919), 4.

<sup>46</sup> William Brown Meloney, *Where Do We Go From Here? This Is the Real Dope* (War Camp Community Service, 1919). On the wide circulation and effectiveness of the pamphlet, see Cromwell and Wilson, *Demobilization*, 108.



**Figure 5.5:** cartoon urging soldiers to stay away from rumors and gloom during demobilization.

*Back* reassured the returning men that "Demobilized Soldiers Will Find Good Jobs."<sup>47</sup> All of these sought not only to reassure the soldiers, but to reduce any sense of urgency they might feel about leaving military service.

<sup>47</sup> *Coming Back*, No. 2, January 10, 1919; History, 26th Division; Morale Branch records; Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 2, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 7.

Yet the morale agency used more than mere reassurance. Editorials used a blend of guilt-tripping, overt commands, prospects of voiding one's wartime honor, praise calculated to instill insecurity and conformity, and simulated peer pressure to prevent unrest, desertion and misbehavior. In a straightforward insistence that the men maintain their discipline, a Morale Branch-produced editorial published in March, 1919 entitled "High Ideals Must Be Maintained," addressed to the American soldiers who were then occupying Germany, conveyed General Pershing's expectation that the men display "dignified and reserved conduct," that they behave "as the representatives of a powerful, just and righteous nation," and that they refrain from engaging in "personal relations" with German civilians—whether violent, exploitative, or sexual.<sup>48</sup> One poster, depicting a series of boxcars, implored: "[i]f the Railroad Company discharged the crew before the freight—who would unload the train? The last man out is the man most needed."<sup>49</sup> Munson reported that the army used films screened for soldiers who "were anxious to get home," and among whom "absence without leave and desertion [had] increased," featuring still slides using the refrain "Uncle Sam Says...": "'Uncle Sam Says: It's not *where* you soldiered for me, but *how* you did it.' 'Uncle Sam Says: Where are my boys to-night? All that are worth havin' are on the job.' 'Uncle Sam Says: The feller that goes 'over the hill' ain't a soldier—he's a mistake.'"<sup>50</sup>

The Morale Branch buttressed these straightforward appeals that the men behave themselves with a number of appeals to honor, patriotism, and the threat of a loss of status. After the armistice, Morale Branch leaders cited a heightened "necessity for fixing in unfading colors the lessons in patriotism impressed by the war."<sup>51</sup> Appeals to patriotism represented something of a phase shift for the War Department's internal propaganda agency. During the conflict, in order to get American men to feel compelled to participate enthusiastically in the war effort, the War Department needed to invest the conflict with personal significance, and it did this by using propaganda to convey a sense that the men were "going over" to protect their wives, sweethearts, sisters and mothers. As Robert Westbrook has explained, the rendering of women as "objects of obligation" allows governments to overcome the paradox of liberal states demanding military sacrifices from citizens whose safety and wellbeing the state itself is obligated to protect. Men might not be compelled to sacrifice their lives for their states, but they

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<sup>48</sup> "High Ideals Must Be Maintained," *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Volume 2, Number 22 (March 4, 1919), 4.

<sup>49</sup> Untitled poster; W.D.—History of Morale Branch, Records of the Historical Section Relating to the History of the War Department, 1900-41; Historical Section records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 131, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>50</sup> Munson, *Management of Men*, 540.

<sup>51</sup> Shaw and Bennett, "Military Morale Work: A History of Its Institution and Development in the United States Army," 18.

might be inclined to do so on behalf of the women they love and/or desire. As Westbrook shows, military propaganda featuring women—most notably, pin-up girls in the conflict he writes about (World War II)—“functioned as icons of the private interests and obligations for which soldiers were fighting,” frequently affixed to the sides of military machinery such as aircraft, tanks and Navy vessels, “where they competed with and upstaged the insignias of the state.”<sup>52</sup> In the First World War, women were depicted as “objects of obligation” too, even if not in the form of pin-up girls. The encouraging voices of the fictional women depicted in the Morale Branch’s editorials; the women in enlistment posters; the women who participated in the encouraging genre of letter-writing that the CPI modeled; the girls at chaperoned dances and the women behind the YMCA canteen counters—all of these women (real and simulated alike) contributed, willingly or not, to the soldier’s sense of duty as a protector. And as such, they augmented and perhaps even “upstaged” the men’s sense of duty to their nation, the flag, and the government of the United States. In this framing, the impersonal cause of the state and the personal image of the virtuous and/or desirable woman as an object of obligation are distinct—particularly in the minds of the deploying, or yet-to-be-deployed soldier.

With the signing of the armistice, however, Morale Branch propagandists strained to imbue a personal sense of investment in nationalist and patriotic symbols and causes. In this new context, the case could not easily be made that the soldier’s discipline and conduct was an act of heroism that would protect women. The morale agency needed to find a new way of motivating the soldiers. Morale Branch propaganda during demobilization sought to invest patriotic symbols with personal significance—to imbue the flag, the uniform, and other national iconography with sentiment and a sense of one’s own honor. In the first place, the Morale Branch’s propaganda frequently depicted the nation itself as feminine.<sup>53</sup> In the April 4, 1919 issue of *Coming Back*, a headline/caption reading “They Await You With Open Arms and Hearts” sat above an illustration of the Statue of Liberty holding her arms open and facing a returning troop transport as it entered New York’s harbor. (See Figure 5.6) In the January 10 issue, Lady Columbia held her arms open, with a similar headline/caption: “With Open Arms and Glad Hearts Americans Welcome Yanks Home.” (See Figure 5.7) In the first issue of *Coming Back*, an illustration of a crowd of exclusively women stands on the berth as a returning troop transport docks, and beneath the headline “Rejoicing Nation Awaits Victorious Yanks’ Return,” an image caption reads: “The girls they left behind them.” (See Figure 5.8) A poster published as an

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<sup>52</sup> Robert B. Westbrook, “‘I Want a Girl, Just Like the Girl that Married Harry James’: American Women and the Problem of Political Obligation in World War II,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (Dec., 1990), 587-614.

<sup>53</sup> The Committee on Public Information used this same strategy. As Stephen Vaughn argues, women were often depicted in CPI posters and advertisements as symbols of public opinion and democracy. Stephen Vaughn, *Holding Fast the Inner Lines: Democracy, Nationalism, and the Committee on Public Information* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 190.



**Figure 5.6:** Cartoon on the front page of the April 4, 1919 issue of *Coming Back*, using a mix of personal and patriotic imagery to represent the nation as a proud, feminine figure.

illustration in *Trench and Camp* depicted two women—one of them older and one younger—hugging and gazing admiringly at a returned soldier. Below the image read the caption: “They Are Proud Of You. Be Proud Of Yourself.” (See Figure 5.9) In all of these examples, the nation itself was depicted as an approving and grateful woman, or as a crowd of women.

Yet if the feminized nation was grateful, this appreciation was not unconditional. To motivate the men to stay in line, Morale Branch writers cunningly played up the notion of the men’s legacy and honor, and represented these as precarious. A key way that the agency sought to personalize the nation was by tying soldiers’ legacies to the cause and the nation for which they supposedly had fought, and then insisting that this legacy was threatened—both on the personal level, and on the collective level. A common way that the Morale Branch’s writers would seek to create these feelings in the soldiers was by praising them for their discipline and loyalty and unflinching self-sacrifice (characteristics and sentiments that they may not have actually possessed or felt). In this way, newspaper editorials routinely used praise as a means

# COMING BACK

PUBLISHED IN THE INTEREST OF RETURNING AMERICAN SOLDIERS BY THE NATIONAL  
WAR WORK COUNCIL OF THE Y. M. C. A. OF THE U. S.

No. 2

AMERICA, JANUARY 10, 1919

DISTRIBUTED FREE  
TO SOLDIERS

*America Awaits You!*



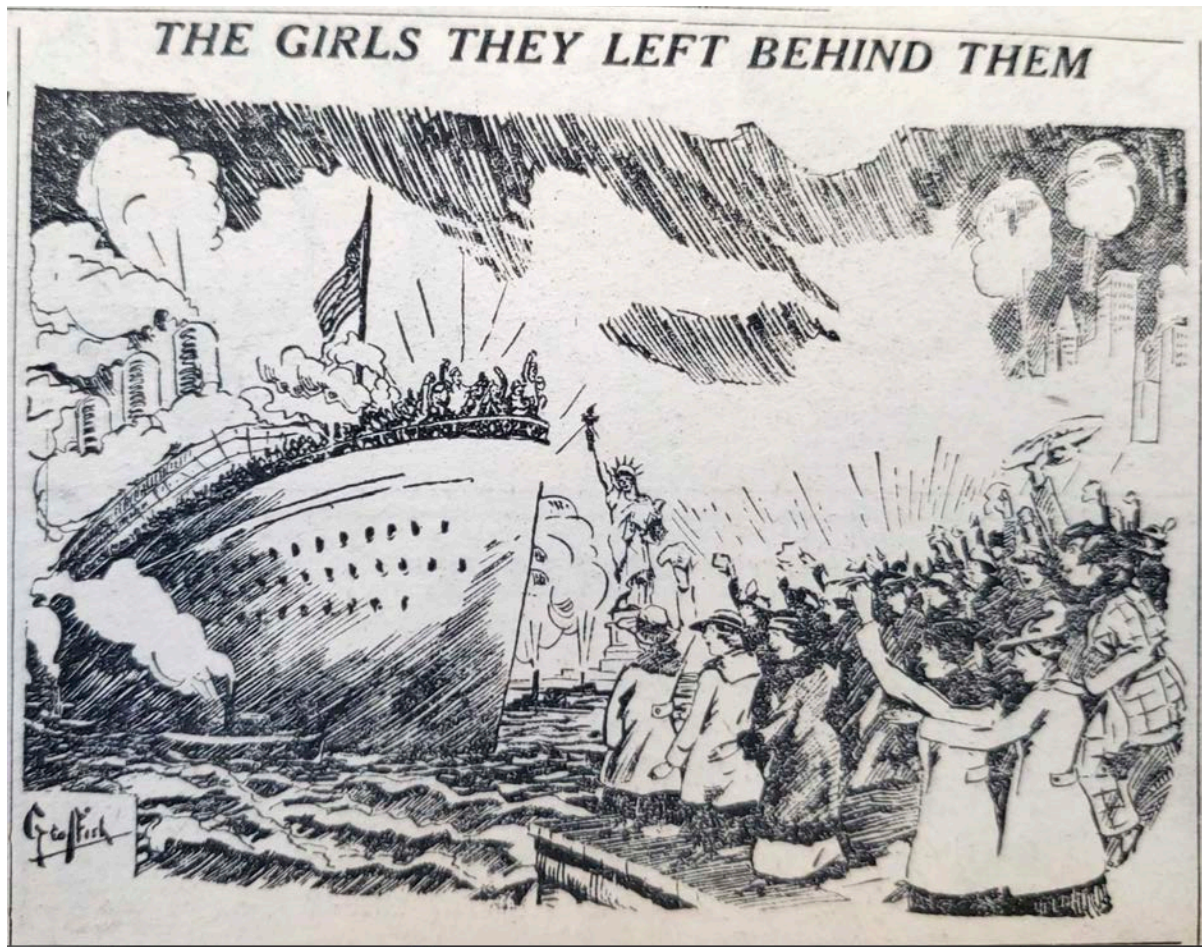
WITH OPEN ARMS AND GLAD HEARTS AMERICANS WELCOME YANKS HOME

**Figure 5.7:** front page of the January 10, 1919 issue of *Coming Back*, featuring the nation represented as a proud woman—in this case, Lady Columbia.

of conveying expectations that they hoped the men would internalize.<sup>54</sup> In a clear example of this in an editorial for *Coming Back*, the Morale Branch's staff writers wrote that "[u]nrest has not proper place in the army, and at this time the country looks toward those who faced the Hun without flinching to be equally bold and untterrified in facing the future. The country is proud of the army and the army is devoted to the country. May its course during the reconstruction period be a shining example of coolness, steadiness, progression and courage."<sup>55</sup> Another editorial, written "for 'Trench and Camp' and hospital paper[s]," as the top left corner of a draft circulated

<sup>54</sup> The disciplining effects of affirmation have been explored by Sarah Ahmed, who, in *The Promise of Happiness*, argues that affirmation can often be more effective than prohibition in steering people's behavior. "To be influenced," Ahmed explains, "is to be directed in one way or another, where we cannot quite see the point of pressure. With prohibitions, we can usually notice the pressure point, the harshness of being brought up against what you are not. . . . It might be harder to hear the 'yes words'—the 'yes,' or the 'yes that's good,' or the 'yes that's a good way to be'—because the words seem to 'go along' with or affirm what we are already doing." Yet, Ahmed insists, this affirmation is its own form of steering—one that often goes unnoticed, yet which steers all the more effectively because of this fact. Sarah Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 48.

<sup>55</sup> Untitled editorial; *Coming Back*, Editorials; Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 2, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.



**Figure 5.8:** Cartoon on the front page of the first issue of *Coming Back* (January 1, 1919), showing a crowd of enthusiastic women welcoming a returning troop transport.

within the agency explained, used a similar approach. The author gave high praise to the soldiers, celebrating their discipline, good character, and commitment to fairness, which he followed with an implicit expectation that the men reading the editorial would seek to prove this praise correct: “High words of praise, to be sure, but justified by the conduct of the men already back and it should be the grim determination of every man in the army to see that nothing happens at any time that will interfere with the excellent impression already made.”<sup>56</sup> The Morale Branch used a similar strategy in the editorial “No Finer, Cleaner, or Manlier Soldiers In The Whole World,” which featured in a March 15, 1919 issue of *Trench and Camp*.<sup>57</sup> In all of these editorials, the implicit message was clear. The men possessed a high degree of honor and status (presumably in the eyes of women—whether a feminized nation or the women back

<sup>56</sup> “A Nation Reincarnated” (editorial); Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 2.

<sup>57</sup> “No Finer, Cleaner, or Manlier Soldiers In The Whole World,” *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Special Edition (March 15, 1919), 7.



**Figure 5.9:** *Trench and Camp* illustration depicting appreciative women staring admiringly at a returning soldier's smiling, chiseled face.

at home), and this status was precarious. As an exemplary editorial authored by Kirby entitled "Honor of the Uniform" put it,

Never before in the history of the nation has the United States uniform stood for more than it does today. . . . Those who were privileged enough to reach the firing line to stand shoulder to shoulder with our associates on the blood-soaked soil of heroic France, those who day and night willingly bore their burden of the drudgery of office work to keep steady the flow of supplies to the front and those who speedily left civil life to go to Camp and endure the grilling training to condition themselves to soon take their places on the line, today occupy a niche high in the esteem of their fellow-countrymen. . . . [D]eep in the heart of the average citizen there is an appreciation of the army that time can never erase. . . . [T]he men and women and children of the country today take consummate pride in the achievements of their soldiers and there is a deep-rooted feeling of appreciation of sacrifice that approaches reverence. . . . But it is distinctly up to the men in uniform to maintain this prestige. Upon the men just leaving the service with

that unimpeachable reference—an honorable discharge—depends most in defending by his conduct the honor of the service in which he was honored by being included. As the test of a chain is its weakest link so, also, is the honor of the army dependent upon the conduct of the men comprising it. . . . During the period between discharge and donning civilian clothes comes a peculiar test of the soldierly qualities of the man. . . . The eyes of a great nation are upon you! . . . Your commission calls for moral responsibility as well as military activity.<sup>58</sup>

Here, the message that was implicit in some other editorials was made explicit: the men needed to maintain their discipline if they intended to keep their status in the eyes of a proud nation.

The Morale Branch pumped up the newly-introduced honorable discharge (introduced in 1916) as a symbolically important achievement that would prove to the world that a man had carried out his duty and earned his status in the eyes of society.<sup>59</sup> The honorable discharge, which the military issued to soldiers when they left military service in good standing, provided a concrete goal for the men to strive for once the war was over. In addition to receiving a \$60 bonus when they left the service with an honorable discharge, Kirby represented the type of discharge in an editorial entitled “Uncle Sam’s Recommendation” as “the diploma from the University of National Service”—something that prospective employers would view as “the highest letter of recommendation for it is a pledge of moral, mental, and physical qualifications.”<sup>60</sup> In a poster described as “the most popular” at Camp Travis (and presumably this was true in other camps as well), and which was also published in *Coming Back*, a smiling soldier clutches an honorable discharge above the caption “Oh boy! That’s sure worth working for.”<sup>61</sup> (See Figure 5.10) Another illustration depicted a veteran being introduced to an audience, with the caption ““We Have With Us Tonight A Man Whom We All Honor and Respect. An Honorably Discharged Soldier of the U.S. Army.”” (See Figure 5.11)

To give the honorable discharge a more visible symbolic weight, Morale Branch writers emphasized the social value of the red chevron stripe, which honorably discharged soldiers would be given to wear halfway up the sleeve of their uniforms. The stripe was treated by the propagandists as a badge of honor that civilians—and especially civilian women—would

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<sup>58</sup> “Honor of the Uniform” (editorial); Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 2.

<sup>59</sup> “Military Discharge Policies and Practices Result in Wide Disparities: Congressional Review Is Needed” (report), (Washington: Office of the Comptroller General of the United States, 1980), 2.

<sup>60</sup> Neil S. Wynn, *From Progressivism to Prosperity: World War I and American Society* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1986), 202; “Uncle Sam’s Recommendation” (editorial); Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>61</sup> Shaw and Bennett, “Military Morale Work: A History of Its Institution and Development in the United States Army,” 21; *Coming Back*, No. 2, 4.

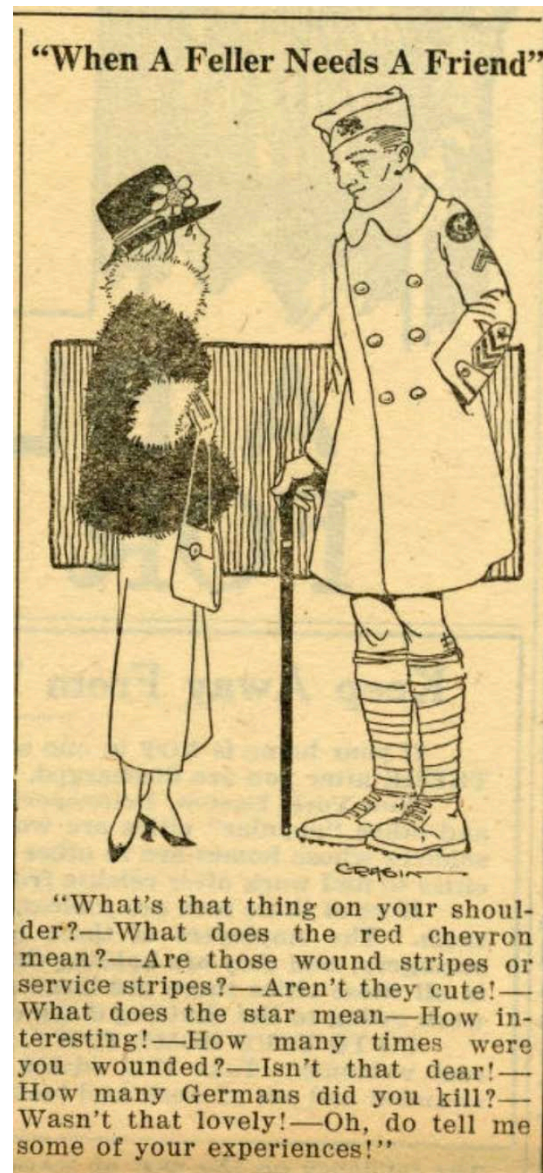


**Figure 5.10:** Illustration in the second issue of *Coming Back* showing a soldier clutching what Morale Branch propagandists called the “diploma from the University of National Service” — the honorable discharge. *Coming Back*, No. 2.



**Figure 5.11:** Illustration in a mid-July issue of *Trench and Camp* showing veteran being valorized at a function of some kind.

recognize and admire. A front-page illustration in a mid-February issue of *Trench and Camp* depicted a well-dressed young woman admiring a wounded veteran's uniform and insignia, with a blurb beneath the image representing a series of prying questions she asked the man about the insignia on his uniform (which she called "cute"), the number of wounds he had sustained, and how many Germans he had killed.<sup>62</sup> (See Figure 5.12) Another illustration, drawn by the famous Boy Scout illustrator Gordon Grant, in a May issue of the newspaper depicted a woman



**Figure 5.12:** Front-page illustration in *Trench and Camp* showing a young, fashionable woman admiring a wounded veteran and asking him questions about his uniform insignia and wartime experiences.

<sup>62</sup> *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Vol. 2, No. 19 (February 11, 1919), 1.

holding the arm of a smiling veteran and staring admiringly at his red chevron. Below, a caption read: "A Chevron of Honor." (See Figure 5.13) The implication here was that the soldier's insignia were his passport to women taking an interest in him—a passport that the military could issue or take away based upon his behavior.

As some Morale Branch propaganda made clear, not only could the soldiers ruin their own legacies; they could diminish the overall honor of their squad, and the military itself by disrespecting "the uniform." If they could not rely on the men to have loyalty to the military or to a patriotic cause, the staff writers at the Morale Branch figured they could rely on their loyalty to their fellow soldiers. As one illustration in a mid-February issue of *Trench and Camp* portrayed, an A.W.O.L. soldier's notable absence could make his fellow soldiers look bad. Below the illustration of a tombstone-looking rectangle labeled "A.W.O.L." filling a gap between a company of soldiers standing at attention, a caption read: "A black mark for the squad"—the implication being that a soldier could undermine his fellows' honor by deserting camp or misbehaving in some other way. (See Figure 5.14) This message was clearly designed to discourage a soldier from leaving the service early so as not to diminish the honor of his squad, and also to encourage the men to police each other, for fear of one of their fellows diminishing theirs.

To augment the power of a perceived civilian adjudication of the men's honor and the peer pressure inherent in a mutually-maintained collective status, the morale staff writers also used guilt—specifically survivors' guilt—to convince the soldiers to stay in line. Using fallen soldiers evoke guilt in discontented soldiers who still had not yet discharged, Kirby, in a poem to be published anonymously in "News Columns of all papers," wrote:

You're kicking and you're grumbling / 'Cause discharge don't come your way, / While you hear of other thousands / Who are going home each day. . . . You think perhaps of the money / At home that you could save, / That you're losing while in the Army, / And again you fume and rave. / But think of the many thousands / Of our boys who sailed away, / Wearing the self-same uniform, / Who lost their all in the fray. / So buck up, all you buddies. / Bring that Yankee 'pep'; / Chase that frown with a smile / And wait till you're to quit.<sup>63</sup>

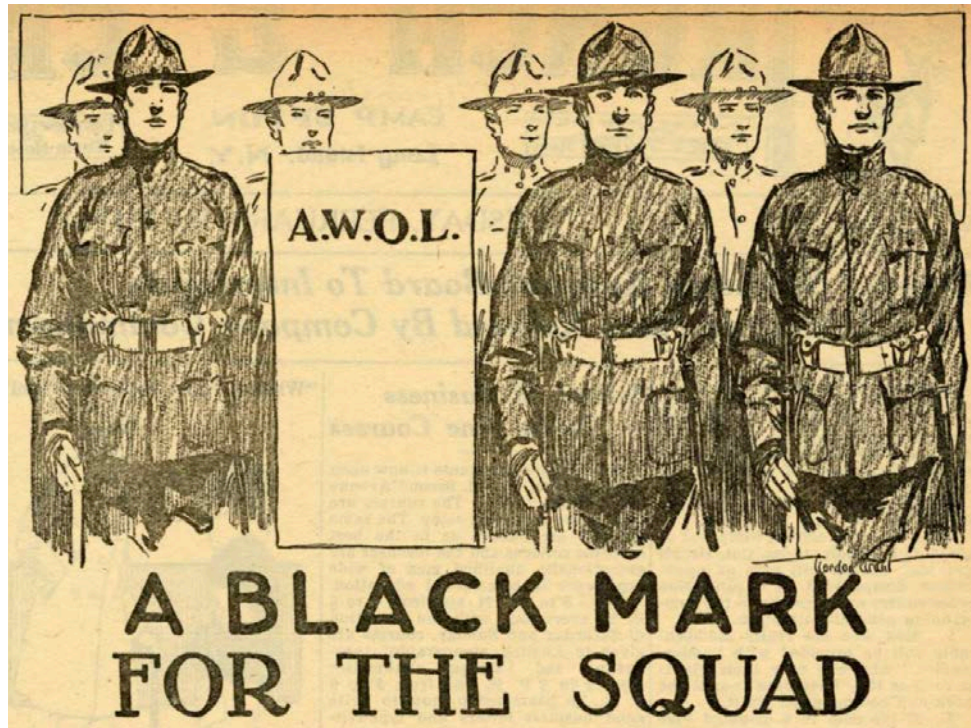
This use of survivors' guilt matched the ceremonial words that, according to Munson, the army delivered to soldiers right before they were discharged from the service: "This is the Flag for which you have sacrificed so much. This is the Flag which has been glorified and sanctified by your sacrifices and the blood of your fallen comrades 'Over There.' Behold your Flag, the

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<sup>63</sup> "Buck Up There, Buddy" (editorial); Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.



**Figure 5.13:** Illustration in a May issue of *Trench and Camp* showing a young woman admiring a veteran's red service chevron—the mark of a man who was honorably discharged from the armed services.



**Figure 5.14:** *Trench and Camp* illustration representing a soldier absent without leave (or “A.W.O.L.”) as a mark of shame against his unit.

emblem of a just and glorious victory.”<sup>64</sup> With these words the military sought to tie together the personal and the patriotic, and to use guilt to invest an enduring, internalized sense of loyalty in the impersonal cause of the nation.

The agency’s propagandists retrospectively attributed the cause for which the men were fighting as a patriotic and nationalistic one, and encouraged the soldiers to view their overseas campaign as a brave duty to their country. The soldiers, according to this reasoning, had been enthusiastically and uncomplainingly fighting for their country all along. What this reasoning obscured, besides the fact that many of the men in the military were involuntarily conscripted, of course, was the personal, rather than patriotic, basis upon which morale planners and propagandists appealed to the men to lean into their wartime and postwar roles.

### **The Contradictory Inclusivity of Post-Armistice Morale Branch Propaganda**

The Morale Branch’s propagandists used their editorials and illustrations to move the goalposts of honor and glory in order to keep the discharging soldiers disciplined and motivated, in the process producing a more exclusive definition of honor. They also contradictorily spun up

<sup>64</sup> Quoted in Munson, *Management of Men*, 575.

narratives that presented a more inclusive version of valor and heroism, as they sought to extend the disciplinary power of legacy-protection to soldiers and officers who never reached the European Theater of Operations. Of the roughly four million men who served in the army, only half went “over” to France. Because of the tremendous efforts that the morale agency and other agencies and organizations put into portraying the combat soldier on the front lines as the most brave and heroic members of the military, the armistice represented a potential breakdown in morale among those who never served in this capacity. In the face of this, the Morale Branch seemed to back-pedal and contradict earlier rhetoric that it had used to motivate men to step into the most dangerous roles in the war. Earlier editorials had insisted to the men “going over” that the man remaining in the United States would “envy you from the bottom of his heart,” and that he would be severely disappointed that he could not “take an active part in the greatest event that will occur in his life”—an experience that would “always be a missing link in his career, a painful explanation that he will feel obliged to make whenever he is asked what he did in the great struggle,” as a September, 1918 editorial in *Going Over* put it.<sup>65</sup> Another editorial in an early October issue of *Trench and Camp* put it even more forcefully, with the headline insisting: “Rather Be Dead in France Than a Slacker At Home.”<sup>66</sup>

After the armistice, the morale agency’s propagandists changed their messaging, shifting to a position that was more inclusive in its allocation of honor and status. Morale Branch writers sought to erase the distinctions between soldiers who served overseas and those who did not, aiming to create a broader sense of unity and identity under the more inclusive banner of Americanism. A series of Morale Branch-produced editorials tried to comfort the men for having lost the opportunity to access honor and status. One propaganda piece, reminiscent of the earlier narrative captured in the September 1918 *Going Over* editorial, spoke of the extent to which the man “who didn’t get to France was tortured, and probably will be tortured all his life, by the thought that somebody believed he was a slacker or a coward.” In a pivot on the significance of this, however, the Morale Branch writer commended “the courage, in the face of the glory that mere overseas orders gave a man, to stay and do the home job enthusiastically.” In this framing, the propagandists asserted that to serve domestically was deny oneself the glory of fighting overseas, and since self-sacrifice offered its own degree of honor, the men who served domestically were highly admirable in their own right. “That legion of sturdy Americans, truly gave an exhibition of heroic abnegation, self-sacrifice and self-denial that will not be forgotten when the lasting history of the world catastrophe is written for the generations yet

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<sup>65</sup> “Every Resource Mobilized to Bring Victory,” *Going Over*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (August 26, 1918), The National WWI Museum and Memorial archives, Kansas City, MO., 1.

<sup>66</sup> “Rather Be Dead in France Than a Slacker At Home,” *Trench and Camp*, *El Paso Herald* Edition for Camp Cody, Deming, New Mexico, Vol. 1, No. 51 (October 10, 1918), 8.

unborn.”<sup>67</sup> The man who served domestically was the “silent hero” of the war, as another editorial put it. When “the returned troops march proudly up the street, and it seems that our hearts will burst with pride and thanksgiving don’t forget the man who didn’t go. If you see him standing, watching with tightened jaw and perhaps a suspicion of moisture in his eye, give him a cheer, even though it be mental, for he is the silent hero, and the band and flags to him are a sign of unfulfilled sacrifice.”<sup>68</sup> Far from being a slacker, another editorial argued, it was good enough that a man was willing to go. “One of the healthiest signs of our army was the magnificent spirit the men at home showed in trying to get across. Disappointed beyond belief at failing to sail, the men who remained in America may find no little consolation in the fact that they did their best which, in the final analysis, is all that can be asked of any men.”<sup>69</sup> The honor of victory was evenly shared, an illustration in a mid-February issue of *Trench and Camp* insisted. The illustration, which had the caption “50-50,” featured a war-hardened soldier in combat gear with his hand on the shoulder of a young draftee in uniform who appeared fresh and unburdened by the grim realities of battle. A speech bubble featured the former’s reassuring-yet-patronizing words, which insisted that the man who served domestically had done his share. (See Figure 5.15)

In its editorials during demobilization, the Morale Branch clearly struggled to comfort soldiers who served domestically while simultaneously maintaining the honor hierarchies that they believed would motivate discipline and aspiration in returning troops. This was evident in the Morale Branch writers’ discussion of service stripes—the chevron-shaped stripes on the sleeve of the uniform that indicated how long a soldier had been in military service and where he had served. For every six months served overseas during the active conflict, a soldier received a gold chevron stripe, whereas service under six months received a blue stripe. For every six months of domestic service, a man would receive a silver stripe. There was a clear hierarchy of honor in the system of stripes—one that the morale propagandists reinforced and reproduced, even as they sought to comfort the men. “While the golden stripe will ever stand as a glorious mark for those fortunate enough to be permitted to wear it,” one editorial unconvincingly consoled, “the silvery chevron will increase in sentimental value as time goes on. . . . [W]hile failure to sail was a stunning blow, the chevron for home service is mute testimony of

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<sup>67</sup> “Real Americans, All!” (editorial); Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>68</sup> “They Stayed At Their Post” (editorial); Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>69</sup> “Contentment” (editorial); Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.



**Figure 5.15:** February, 1919 *Trench and Camp* illustration simultaneously comforting and patronizing the service member who did not make it “over” to France.

the willingness of the wearer to give even his life in order that the things for which America stands might not perish.”<sup>70</sup> Another editorial spoke directly to the shame that the symbolic diminution of the silver service stripes’ wearers unsurprisingly felt, the Morale Branch’s writers insisted that, while some criticized the silver chevron as evidence of “having failed in securing the duty [the wearer] coveted overseas,” that “[n]othing of course could be further from the truth.” The chevrons, each of which indicated six months of military service, were, if anything, the mark of “a relatively experienced soldier,” the Morale Branch’s propagandists reasoned.<sup>71</sup> Such framings were unlikely to comfort a soldier in the short term, but also would have produced an incentive to work hard and stay disciplined in hopes of attaining honor in the long run—a familiar temporality in the efforts to instill morale, which consistently encouraged deferred gratification.

While some editorials comforted (albeit in an unconvincing way), a contradictory set of messages promoted by the Morale Branch (sometimes in the very same editorials) sought instead to minimize and play down the highly visible forms of honor that they themselves reinforced, such as victory parades and service stripes. The writers offered shallow reassurance that these distinctions were not important. One example of this was a poem that Kirby prepared for the “News Columns for all papers” entitled “The Silver Chevron.” The poem included the lines “For when history’s rightly told, / Silver chevrons are good as gold”; and “Take your share in the tyrant’s fall, / There is glory enough for all.”<sup>72</sup> An editorial, drawing on the agency’s pervasive narrative that the honor of military service would increase over time like a stock portfolio or alumni affiliation, reasoned that “[a]s time goes on it will be found that the honor of the uniform will further increase and there will be no demarkation between those who got to France and they who were on the job in America, training or performing some task that added to the strength of the blow the men at the front struck.”<sup>73</sup> Another editorial sought to rewrite the definition of having gone to France, to include those whose instruction and support was necessary for those who went in-person. “You were in France!” the editorial reassured to “[t]he officers whose hearts were torn by their failure to see service overseas.” “Every gentleman of the Regular Establishment, regardless of where he was stationed, who took part in training

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<sup>70</sup> “Chevrons for Service” (editorial); Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>71</sup> Untitled editorial; Trench and Camp, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 2, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>72</sup> “The Silver Chevron” (editorial); Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>73</sup> “They Stayed At Their Post” (editorial).

amateur officers and men of the army, did his bit in France.”<sup>74</sup> All of these editorials minimized the significance of overseas service compared to domestic service, even after their authors had mounted an extensive propaganda campaign to exalt overseas service as the apex of bravery.

The Morale Branch’s attempts to paint the soldiers who went “over” and those who served at home in an undifferentiated way paralleled the American Legion’s efforts to promote “100% Americanism” among veterans. The Legion designed its 100% Americanism campaigns to unify a nation composed of different ethnicities and backgrounds through post-war patriotism. Under its guise, the Legion and other organizations fostered an anti-radical politics, set to work assimilating immigrants, and attempted to gloss over class and race differences.<sup>75</sup> The Morale Branch set about unifying the soldiers, just as the American Legion set about unifying the nation. In an editorial entitled “Real Americans, All!” the Morale Branch’s writers used similar themes as they comforted the soldiers who did not make it to France, and appealed the the patriotism of the men, regardless of their backgrounds.<sup>76</sup> Yet, just like the 100% Americanism campaigns, there was a major flaw in the logic behind the Morale Branch’s efforts to get the soldiers to feel loyal to the nation, since the agency had put so much effort into making the soldiers feel superior to others within that nation—both inside and outside of the ranks. The whole hierarchy of honor and status that they had used to motivate soldiers lent itself to antagonism, jealous guarding, resentment, entitlement, gatekeeping and covetousness.

For the men who had endured the conditions overseas, the efforts to distribute the glory of serving overseas appear to have been a source of resentment. According to Newton Baker’s biographer, 100% Americanism, which “was the slogan of the moment” during demobilization and reconstruction, “seemed unnecessarily vocal to him after his return from overseas, where in that intimate soldier clan of his buddies, his platoon, and his company, he had been fighting off homesickness at the same time he was fighting for America.”<sup>77</sup> This is unsurprising, given the degree to which the military’s morale campaigns couched its motivational patriotism in appeals to a precarious personal glory threatened by insecurity and status anxiety. Such appeals were inherently hierarchical, and could not, therefore, unify the returning soldiers, let alone the nation.

While the Morale Branch put a great amount of effort into including the men who served exclusively in the United States in hero narratives, it made virtually no similar effort to include

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<sup>74</sup> Untitled editorial; Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>75</sup> David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004 [1980]), 217-18.

<sup>76</sup> “Real Americans, All!” *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Vol. 2, No. 24 (March 18, 1919), 4.

<sup>77</sup> Palmer, *Newton D. Baker*, 401.

African American soldiers. Even as the Morale Branch inundated the soldiers with patriotic appeals and insisted on the equality of status among the soldiers, they continued to depict African American soldiers in racist and demeaning ways. Overall, African American soldiers received relatively scant attention in the *Trench and Camp* newspapers. Whereas the generally White 77th Division received a 37-page special issue of the newspaper to welcome these “heroes” back to Camp Upton, Long Island in May, 1919, the return of the Black soldiers of the 92nd two months earlier received a mere paragraph.<sup>78</sup> The illustrations depicting soldiers as brave, confident, heroic or disciplined always featured White soldiers, whereas whenever Black soldiers appeared in illustrations, they were depicted in a cartoonish and caricatured style. One cartoon in a February 25 issue of *Trench and Camp* depicted a Black soldier illustrated in the minstrel show style, featuring wide, white eyes, exaggerated lips, and an overall unserious demeanor. The caption read “Oh, You Fightin’ Baby,” referencing the apparently surprising fact that the Buffalo Soldiers of the segregated 92nd Division, which was returning to Camp Upton, Long Island, had witnessed combat.<sup>79</sup> (See Figure 5.16) Images such as this positioned the Black soldier as an object of consolation, entertainment, and caution. The message behind the Morale Branch’s depiction of Black soldiers was clear, even if never explicitly stated: in peace, just as in war, the Black soldier mattered far less than the White one, and the White soldier’s status, which was higher than that of the Black soldier, should not be taken for granted.

### **Morale Among Disabled Soldiers and Veterans**

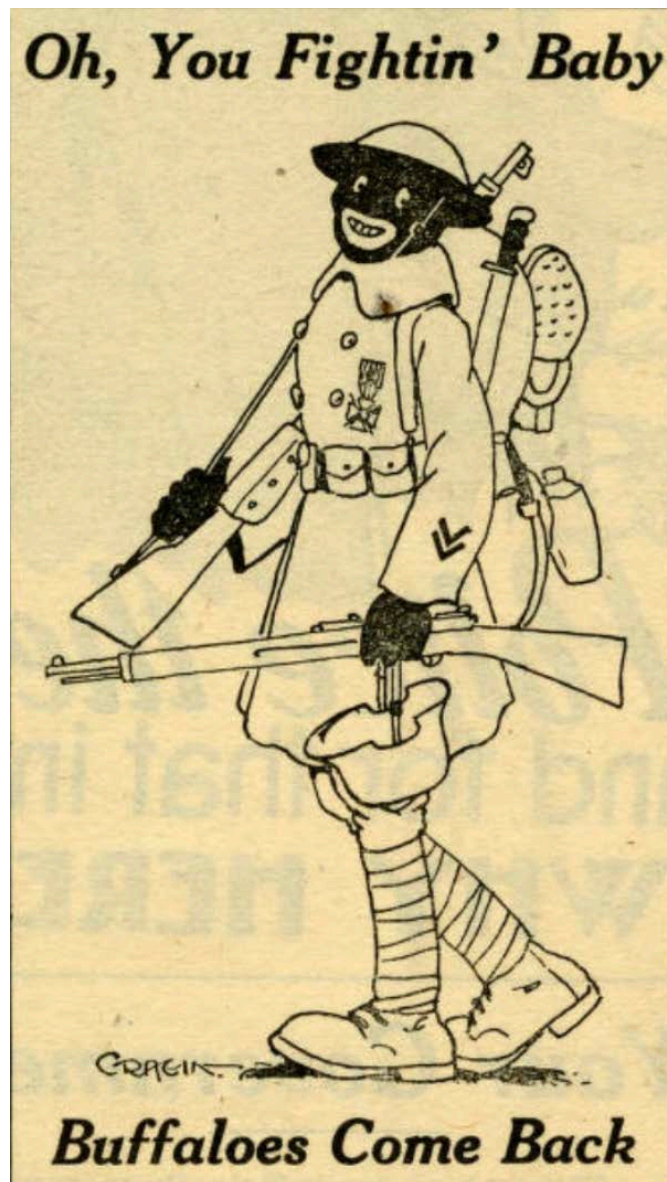
Another category of returning soldier, who, unlike the Black soldier, the Morale Branch spent a great deal of attention comforting and raising attention about was the wounded and/or disabled soldier. According to War Department figures, 206,000 American soldiers were wounded in the war, and nearly 300,000 returned from war with debilitating conditions (both physical and mental)—victims of gunshot wounds, shrapnel, poison gas (which damaged the lungs and caused blindness), infection, influenza, tuberculosis and “shell shock” at the horrors of active combat duty.<sup>80</sup> Many were confined to hospitals for months—both in France and in the United States—only to return to the harsh realities of civilian life, where they faced difficulties accessing long-term medical care and economic security (whether through employment or

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<sup>78</sup> *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Special Edition (May 15, 1919); “Buffaloes Come Back,” *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Vol. 2, No. 21 (February 25, 1919), 1.

<sup>79</sup> “Buffaloes Come Back,” *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Vol. 2, No. 21 (February 25, 1919), 1.

<sup>80</sup> Leonard Ayres, *The War with Germany: A Statistical Summary* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1919), 11; Carol R. Byerly, “War Losses (USA),” *International Encyclopedia of the First World War* (January, 2017), 12 (online: [https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/pdf/1914-1918-Online-war\\_losses\\_usa-2014-10-08.pdf](https://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/pdf/1914-1918-Online-war_losses_usa-2014-10-08.pdf)) accessed July 26, 2022.



**Figure 5.16:** Front-page *Trench and Camp* cartoon featuring a racist drawing of a returning Black soldier.

governmental assistance). In the historical report of the Morale Branch, the authors stated that “morale problems were acute [in] the wounded and sick in hospitals,” and that “[t]he depressed mental state of such patients, due to their illness, slow or delayed convalescence required especial attention from a morale standpoint.” Because of this, the Morale Branch’s propagandists established a dedicated hospital newspaper entitled *The Come-Back*, which “attained circulation of from 50,000 to 75,000 copies weekly,” and which the agency’s historians claimed “did much to continue public interest in the wounded soldier,” and directed a great

amount of attention in other newspapers to the plight of the wounded soldier and the disabled veteran.<sup>81</sup>

The Morale Branch's propaganda aimed at the convalescent appears to have had two main purposes: to prevent discontentedness among the wounded and disabled soldiers, and to encourage them to find a way to get back to work in spite of their wounds and/or disability. In the pursuit of the former of these purposes, the agency's propagandists sought to paint a more inclusive picture of military legacy, honor and valor by representing the wounded soldier as heroic and socially desirable. Here, the propagandists were again faced with a contradiction that they and the framers of morale themselves had created. In many places, the morale agency held up the upright posture and supreme ability of the returning soldiers as celebrated qualities that military service had instilled in them—qualities that all discharging soldiers should aspire to embody. As Hall's aforementioned remarks exalting "healthfulness," and spurning "weakness, invalidism, [and] flabbiness," and the Morale Branch's illustrations embracing upright posture and tidy appearance indicate, the fit and capable soldier represented an ideal that the government sold to both military personnel and civilian society.<sup>82</sup> Yet, alongside this idealization of the fit and capable soldier, the Morale Branch's propagandists simultaneously represented the wounded soldier as heroic and socially and sexually desirable. One mid-January editorial in *Trench and Camp* celebrated the wound stripes (gold-threaded chevrons with a drab background worn at the bottom of the right sleeve of a wounded soldier's uniform) of returning soldiers, and insisted that the other men in camp were eager to hear the battle stories of these men.<sup>83</sup> A previously-cited front-page cartoon in *Trench and Camp* depicted a young woman peppering an injured soldier with prying questions. (See Figure 5.12) Another editorial, this one in a late February issue of *Trench and Camp*, depicted "a blue-eyed Margaret" as being impressed with a soldier's wound stripes. "He fingers his wound chevron deprecatingly," the piece editorialized, and "She flutters nearer."<sup>84</sup> A brief article in that same issue reported that convalescing men were taken to a Valentine's Day dance hosted in Camp Upton's YWCA Hostess House.<sup>85</sup> Civilian magazines assisted in representing the wounded soldier as socially and sexually desirable—as exemplified by *Life* magazine (a publication whose editorship was

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<sup>81</sup> Shaw and Bennett, "Military Morale Work: A History of Its Institution and Development in the United States Army," 19.

<sup>82</sup> G. Stanley Hall, *Morale: The Supreme Standard of Life and Conduct* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1920), 142; Shaw and Bennett, "Military Morale Work: A History of Its Institution and Development in the United States Army," 2.

<sup>83</sup> "Record Number Of Wounded Men Come Into Camp," *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Vol., No. 15 (January 14, 1919), 1.

<sup>84</sup> "Love-Making A La Mode," *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Vol. 2, No. 21 (February 25, 1919), 2.

<sup>85</sup> "Valentine Party!!" *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Vol. 2, No. 21 (February 25, 1919), 6.

taken over by a former Committee on Public Information propagandist, and whose content the Morale Branch's staff praised for its assistance of their own efforts). A *Life* magazine cover illustrated by the young Norman Rockwell for the April 10, 1919 issue depicted a woman leaning in to kiss a shocked, wounded veteran sporting two wound stripes (indicating two separate injuries) and a cane. (See Figure 5.17) Another *Life* illustration—this one in the January 23 special “Back-Home” issue—represented a fashionable young woman bending down to speak to a convalescing sailor with his arm in a sling, saying “and the shell broke your arm in two places? Oh! How dreadful!” (See Figure 5.18) Another *Life* illustration—one that the Morale Branch had on a torn-out page in their files—depicted a woman sitting at the foot of a convalescing soldier's bed in a military hospital, pleading with a grinning doctor: “Can't I stay five minutes longer, doctor? I won't let him talk. I'll just let him look at me.” (See Figure 5.19) All of these editorials and illustrations indicated to the wounded and/or disabled soldier that he was not only not forgotten about, but that he was especially desirable in the eyes of a public—particularly in the eyes of young, attractive women, who would view his injuries (and the military-issued symbol of them—the wound stripe) with interest and admiration.

Like other returning soldiers and veterans, the wounded soldier was not to rest easy and lackadaisically ride on his accomplishments. The Morale Branch encouraged him to find work, and, if his injuries demanded it of him, to sharpen his skills and retrain in order to become useful within a new role in the postwar economy. Here, the morale agency was part of a broader effort, coming out of the experiences of the Civil War, to reduce the reliance of government pensions, and to increase the “efficiency” of the nation and its civilian workforce—an effort that led, according to Beth Linker, to the War Department's embrace of rehabilitation and vocational training during the First world War.<sup>86</sup> Toward this end, the Morale Branch promoted the vocational training programs of the Federal Board for Vocational Training in the military newspapers, and local morale officers played an important role in setting up and promoting the vocational training courses for wounded and disabled soldiers.<sup>87</sup> One article penned by the Morale Branch's propagandists described vocational training for returning wounded and/or disabled veterans as “merely common sense,” and claimed that the disabled man could become “efficient” by learning, for example, “to use his hand, or perhaps the stump of his leg by means of a special adjustment,” to “continue that work” which his prior “trade knowledge” made him

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<sup>86</sup> Beth Linker, *War's Waste: Rehabilitation in World War I America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 12-13.

<sup>87</sup> “To The Disabled Officer,” *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Vol. 2, No. 31 (May 6, 1919), 7; “Camp Shops To Train Wounded,” *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Vol., No. 15 (January 14, 1919), 1.

1919

# Life

PRICE 10 CENTS  
73, No. 1902. April 10, 1919  
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**NOTICE TO READER**  
*When you finish reading this magazine place a Secret stamp on this notice, mail the magazine, and it will be placed in the hands of our soldiers or sailors destined to proceed overseas. No Wrapping. No Address. A. S. Burleson, Postmaster General.*



Digitized by Google **THE COWARD**

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**Figure 5.17:** This cover of *Life* magazine, illustrated by a young Norman Rockwell, features a young woman leaning in to kiss a disabled veteran who has two wound stripes on his right sleeve and three service stripes on his left sleeve. Entitled “The Coward,” Rockwell’s illustration suggests that the brave soldier who had braved injury in France could become nervous by the affectionate attention of an admiring woman.



"AND THE SHELL BROKE YOUR ARM IN TWO PLACES? OH! HOW DREADFUL!"  
"I WOULDN'T MIND THAT, LADY, ONLY I HAD A BEAUTIFUL MERMAID TATTOED ON THAT ARM, AN'  
IT HIT HER PLUMB IN THE FACE."

**Figure 5.18:** This illustration in *Life* magazine shows a young woman giving admiring attention to a wounded navy sailor. *Life*, Vol. 73, No. 1891 (January 23, 1919), 121.



**Figure 5.19:** In this illustration in a February, 1919 issue *Life* magazine, a young woman sits beside a convalescent soldier, pleading with the doctor to allow her to “stay five minutes longer.” Her request suggests that her presence—particularly her looks—can help the man heal.

suited for.<sup>88</sup> These urges to remain productive, which paralleled those directed at the unwounded soldier and veteran, capitalized on wider cultural discourses that valorized as socially- and sexually-desirable the male breadwinner ideal, which linked masculinity with productivity and the earning of an income. According to Beth Linker, the War Department's propagandists posited a disabled version of this ideal: what Linker calls the "supercrip," "who, against all odds, surmounted his physical deficits and achieved spectacular career success."<sup>89</sup> This ideal is clearly touted in the Morale Branch's editorials and illustrations, which depicted, and encouraged wounded soldiers and veterans to become, socially, sexually, and economically successful civilian breadwinners.

### Conclusion

A core means by which the Morale Branch set about keeping demobilizing soldiers motivated and disciplined was by emotionally orienting them, to the extent that it was possible to do so, to both the past and the future—to convince them to feel emotionally invested in the past and the future, in order to endure the present. The Morale Branch sought to convince them that they possessed a socially- and economically-valuable legacy, produced in the past, that they would enjoy the splendors of in the future if they did not ruin it through misbehavior. In order to achieve this, the morale agency had to move the goalposts of honor, urge the men to steward their legacy, and inscribe more men than had deployed to France within the self-governing responsabilization framework of honor and legacy management. This was an expansive version of what Ben Anderson describes as a strategy—crucial to morale—that places "a perpetually deferred promise on the horizon" in order to keep subjects in line.<sup>90</sup> [In order for this to work, however, the men needed to continue to be deprived of sexual pleasure, and needed to be made to feel insecure about their status.](#) The morale agency reminded men of their place within a racial hierarchy, which gave their position as celebrated heroes meaning.

Demobilization, if not quick, was relatively peaceful. There were very few outbreaks of insubordination or rebellion—especially when compared to the British demobilization experience.<sup>91</sup> By November, 1919—one year after the signing of the armistice—the War Department could claim demobilization to be complete. By then, roughly four million men had

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<sup>88</sup> "Merely Common Sense" (editorial); Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>89</sup> Linker, *War's Waste*, 130.

<sup>90</sup> Anderson, "Modulating the Excess of Affect," 164.

<sup>91</sup> Howestine, "Demobilization After the First World War," 104.

been discharged from the armed forces, as had three million wartime workers from munitions and other plants that had kept the AEF supplied. Munson claimed that the Morale Branch, “which worked intelligently, comprehensively and ceaselessly from the day of the Armistice, using every possible agency which might contribute to the desired end,” could “lay just claim to a large share” of securing peace and preventing disorder during the military’s demobilization.<sup>92</sup> While his claim may be overblown, the essential fact is that the Morale Branch made such a considerable effort to instill a sense of valor and legacy among returning soldiers.

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<sup>92</sup> Munson, *Management of Men*, 574.

## Chapter 6:

### **“Discharged as a Soldier Does Not Mean Discharged as a Citizen”: The Morale Branch’s Mission to Send Morale Home**

The War Department’s ambitions extended well beyond the war, as did those of the Morale Branch. The morale theorists, whose ideas both guided and were shaped by the military’s motivational campaigns, held great aspirations for the nation, and believed that the management of morale was the way to achieve them. In the morale theorists’ vision of a postwar economy, workers’ morale would provide the basis of an “industrial peace” wherein workers and their employers would cooperate harmoniously. As with military morale, the morale theorists hoped that what they referred to as “industrial morale” could be accomplished by routing social and sexual status attainment through work and a particular version of citizenship that entailed, if not civic participation, at least civic cooperation.

Consonant with these visions, the Morale Branch designed and circulated propaganda targeted at soldiers in the process of discharging, which encouraged them to view their honor, their social status, and their sexual status as being contingent upon their performance within state and commercial processes. They hoped that the men would, in pursuit of personal sexual, romantic, and social goals, fulfill their civic and commercial duties as citizens and workers, and refrain from engaging in unproductive or rebellious activities. During demobilization, the Morale Branch’s propagandists attempted to influence the soldiers to view their military service through the lens of legacy. Morale Branch propaganda portrayed the soldier’s status as precarious, because it could be lost or tarnished by his subsequent actions. The military’s morale agency drew upon this same precariousness to instill an insecure and intimate form of patriotism in veterans that would continue to influence them after they left military service. In the design of their propaganda for the returning soldier, the Morale Branch drew heavily upon patriotic imagery, motifs, and themes. But its representation of patriotic symbols frequently rendered these as intimate and unstable.<sup>1</sup> The agency depicted the nation as an approving woman, and described the nation’s honor as something whose value could rise or fall—something that the men would need to protect and grow when they returned home, since their own honor and glory was tied up with that of the nation. The Morale Branch intended for this kind of portrayal of the nation to prevent the men from going on strike or participating in revolutionary activities when they returned home to turbulent economic and social conditions.

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<sup>1</sup> This concept of intimate and insecure patriotism draws upon the insight of recent tendencies within media studies scholarship to trace the ways that personal relationships give seemingly public and political institutions meaning (e.g., “intimate publics” and “intimate citizenship”), and how institutions have encouraged these ways of relating. Meg-John Barker, Rosalind Gill and Laura Harvey, *Mediated Intimacy: Sex Advice in Media Culture* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018), 3.

The Morale Branch's propagandists sought to extend their influence over men's conduct even further by insisting that they become a "good citizens" after they left the military—that they be loyal to the government and American institutions, that they believe in democratic ideals, that they have and support families, and, perhaps most importantly, that they become gainfully employed and work hard in their jobs. Whereas "[t]he original great purpose of the Morale Branch . . . had passed," the agency's historians reflected in a retrospective report, "another equally important purpose was immediately apparent." That purpose was to instill an expectation in the minds of soldiers that they become productive citizens with a loyalty to the American government.<sup>2</sup> To fail to live up to these expectations, whether through engaging in self-serving hedonistic behavior, laziness, or participating in militant labor disputes or revolutionary activity, the Morale Branch's implicit message threatened, was to risk one's status and honor in the eyes of civilians, and civilian women in particular.

### **From Soldiers to Civilians**

The War Department's leaders thought that the transition back into civilian life would require guidance and adjustment. According to Newton Baker's biographer, the Secretary of War fretted about the "problem in restoring to the free will of the civil world the four millions of men who had had to submit their wills to the command and initiative of others"—a mission that was liable to be more difficult the longer the men concerned had spent in the military.<sup>3</sup> Munson stated in a memo that with the war over, "the morale problem pertaining to our troops changes from one to promote military efficiency in men recently from civil life, to one to promote high ideals of citizenship and civic duty among soldiers shortly to return to the civil community."<sup>4</sup> "Beside teaching men how to die for their country," Munson mused about the returning soldiers, "the army will not do its full duty toward them unless it teaches them how to live for their country in the sense of better citizenship."<sup>5</sup> According to the retrospective report on the Morale Branch's activities, there were "two great ends if demobilization—the most successful, possible re-

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<sup>2</sup> Capt. Randolph C. Shaw and 1st Lieut. J. L. Bennett, "Military Morale Work: A History of its Institution and Development in the United States Army," enclosed in letter from Major R. J. Burt, Acting Chief of the Morale Branch to Chief, Historical Branch, War Plans Division, General Staff, September 20, 1919; W. D.—History of Morale Branch; Records of the Historical Section Relating to the History of the War Department, 1900-1941; G-4 Liason & Communication, Orders & Publications; Record Group 165; National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 18.

<sup>3</sup> Frederick Palmer, *Newton D. Baker: America at War* (New York: Dodd & Mead, 1931), 400.

<sup>4</sup> Munson, quoted in Nancy K. Bristow, *Making Men Moral: Social Engineering During the Great War* (New York: New York University, 1996), 182.

<sup>5</sup> Edward L. Munson, *The Management of Men: A Handbook on the Systematic Development of Morale and the Control of Human Behavior* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921), Management of Men, 480-81.

establishment of the discharged men in civil life and the most successful possible return of the discharged men as American citizens, deeply, permanently and comprehendingly imbued with the great principles underlying that American democracy for which they had fought, or been willing to fight.”<sup>6</sup> In brief, the agency sought to ensure a steady supply of dependable citizens, and to civil security.

Throughout the war, Wilson and the progressives who staffed the high positions in the War Department and who supported American belligerency from outside of the government articulated their great aspirations of national uplift for the war, with many hoping that they could seize the moment as an opportunity to transform the citizenry of the country.<sup>7</sup> In a stunning feat of public relations management, Baker, Creel, and other key figures in Wilson’s cabinet had used the ambition of national uplift to persuade the progressives of the nation to abandon their pacifism and support the war. The philosopher John Dewey’s editorials, for example, insisted that the war was full of “social possibilities” for reforming American society and making it more public-minded and cooperative.<sup>8</sup> Early in the war, Baker declaimed a vision of transforming the young men of the nation through military service, explaining that he hoped to send them home equipped with the “invisible armor” of self restraint to unified communities whose red light districts had closed, and whose overall cultural values had become more wholesome and whose denizens were full of pride at “having participated in this great undertaking and achievement.” In Baker’s vision, the war would produce a people who were “sound and virile and intelligent.”<sup>9</sup>

Like Dewey and Baker, the morale theorists had been eager to exploit the “social possibilities” of the war—especially the prospect that a full-scale national mobilization would generate a public-minded spirit and a robust commitment to collective effort. For them, morale described the fundamental state that society ought to strive for—an emotional and psychological state that would drive effort, efficiency and collaboration in times of peace as well as during war. Turning away from the military mission of winning the war and toward peacetime commercialism, Munson, G. Stanley Hall and Harold Clarke Goddard insisted on the importance of morale to post-war society. They believed that morale was the key to transforming the nation, since through its cultivation, men could become invested in being good citizens in a way that paralleled how they had become invested in being good soldiers. For these theorists, morale

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<sup>6</sup> Shaw and Bennett, “Military Morale Work: A History of Its Institution and Development in the United States Army,” 18-19.

<sup>7</sup> Bristow, *Making Men Moral*, xvii-xviii, 12, 16.

<sup>8</sup> David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004 [1980]), 50.

<sup>9</sup> Newton D. Baker, *Frontiers of Freedom* (New York: George H. Doran company, 1918), 96.

was the very thing that could defuse class conflict between the working class and the capitalist class, and sooth elite, intra-class tensions between the social reformers, academics, and industrial and commercial business owners who constituted Wilson's wartime coalition. According to David Kennedy, the pillars of Wilson's political constituency were progressive and paternalistic "liberal Americanizers" who sought to uplift immigrants and the working classes for their own wellbeing, "old-stock Americans who feared for the continued ascendancy of their cultural values and social position," and "businessmen who sought to discipline a troublesomely varied labor force." All of the concerns of this "unholy collaboration," as Kennedy calls it, were addressed in the plans for postwar morale sketched out by the morale theorists.<sup>10</sup>

Harold Goddard's writing on post-armistice morale was exemplary in this regard. For Goddard, who continued to head Swarthmore's English department after the war, a fundamental goal of post-war reconstruction was to maintain the motivational capacity and ideals that the morale programs had achieved. An "invigorated American" must maintain the "better habits" it acquired during the war. "The whole problem of reconstruction, on its psychological side," he explained, "is the problem of carrying over into peace the high morale of war"—a morale that had been built, in his own words, upon "self-control in matters of sex." Like others, he worried that these gains would be lost as the men left the disciplined life of the military. "Is our high morale destined to end with the war?" he asked rhetorically. "After the tension, must there come relaxation? After the enthusiasm, apathy? After the vigilance, irresponsibility? After the sacrifice, selfishness?" Goddard's main worry was that the men, freed from the tensions of war and military oversight and responsibilities, would turn away from the responsibilities of citizenship to hedonistic pleasure and become "voluptuaries," who he described as short-sighted, selfish and self-interested "deserters" of democracy. Such men were not only unproductive and uncooperative, but they also abandoned their hypothetical commitment to justice—the high aspiration that had supposedly carried them in their military duties overseas.<sup>11</sup> In Goddard's formulation, morale served the panoply of causes that animated Wilson's variegated coalition: the progressive ideals of selflessness, commitment to justice, and cooperation; the business principles of productivity and efficiency; and the "old-stock" values of patriotism and loyalty—and all of it built atop a precarious foundation of sexual control and managed sexual desire.

While the high aspirations of progressive idealism and patriotic loyalty were perhaps the most sentimental and cherished ends that the morale theorists held up as goals for the post-armistice morale of the ideal citizen, productivity and efficiency were the most practical. For the theorists, morale constituted a kind of psychological Taylorism. Munson argued that as far as

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<sup>10</sup> Kennedy, *Over Here*, 64.

<sup>11</sup> Harold Clarke Goddard, *Morale* (New York: George H. Doran company, 1918), 105, 110, 111, 113, 114, 118.

efficiency and productivity were concerned, “the mind of the worker is no less important to the final output and value than is the machine.” He insisted upon the synonymy of men’s “mental state, their will to do, their coöperative effort, [and] their morale,” all of which needed to be honed in order to maximize “output, and productivity and the success of the joint undertaking.”<sup>12</sup> His book on morale included an entire chapter on “industrial morale,” where he sought to use the frameworks for boosting military motivation to improve workplace productivity and secure worker contentment and loyalty. Morale work in some form, he thought, should be pursued in the industrial workplace and office of the post-war society. Goddard, for his part, was thrilled about the massive productive potential that the war economy unlocked, which, he said, “put to shame the most millennial imagination. We had not begun to grasp the wealth and productive capacity of man.” Goddard wondered what could be achieved if the nation could harness wartime productivity and channel it into peacetime creation. He believed this could be accomplished by reforming the human spirit, rather than altering the economic system.<sup>13</sup>

The Morale Branch was clearly operating according to this same logic. This was reflected in both internal memos and in the propaganda the agency produced after the armistice. With the men’s military responsibilities coming to an end, it was the agency’s explicit plan to redirect the men’s efforts into a new set of roles and responsibilities. The agency’s historical report in the fall of 1919 explained that “the discipline and degree of tractability of the men during demobilization would be in proportion to the degree of their comprehension of the responsibility entailed by American citizenship.”<sup>14</sup> In talks with the American Newspaper Publishers’ Association in the spring of 1919, Morale Branch staff, seeking to create a campaign for recruiting a new peacetime army, emphasized that military service would transform the enlistee into “a more useful citizen, a more efficient worker, and an American with broadened ideas and capacity for effort.”<sup>15</sup>

Many of the Morale Branch’s *Trench and Camp* editorials and posters displayed this same preoccupation with the men’s efficiency and “capacity for effort.” In an editorial for “News columns of all papers,” Thomas Kirby encouraged returning soldiers to become “good citizens” as they left military service. To define what a good citizen was, Kirby quoted Henry Cabot Lodge:

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<sup>12</sup> Munson, *Management of Men*, 736, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Goddard, *Morale*, 116-117.

<sup>14</sup> Shaw and Bennett, “Military Morale Work: A History of Its Institution and Development in the United States Army,” 18-19.

<sup>15</sup> James E. Edmonds, Letter to E. L. Munson, April 28, 1919; Coming Back, Editorials, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 2, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

He who labors in any way, who has any intellectual interest, who employs his leisure hours for any public end, has one valuable element of good citizenship to his credit in the mere fact of his industry; for there is nobody so detrimental in a country like ours as the mere idler, the mere seeker for self-amusement, who passes his time in constant uncertainty as to how he shall get rid of the next day or the next hour of that brief life which however short in some cases, is from every point of view too long for him.<sup>16</sup>

In an “Editorial for all papers” entitled “Get Back on the Job!” the Morale Branch’s main propaganda writer Thomas Kirby insisted that “[r]eleased soldiers should lose no time in resuming their places in the business and professional life of the country.”<sup>17</sup>

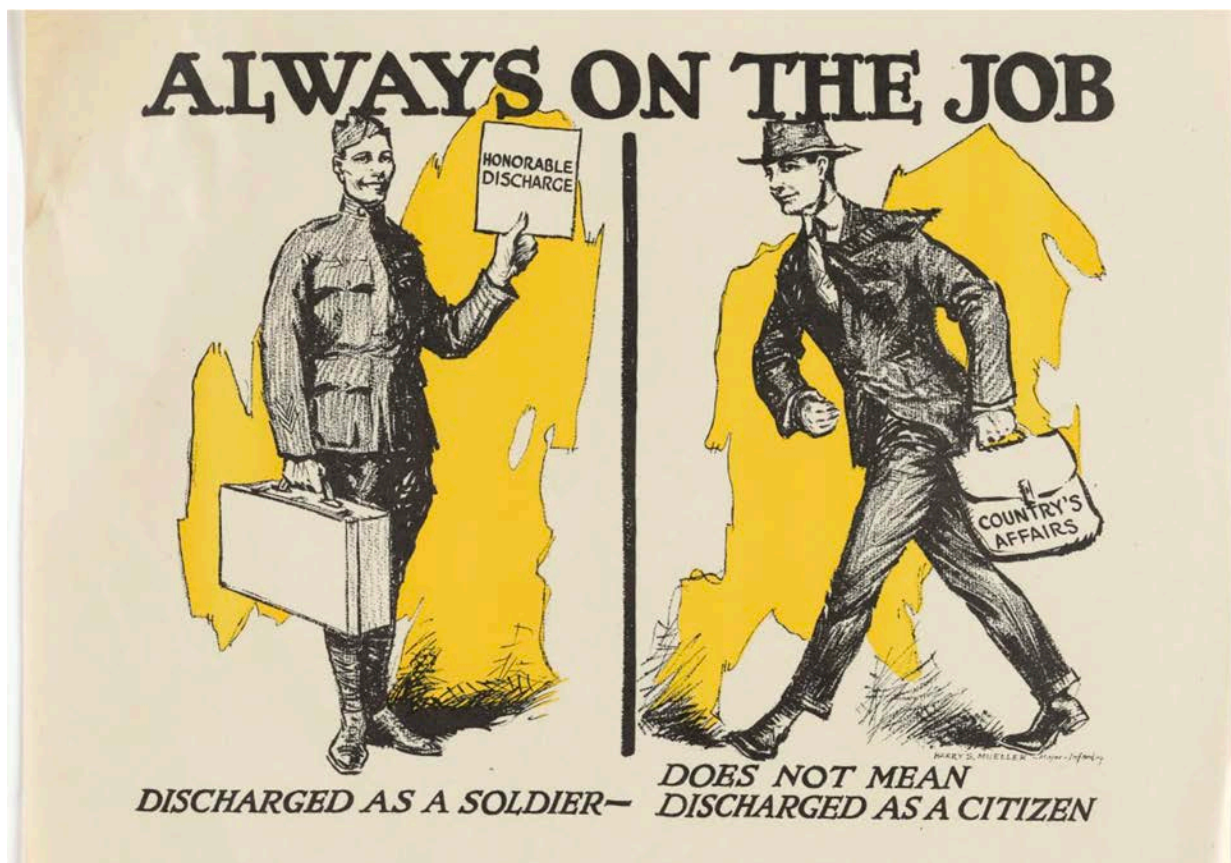
The urge to be productive was also a salient theme in a number of the Morale Branch’s posters. “Discharged as a soldier,” one exemplary poster read, “does not mean discharged as a citizen.” In the illustration, below a caption reading “always on the job,” a vignette on the left depicts a grinning soldier holding a sheet of paper labeled “honorable discharge.” In a vignette on the right, the same man is dressed in business attire and swiftly marching (presumably toward his gainful employment somewhere), holding a briefcase labeled “country’s affairs.” (See Figure 6.1) Another Morale Branch-produced poster designed by the artist and illustrator Gordon Grant, depicting a smiling veteran sporting a red chevron on his sleeve, urged discharging men to resist the temptations of becoming inactive or unproductive upon leaving military service—putting off work to “blow” their bonus on amusements or to rest on their laurels. (See Figure 6.2)

As during demobilization, the Morale Branch’s writers and illustrators depicted men’s legacies as precarious. The morale theorists’ and morale agency’s definitions of citizenship, with their firm embrace of productivity and their rejection of idleness and pleasure-seeking, represented a specific vision of manhood, and of the postwar nation—a commercial nation in which men worked hard in order to be considered acceptable. By failing to be a good citizen, the propaganda seemed to suggest, he risked losing the honor and status that his military service supposedly conferred upon him. The posters and editorials represented the soldier’s wartime experience as a legacy or a “record”—something that needed to be protected and maintained. As Goddard warned, “the tragedy of [reconstruction] will be that many a soldier who proved himself a hero in the earlier struggle will come home only to prove himself a coward in the coming one—abandoning in a life of selfish pleasure the unfinished cause for which he

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<sup>16</sup> Untitled editorial; Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>17</sup> “Get Back On the Job!” (editorial); Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

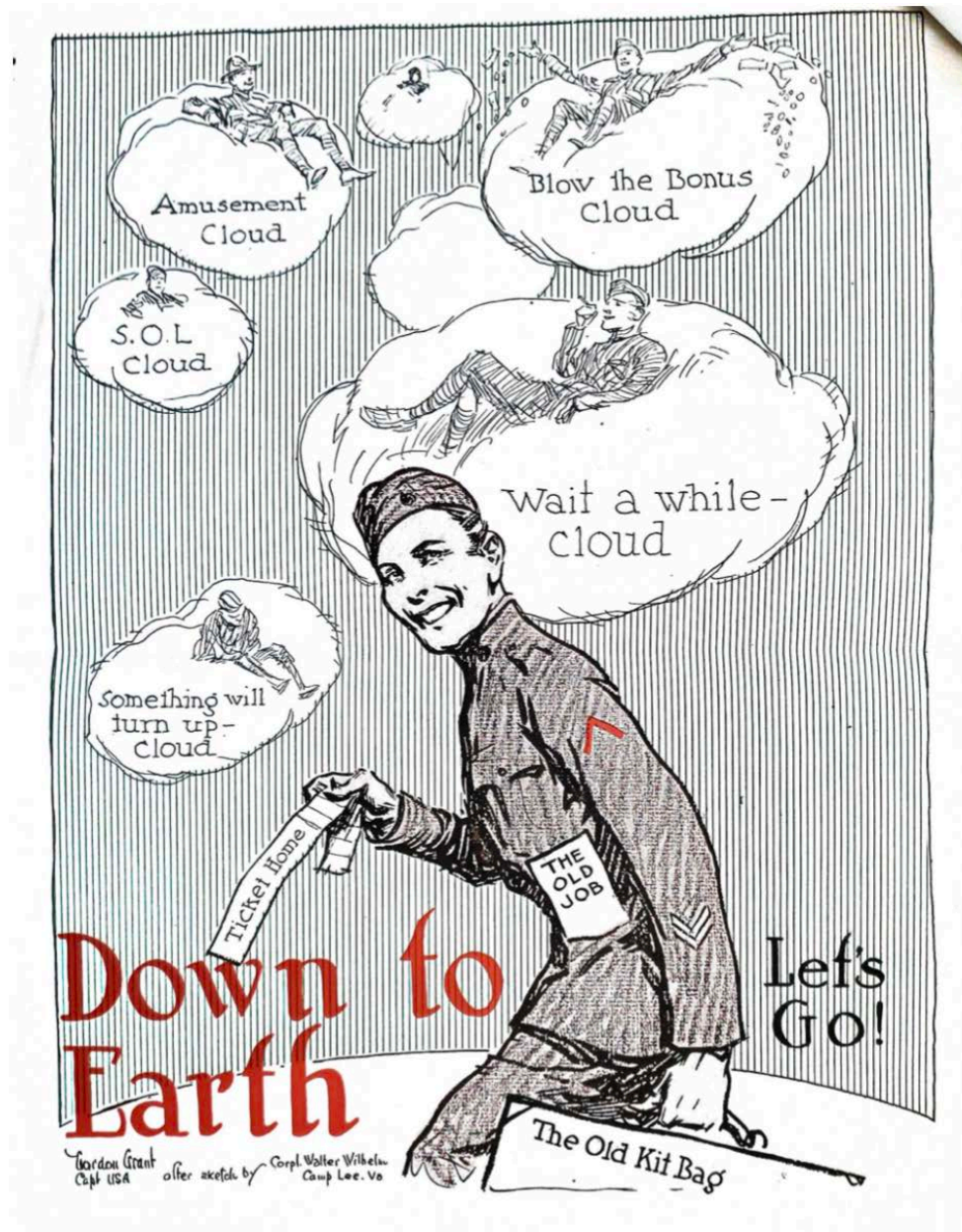


**Figure 6.1:** Morale Branch poster illustration showing the transformation of the honorably discharged veteran becoming a civilian worker taking responsibility for the “country’s affairs.”

fought.”<sup>18</sup> An illustration in an early February issue of *Trench and Camp*, trafficking in this type of logic, depicted a discharged soldier with a “ticket home” in one hand, standing in front of an honorable discharge certificate, with the caption “Honor Your Record and Your Uniform.” (See Figure 6.3) This was the moving goal post of social recognition that the Morale Branch’s propagandists clearly hoped for the returning men to internalize: regardless of any virtuous prior action, they could always lose their status; always become a pariah or an outcast—implicitly in the eyes of women.

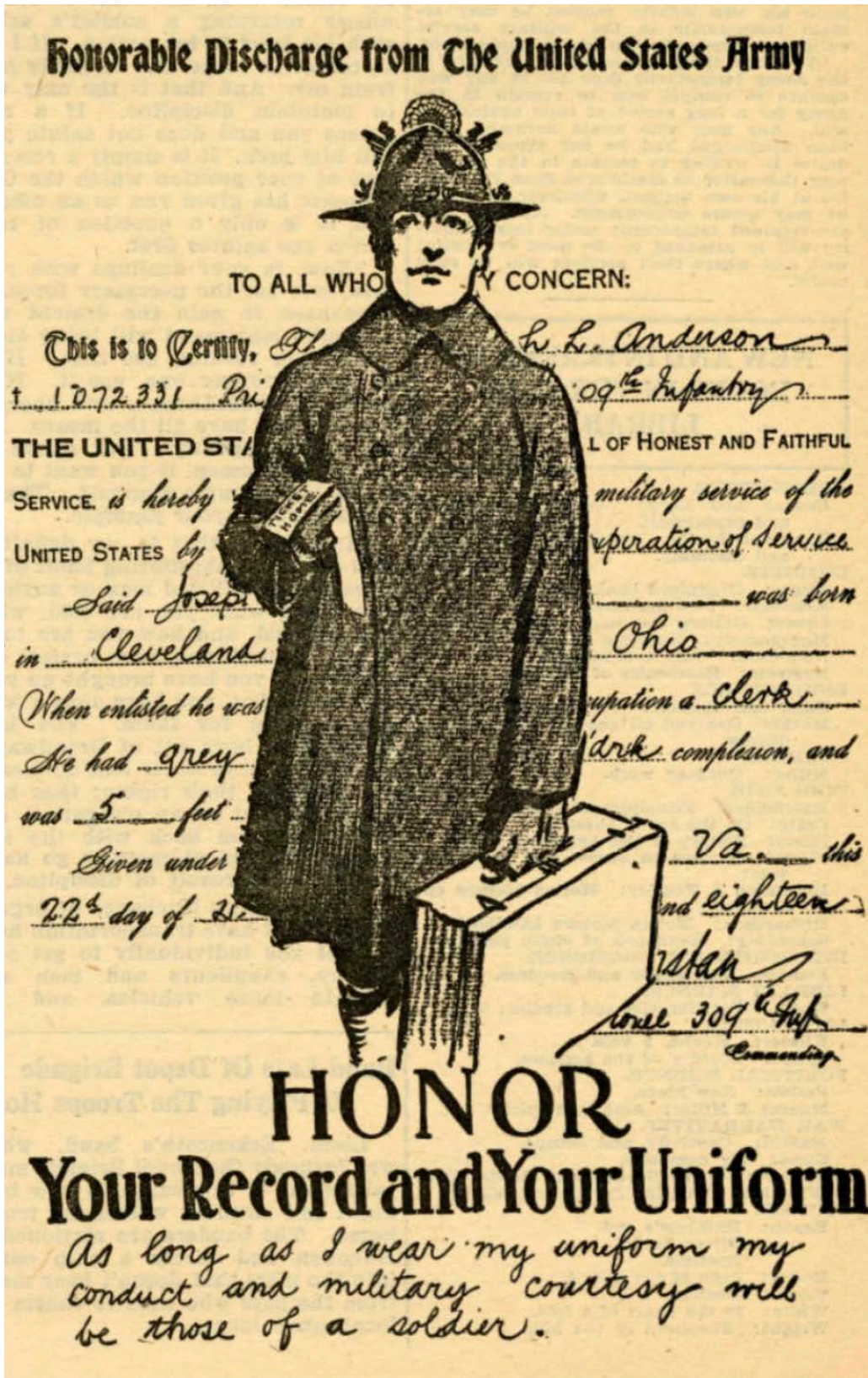
G. Stanley Hall’s 1920 book *Morale: The Supreme Standard of Life and Conduct* delved deeply into the logic of how postwar male effort ought to be motivated by sexual precariousness. In his chapter on “Morale and Feminism,” Hall explained that he saw it as imperative for civilian society to maintain a competitive, gendered sexual economy, where discerning women’s high standards for men would compel effort, productivity, and self-improvement on the part of those men. It was one of women’s essential functions, Hall insisted, to “long-circuit” the “sublimation or irradiation of the sex impulse [of men]” by maintaining high standards. If the woman herself “had wooed and made the advances, or even been won too

<sup>18</sup> Goddard, *Morale*, 118.



**Figure 6.2:** Morale Branch poster urging the discharging soldier to quickly get back to work in his home town once he leaves the service.

easily, the sex impulse would have been short-circuited and the higher qualities [in men] would never have been developed.” The long circuit, in Hall’s electrical metaphor, created by “the hesitation or reluctance of the female,” would result in elaborate, socially-useful activity on the part of men. “It would be impossible to enumerate all the great deeds, noble qualities, monumental works in every field of art and literature which men have achieved under the inspiration of women, and this is the larger psychogenetic function of courtship,” Hall asserted. Therefore, women needed to be encouraged to play a gatekeeping function over men’s access to their bodies. If a woman “allows liberties in her competition” or “permits marital approaches without a preliminary flushing up of these higher secondary sex qualities in her mate,” Hall



**Figure 6.3:** February, 1919 *Trench and Camp* illustration showing a veteran standing in front of an honorable discharge certificate, insisting that he “Honor Your Record and Your Uniform.”

inveighed, she “lowers the standards which it is the prime function of her sex to keep high.” Women’s love, Hall thought, should be “eugenic.”<sup>19</sup>

In Hall’s vision, women should not merely gatekeep sex; they should also become maximally desirable to men by leaning into sexual dimorphism (or gender distinctions). Women, he thought, should “strive to become as truly feminine as man should be virile.” “Civilization,” he claimed, demanded such “progressive differentiation.” Masculine women and “the feminized male” were, in Hall’s view, a “monstrosity” that impeded the “true progress” of society.<sup>20</sup> This was Hall’s rejoinder to feminism: in a moment in which women were gaining new rights (Hall’s book on morale was published in 1920—the year of the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment granting women the right to vote in the United States), Hall was wary of equality and equal opportunity. Like the nineteenth-century moralist Auguste Comte, who Hall cited as an inspiration for his views on women and feminism, Hall revered traditional forms of femininity and celebrated women’s roles as civilizers, but opposed women’s political and economic advancement.<sup>21</sup> Instead of claiming parity with men, Hall thought, women should, “[t]o attain the new morale which the times now demand of her sex . . . find and emphasize every possible real and certain sex difference and to push it to the uttermost.” In Hall’s vision, true women’s empowerment consisted of embracing their role in sexual selection, and consciously and intentionally wielding this to shape men into virile and productive defenders of, and providers for motherhood and childhood.<sup>22</sup>

Because the Morale Branch’s propaganda tied men’s honor (typically represented as something that would be validated or invalidated in the eyes of women—real or fictional) to their legacies, and tied their legacies to the nation’s reputation, by this logic, the man’s status in the eyes of women would potentially come under threat if the nation’s reputation was tarnished. Patriotism, in this framing, was not an impersonal or political category, so much as an intimate symbol of personal honor—a symbol with the capacity to rise and fall in value. By constantly reminding the men that their status was precarious, it is clear that the Morale Branch’s propagandists hoped that the men would internalize a certain degree of insecurity and continue

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<sup>19</sup> G. Stanley Hall, *Morale: The Supreme Standard of Life and Conduct* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1920), 260, 265-66.

<sup>20</sup> Hall, *Morale*, 246-47, 249.

<sup>21</sup> See Auguste Comte’s reflections on “the worship of Woman,” in *System Of Positive Polity*, Vol. 1 (London: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1875), 211-214. On Hall’s reverence for women—and his mother in particular—see T. J. Jackson Lears, *No Place of Grace: Antimodernism and the Transformation of American Culture, 1880-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 447-251.

<sup>22</sup> Hall, *Morale*, 246, 250-51. For further analysis of Hall’s perspective on gender, see Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995), 107.

to strive to maintain their honor by working hard and being compliant and cooperative after they left the service.

### **Employment, Morale, and Concerns About Labor Unrest**

Alongside the Morale Branch's treatment of the honorable discharge (and military service more generally) as a legacy, the agency had other designs for securing discipline among discharging soldiers and veterans. The Morale Branch sought to instill a lasting loyalty to the United States government and its institutions in the hearts and minds of the returning soldiers in order to prevent them from engaging in labor unrest or subversive political activities when they re-entered civilian life as workers.

Morale work had always been partially about preventing revolt and mutiny. The Military Morale Section had originally been instituted under the Intelligence Branch of the General Staff—a part of the War Department whose mission was to counter both foreign and domestic threats to military operations, including espionage and sedition. Its founders set it up shortly after the October Revolution, which ultimately pulled Russia out of the war. The morale theorists behind the morale agency worried that the US could suffer its own revolution, which would incapacitate its industry and undermine its military. Munson blamed the Russian Revolution on a breakdown of morale.<sup>23</sup> G. Stanley Hall dedicated an entire chapter of his book on morale to analyzing the relationship between morale and “red radicalism,” and pointed to morale work as a key means of preventing revolutionary upheaval.<sup>24</sup> An August, 1918 editorial in *Going Over* argued that “narrow minded” Russian civilians, lacking high spirits, had “turned Russia to the vultures.”<sup>25</sup>

The agency also sought to discredit pacifists during the war. In a Military Morale Section memo describing the agency's active anti-radical activities, a member of the Section's staff explained that “[t]he work on conscientious objectors, I.W.W. and similar disturbing elements in the Camps is continuing, and the situation regarding the [conscientious objectors] shows decided improvement. Many have shown a willingness to accept non-combatant duty. A good effect will doubtless be produced by the arrest of [the American socialist politician] Eugene V. Debs, and an effort is being made by this office to determine just what the case is for and against Roger Baldwin [the founding director of the ACLU], in so far as his activities have

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<sup>23</sup> Munson, *Management of Men*, 47-48.

<sup>24</sup> Hall, *Morale*, 316.

<sup>25</sup> “An Ideal Letter From the Front,” *Going Over*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (August 26, 1918), The National WWI Museum and Memorial archives, Kansas City, MO., 5.

affected the army.”<sup>26</sup> The morale agency also accused pacifists of being “slackers” in editorials published in *Trench and Camp*.<sup>27</sup>

The morale agency was assisted in these efforts by the Committee on Public Information (CPI). Through Four Minute Men speeches, the CPI aimed to leverage young men’s home communities—and especially the women in their families and social circles—to pressure men to enlist under threat of enforcing a social death upon them if they didn’t. One such speech, entitled “It’s Duty Boy,” urged a hypothetical son to “do your part,” insisted that “No son of ours shall e’er disgrace our grand old family tree / By turning out a slacker when his country needs his aid,” and searingly claimed that it would be better to “know you bravely died / Than have a living coward sit supinely by my side.”<sup>28</sup> The shaming campaigns seem to have worked to sway public opinion, as evidenced by the scorn that many civilians and politicians showed for pacifists. Congressman Walter H. Newton called conscientious objectors “consciousless objectors,” and insisted that they were “pro-German, I.W.W. political Socialists, and cowardly slackers.”<sup>29</sup> The stigmatization campaigns, bolstered by public support, appear to have been effective in pressuring the young men of the nation too. Not only did men’s families and sweethearts actually pressure them to enlist (as happened to Joseph Rizzi), but some of those who refused to go on moral grounds testified that they felt like pariahs.<sup>30</sup> As one imprisoned Mennonite conscientious objector explained in a letter to his parents from the Fort Leavenworth detention facility where such refusers were warehoused, “You cant emagen how it is to be hated. If it wasent fore Christ it would be empossible.”<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Military Morale Section, “Morale in the Army,” c. June, 1918, Morale Material for Bulletins in Preparation, General Correspondence (“Subject”) File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs; Record Group 165; Box 8, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 3.

<sup>27</sup> A key example of the agency’s anti-pacifism was written by the Military Morale Section’s Thaddeus DeFriez. Entitled “The True Pacifist—He Fights,” and published in both *Going Over* and *Trench and Camp*, the editorial linked militarism and productivity, claiming that “There are two kinds of men. One lies down before trouble. The other stands up and fights it. The work of the world is done by the men who fight.” “Editorial for *Trench and Camp*,” Articles, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records, Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 4, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 1. Published as “The True Pacifist—He Fights,” *Going Over*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 4; and “The True Pacifist—He Fights,” *Trench and Camp*, *El Paso Herald* Edition for Camp Cody, Deming, New Mexico, Vol. 1, No. 47 (September 12, 1918), 4. For further examples of the morale agency’s anti-pacifist articles, see, e.g., “Rather Be Dead in France Than a Slacker At Home,” *Trench and Camp*, *El Paso Herald* Edition for Camp Cody, Deming, New Mexico, Vol. 1, No. 51 (October 10, 1918), 8.

<sup>28</sup> “‘It’s Duty Boy’ (Poem Read by Four Minute Men),” *Four Minute Men: Volunteer Speeches During World War I* (webpage), historymatters.gmu < <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/dl/4970/> > accessed July 19, 2022.

<sup>29</sup> Robert K. Murray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955) 13; Walter H. Newton, quoted in Burl Noggle, *Into the Twenties: The United States from Armistice to Normalcy* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1974), 85-86.

<sup>30</sup> Joseph N. Rizzi, *Joe’s War: Memoirs of a Doughboy*, Richard A. Baumgartner, ed., (Huntington, WV: Der Angriff Publications, 1983), 1-3.

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Thomas J. Fleming, *The Illusion of Victory: America in World War I* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 137.

Labor unrest among workers commanded a great deal of attention from morale planners too. During the war, labor shortages caused by the subtraction of enlisted men from the workforce paired with a nearly total halt on immigration and increased demand lent considerable power to workers.<sup>32</sup> Strikes proliferated between 1916 and 1919, and in the immediate aftermath of the armistice, strikes reached their highest levels ever, with around one fourth of all American private-sector employees participating in strikes that year.<sup>33</sup> In early February, 1919, workers in Seattle, whose shipbuilding and lumber industries boomed during the war, initiated a weeklong general strike which took 65,000 workers off the job. Due in part to the participation of a minority of IWW members and the circulation of radical literature and brazen statements made by labor organizers during the events, a series of frenzied media reports depicted the strike as a major step toward anti-capitalist revolution, sparking a nation-wide red scare.<sup>34</sup>

The strike, in combination with breakdowns in military discipline and conduct, worried War Department officials, who believed that the rapid demobilization strategy that they were pursuing would strain labor markets by flooding them with returning soldiers and add fuel to an already incendiary labor situation. The Morale Branch's leaders thought that the the best way to prevent political upheaval was to bolster the returning soldiers' morale by instilling a sense of both loyalty and security in them. They identified economic anxieties as posing a particularly acute hazard for morale, especially among soldiers who discharged comparatively late in the demobilization process, who worried that by the time they arrived home, all the jobs would be filled by previously-discharged men. At the same time, the Morale Branch's leaders worried that the men returning home would be disappointed with their economic prospects. The agency needed a way of reassuring the men still enlisted in the military that they would find work, while also tempering their expectations that they would immediately find jobs—especially jobs that were superior to the ones they had before joining the military.<sup>35</sup> As the Morale Branch's historical report explained, "It was manifest that the contentment and responsiveness to discipline of the men during demobilization would very definitely be influenced by knowledge that a grateful government would protect their economic interests."<sup>36</sup> That the purpose of such reassurances was to prevent rebellion and disorder was testified to by Munson as well, who insisted that

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<sup>32</sup> David Brody, *Steelworkers in America: The Nonunion Era* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 181.

<sup>33</sup> Melvyn Dubofsky, "Labor Unrest in the United States, 1906-90," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Winter 1995), 126.

<sup>34</sup> Murray, *Red Scare*, 59-66.

<sup>35</sup> "Soldiers Have Ambitions" (editorial); Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>36</sup> Shaw and Bennett, "Military Morale Work: A History of Its Institution and Development in the United States Army," 19.

ensuring that the men were “rapidly and effectively absorbed by business and industry” was “necessary, not only in the interests of the men, but to promote their morale and tractability during the trying demobilization periods and to quicken their appreciation and loyalty to the Government thus taking practical measures for their welfare.”<sup>37</sup>

Through *Trench and Camp* articles, posters, and pamphlets, both the Morale Branch and CTCA organizations such as the War Camp Community Service (WCCS) organization constantly encouraged discharging men to be in contact with agents from the United States Employment Service (USES)—a branch of the Department of Labor that the government tasked with assisting soldiers in securing employment.<sup>38</sup> The USES sent agents to the ports of embarkation in France to distribute cards to soldiers promising to secure them employment and inquiring about their home destinations and qualifications. These cards were collected by agents on the other side of the soldiers’ Atlantic crossing, and sent to local employment bureaus scattered around the United States, which would work with employers to recruit suitable veterans for their businesses. This, according to the historians of demobilization Benedict Cromwell and Robert Forrest Wilson, had a stabilizing impact on soldiers’ behavior, since many men secured jobs for themselves prior to being discharged, which presumably contributed to their contentment as they served the remaining weeks and months of their military service.<sup>39</sup>

In order to pacify the soldiers still further, the Morale Branch encouraged the men to attend lectures and educational courses where YMCA workers and officers taught them the basics of American civics, the virtues of democracy, and vocational skills that would make them feel that they were improving their economic prospects. These lectures were overseen by the intellectual historian and professor of philosophy from Johns Hopkins University Arthur Oncken Lovejoy, who served as the Director of Lectures for the YMCA’s Educational Bureau. Even before the war had ended, Lovejoy, at Munson’s urging, coordinated with the social Darwinist and Yale professor Albert Galloway Keller—who Munson brought into the Morale Branch in October, 1918 to oversee post-war morale—to establish the educational courses.<sup>40</sup> Such courses, Keller wrote in an October, 1918 memo to the Morale Branch’s G. B. Perkins, should make the most of the “unparalleled opportunity” presented by the end of the war, to “send the

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<sup>37</sup> Munson, *Management of Men*, 577.

<sup>38</sup> “Let the U.S. Employment Service Help You Find a Good Position—It’s Free,” *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Vol. 2, No. 22 (March 4, 1919), 2; “U.S. Employment Service Goes Overseas,” *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Vol. 2, No. 28 (April 15, 1919), 5; William Brown Meloney, *Where Do We Go From Here? This Is the Real Dope* (War Camp Community Service, 1919), 33, 46-47.

<sup>39</sup> Cromwell and Wilson, *Demobilization*, 106-108.

<sup>40</sup> E. L. Munson, letter to A. O. Lovejoy, October 24, 1918; C.T.C.A.—Y.M.C.A.; A-File, Consolidated Office File on all subjects except camps, posts & stations, A, General Correspondence (“Subject”) File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs; Record Group 165, Box 1, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 2.

soldiers back to civil life better qualified to discharge civic functions,” and to “inoculate the generation, now rising into power, against bolshevism, I.W.W.ism, socialism of the obnoxious and fatal order, and many another social disease that we have feared.” Since the men, Keller anticipated, were “going largely to run the country for decades to come,” they needed “to be molded into genuine Americans,” who felt invested in their future lives and careers.<sup>41</sup>

In a January 20, 1919 memo Munson urged local morale officers to encourage men to take part in these courses. These courses sought, according to Munson, “to develop among the men, prior to their demobilization, a knowledge and appreciation of good citizenship, and to prepare men for . . . better opportunities in their home communities as might be secured through short educational courses.” “To this end,” he further explained, lectures would cover

subjects relating to good citizenship, respect for law, orderly adjustment of social controversies, the meaning of a democracy, the forms and principles of Federal, State and local government in this country, the fundamental facts and elementary principles of economics, vocations, the value of education to the individual and community, the problems of reconstruction, the benefits of military experience to be carried back by the soldier to civil life, etc. These lectures are to be short, practical, interesting and couched in simple language.<sup>42</sup>

As Munson explained elsewhere, these courses were designed to generate “a higher state of morale and a corresponding state of discipline and contentment at a time when the unrest pertaining to demobilization needed to be allayed.”<sup>43</sup> A number of Morale Branch-produced editorials publicized that if the men could not find a job, they could remain in the military for as long as they needed to, improving their skills and knowledge in the educational and vocational training programs while they did.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> A. G. Keller, letter to Captain Perkins, October 22, 1918; Demobilization; A-File, D; Morale Branch records, General Correspondence (“Subject”) File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs; Record Group 165, Box 5, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 2.

<sup>42</sup> E. L. Munson, Memorandum to Morale Officer on “Education of enlisted men,” January 20, 1919; Education of E.W.; A-File, D, Morale Branch records, General Correspondence (“Subject”) File, 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs; Record Group 165, Box 5, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 1-2.

<sup>43</sup> Munson, *Management of Men*, 476. The agency’s historical report confirmed that “allaying unrest and maintaining high devotion to duty among units and individuals” by giving the men something productive to do, and easing their economic anxieties was the chief goal of these education programs. Shaw and Bennett, “Military Morale Work: A History of Its Institution and Development in the United States Army,” 22.

<sup>44</sup> “You Can Stay In The Army Until You Get A Position,” *Coming Back*, No. 14 (April 4, 1919), 1; “The Benefits of Army Service” (editorial), *Coming Back*, Editorials, Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 2, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD. “Playing Safe’ With ‘Uncle Sam’,” *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Vol. 2, No. 19 (February 11, 1919), 4.

War Department officials also worried that discharging soldiers might accumulate in larger cities, and either fall idle, or become involved in labor struggles there. Because the War Department's chosen plan for demobilization processed and discharged soldiers in thirty large demobilization centers scattered around the country, rather than in the thousands of local draft board offices that had been established in nearly every city and town in the country at the beginning of the war, there was a danger that they might not leave these larger cities. They worried that if men, allured by the prospects of upward mobility and urban thrills, decided against returning to their smaller hometowns, that they would also flood the labor markets in those cities and contribute to mass unemployment, leading to further disaffection and strife.<sup>45</sup> The military issued money to soldiers for train tickets, and a variety of Morale Branch-produced *Trench and Camp* editorials encouraged soldiers to proceed to their home communities as quickly as possible, and to avoid congregating in larger cities if they did not have confirmed employment there. Seeking to lure the soldier away from the city by promising economic opportunities and social recognition in his home community, one such editorial implored: "For his own sake, for the sake of his family, for the sake of his future and for the sake of the community that is truly grateful for the part he played in civilization's defense, the discharged soldier should make his own home town his immediate objective upon leaving the service."<sup>46</sup> Here, the Morale Branch used the promise of soldier's admiring community and economic opportunities to lure him away from the places that were likely to become centers of labor militancy.

The ambitions of morale leaders extended beyond the military and into the industrial workplace. Morale theorists proffered their motivational frameworks as a means of abating radicalism there as well. Hall, who thought that employers in the United States were "less awake" to "the dangers of revolution" than they were in other countries, believed that "the most vital question of our day" was to undermine the "appeal of radicalism"—something he thought could be achieved only through both looking out for the basic comforts of workers, and through extensive provision for their morale. Morale, Hall thought, was the determining factor behind whether or not the working classes would revolt, just as it had been the determining factor that led to the Russian Revolution. "[O]nly a new high morale," he claimed, "can save us from a radical revolution. On this the course of the world's future history now chiefly depends." Such "industrial morale," as he and other morale theorists called it, could come about if captains of industry would "employ [psychological] experts like C. H. Parker, Ordway Tead, Glenn Frank,

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<sup>45</sup> Palmer, *Newton D. Baker*, 400.

<sup>46</sup> "The Home Job" (editorial); Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

John Spargo, A. Henderson, Boyd Fisher, J. R. Commons, Meyer Bloomfield, Mackenzie King, Robert Bruère, etc., . . . to work at the great centers of unrest, explore in the most sympathetic way the actual attitude and operations of the minds of radicals . . . and suggest antidotes.” By employing psychologists and other experts to remake the workplace with a “recognition of the primacy of the human factor,” Hall reckoned, society could attain a certain “solidarity . . . between employer and employees.”<sup>47</sup> Here, Hall’s ambitions for employer-employee harmony was characteristic of the morale theorists writing after the war who, seeking to please the inherently strained elements of the Wilson coalition, set about to use their motivational strategy to pacify a restive working population and in the process to make worker productivity (and therefore profits) higher, while simultaneously encouraging employers to take steps to improve the subjective wellbeing of the workers themselves. In their fantasy for postwar harmony, the morale theorists imagined a society in which businesses were profitable because workers were efficient, and workers were efficient because they were happy, healthy, and driven—a dynamic that they called “industrial peace.” In this design, morale—specifically, the morale of the worker—would be the backbone of order and prosperity.

The morale theorists’ “industrial peace” approach informed the Morale Branch’s moderate, anti-radical version of labor advocacy in the agency’s posters and publications. The first issue of *Coming Back* featured an editorial by the Federation of Labor’s pro-war, anti-radical leader Samuel Gompers. During the war, Gompers greatly aided the government’s mobilization by using his position of influence and power to encourage the nation’s industrial workers to work hard and efficiently, without complaint, to supply the military and support the war effort. He sat on the Council of National Defense and enjoyed a privileged position of being shielded from criticism in the press by the government’s postal censors.<sup>48</sup> The Morale Branch’s featuring of Gompers, who was a relentless critic of radical political ideologies such as anarchism and socialism, in a newspaper issued to returning soldiers indicates that the agency was seeking to appeal to the men as future workers while simultaneously aiming to head off the more radical elements within labor organizing. While some progressives, inspired by the Russian Revolution and the rise of the British Labor Party, saw a radical potential for American labor to not merely reap greater benefits and enjoy shorter working hours, but to exercise direct control over production in the period following the war, the Morale Branch was allying itself with a far more conservative reformist impulse.<sup>49</sup> In the Morale Branch’s Gompers piece, the famed labor leader

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<sup>47</sup> Hall, *Morale*, 216, 318-320, 339.

<sup>48</sup> Oswald Garrison Villard, *Fighting Years: Memories of a Liberal Editor* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939), 354-55; Stanley Shapiro, “The Great War and Reform: Liberals and Labor, 1917-19,” *Labor History*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (1971), 333.

<sup>49</sup> Shapiro, “Great War and Reform,” 332.

urged that the men returning from France ought to maintain their commitment to their country and to “[t]he cause and principles for which so high a price has been paid”—a clear endorsement of the mission that the Morale Branch was pursuing with respect to the maintenance of order.<sup>50</sup>

While the Morale Branch was not in a position to propagandize civilian communities, they were clearly concerned with inoculating the minds of discharging men against radical political sentiment. On January 18, 1919, Kirby sent a memo to MacMahon stating that Munson had insisted that *Trench and Camp* not mention the word “Bolshevism.” The memo continued: “His notation was ‘The word Bolshevism is taboo in this office.’ It is requested that you be guided by this instruction in your future handling of the Russian situation, as it may occur.”<sup>51</sup> It seems that the Seattle general strike changed this stance, since following the incident, the Morale Branch’s editorials became increasingly explicit in their renunciation of radical organizations and ideologies. Following the strike, Kirby issued a statement intended for the “News Columns for all papers” reporting that “[t]he printers of Washington have gone on record in strong denunciation of a general strike and the I.W.W.”<sup>52</sup> In another editorial entitled “A Nation Reincarnated,” Kirby referred to the United States as a “new country,” endowed with “the spirit of 1918”—a spirit, underpinned by “a healthy morale” that was “in America to stay.” The editorial reasoned that this morale, embodied by the army, was a “bulwark” against revolutionary upheaval, and insisted that in democracies, citizens would guard their “freedoms” against violent revolution, and exercise a “[c]ontinuous watchfulness of the national welfare.”<sup>53</sup> In another piece for the “News columns for all papers,” Kirby appealed to the honor of the soldier in order to dissuade him from taking part in the “selfishness” of Bolshevism and what he described as the “habits of easy spending, the coddling of luxuriousness, profit mongering, class hate, [and] loose and thoughtless living”—a motley list of behaviors that, he wrote, the discipline and self-

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<sup>50</sup> Samuel Gompers, “Great Cause Is Made Safe for World,” *Coming Back*, Vol. 1 (January 1, 1919); *Coming Back*, Editorials; Morale Branch records; Service Publications, Including Histories, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 2, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 3.

<sup>51</sup> Thomas Kirby, Letter to Louis MacMahon, January 18, 1919; Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>52</sup> Untitled news article; Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; published as “Capital Printers Denounce Proposed General Strike,” *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Vol. 2, No. 23 (March 11, 1919), 5.

<sup>53</sup> “A Nation Reincarnated” (editorial); Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; published as “A Nation Reincarnated,” *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Vol. 2, No. 19 (February 11, 1919), 4. The copy of this editorial in the Morale Branch’s files had an office note attached to it reading “may have a beneficial affect in discrediting unrest.”

mastery involved in “service in the army got us away from.” The editorial also argued that “[a]ny doctrine or dogma which places ‘self’ first must kill ambition, turn men into automatons, produce narrow, selfish minds, breed egotism and jealousy and stifle the love of progeny.”<sup>54</sup>

The morale agency’s framing of radical ideology as selfish was an accusation that they and the morale theorists also leveled at employers and capitalists who sought to myopically serve their own class interest to the detriment of their workers. Both, in Hall’s framing, threatened to undermine “industrial peace” and bring about Bolshevism.<sup>55</sup> Similar to Hall, the editorial that argued that radical political ideologies “kill ambition” insisted that low morale “arises not from the fundamental soundness of commerce and not the fundamental soundness of labor put forth in production, but because of stupid and inefficient management”—in other words, from employers’ shortcomings too, and the the “childish of coveting possessions”—the editorial’s way of describing an unreasonable degree of wealth hoarding. The opposite of this childishness, according to the editorial, was an approach that would play to men’s supposedly natural ambitions, including the pursuit of love and family—goals that the morale agency’s staff and leaders hoped to instill in the returning soldier.<sup>56</sup>

Like Hall, Munson, too, believed that industrial strife could be prevented through morale work deployed by morale-conscious employers. In a chapter on “industrial morale,” Munson argued in favor of employers motivating men to work harder and more efficiently by applying the principles of morale pioneered during the war to the workplace. “As in the military service,” he explained, “morale work increases efficiency in industry, but it does so not through measures of compulsion but through voluntary action of the individuals concerned.” According to Munson, “applied psychology may be used to practical advantage,” and industrialists needed to think of “the mind of the worker” as part of their plant machinery, inspiring him to participate in work by playing to his instincts. Workers’ instincts, Munson thought, should be woven into a motivational framework that would infuse their work with affective investment, shaking the previously-unmotivated worker into action. “Interest replaces listlessness, desire supplants indifference, and loyalty, enthusiasm, contentment and esprit reinforce each other.”<sup>57</sup> Hall concurred, arguing that men’s “basal human impulses,” which determine and “constitute the normal motives of

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<sup>54</sup> Untitled editorial; Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 1.

<sup>55</sup> Hall, *Morale*, 338.

<sup>56</sup> Untitled editorial, 3.

<sup>57</sup> Munson, *Management of Men*, 137, 736-37.

man's behavior," needed to be catered to and channeled if industrial society was to operate efficiently without labor unrest.<sup>58</sup>

According to this logic, employers should find ways of motivating their employees that tapped into the employees' desires. A key part of this was to route the desire for sexual connection into a desire for marriage, and to make eligibility for marriage contingent upon a man's employment status. As Hall explained, a crucial "basal human impulse" was love, which, once hunger was no longer a vital concern, became a core driving impulse behind men's and women's effort.<sup>59</sup> Because of the power of this impulse, morale theorists endorsed what feminist authors have called the "male breadwinner ideal," hoping that the man, operating in a competitive and stratified sexual economy (characterized by a baseline of sexual scarcity) and pursuing the most desirable (and therefore most discerning) women as partners, would be compelled to seek financial stability through hard work and stable employment so that he could be a viable husband and provider.<sup>60</sup> To support this crucial aspect of industrial morale, the morale theorists called upon employers to design hours, worker benefits, and schedules to accommodate families, and to encourage employees to see their status as workers as a sexually desirable characteristic that they could use to win over a prospective mate—to view, in other words, their employment status as what contemporary sociologists call "sexual capital" or "erotic capital."<sup>61</sup>

Both Munson and Hall thought that rerouting sexual instinct into employment and marital aspirations held the key to solving a problem that plagued employers in the early twentieth century: high rates of worker turnover. Studies from the time indicated that it was common for industrial plants to see anywhere between eighty-eight to 157 percent annual turnover of workers. In the 1910s, employers and academics gave the matter of worker turnover increasing attention. Worker retention, they argued, was more economically efficient, since hiring, training and reliability each came with costs and losses in productivity. Both Munson and Hall pointed to the work of Carleton H. Parker, who criticized as ineffectual the "womanless existence" that migratory workers typically led in an essay on "Motives in Economic Life" published

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<sup>58</sup> Hall, *Morale*, 202.

<sup>59</sup> Hall, *Morale*, 206.

<sup>60</sup> For an analysis of the male breadwinner ideal, and how the media, advertising, and other shapers of cultural ideals have imposed it as a burden upon men through the threat of social sanctions for nonconformity, see Barbara Ehrenreich, *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight From Commitment* (New York: Anchor Books, 1983), 14-28.

<sup>61</sup> See, for example, Catherine Hakim, "Erotic Capital," *European Sociological Review*, Vol. 26, No. 5 (Oct. 2010), 499-518; Robert T. Michael, "Sexual Capital: An Extension of Grossman's Concept of Health Capital," *Journal of Health Economics*, Vol. 23 (2004), 643-652.

posthumously in a 1920 book entitled *The Casual Laborer*.<sup>62</sup> Munson, following this logic, directed his concern about morale at what he called the “floater class” in particular, which he described as “a womanless class, and therefore without the stabilizing and stimulating influence of family and home.”<sup>63</sup> The presence of women—or at least the prospect of their presence—was, by this logic, one of the most effective motivators of productive and efficient work, and both a cause of stability and reason for male workers to settle into a job and treat it as a long-term career.

This type of reasoning found its expression in the Morale Branch’s propaganda too—in the first place by linking heroism to civilian duty. A *Trench and Camp* editorial entitled “On Pride in Workmanship,” published in March 1919 urged soldiers to find parallels between the job they may have been reluctant to take and the mission and purpose they found in the military. “Life is a great fight,” the editorial insisted, “a fight against disease and poverty and vice and everything else that kills happiness—and all of us, no matter how small our part, are comrades in that fight, and have the welfare of the rest in our keeping. This thought makes any job take on importance and allows us a legitimate pride in our workmanship.”<sup>64</sup> The Morale Branch published an editorial borrowed from *Life* magazine that urged returning soldiers to “[s]till be heroes when you come home,” and insisted that “there are heroic times and more coming.” “We need persons who can sit tight,” the quoted *Life* editorial stated, “gentlemen not too much concerned about what is going to happen to them and the rest of the community, but duly concerned for their own conduct and the maintenance of the spirit and the discipline that helped them to end the war.” According to the editorial, while “[t]he country owes you a great deal,” the men owed much to their country as well, for making them into heroes. “Could you have been heroes unless she had gotten you into war?” the editorial asked.<sup>65</sup> Such pleas were clearly calculated to motivate further endurance of unpleasant conditions—whether in Brest, aboard crowded troop transports, in domestic demobilization camps, or in unfulfilling jobs by once again threatening the men’s legacies and status. If the veteran could view his post-war vocation—however menial it was—as a service-oriented mission, and if he could view his military service—however inglorious,

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<sup>62</sup> Paul H. Douglas, “The Problem of Labor Turnover,” *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Jun., 1918), 308-309; Carleton H. Parker, *The Casual Laborer, and Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920), 153-54.

<sup>63</sup> Munson, *Management of Men*, 746.

<sup>64</sup> “On Pride in Workmanship,” *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Vol. 2, No. 23 (March 11, 1919), 5.

<sup>65</sup> “A Word to Heroes” (editorial); Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

uncomfortable, or prolonged—as an honor and a gift, then perhaps he would be less inclined to feel discontent, unmotivated, and restless.

As was the case with military motivation, the morale agency's leaders thought that their efforts to direct the thinking, feeling, and behavior of discharged men would be more successful if they could summon community support. As the men were being discharged, therefore, the Morale Branch sought to increase the veteran's visibility in the civilian press and improve his reputation in civilian society. For Munson, who thought that the army should treat discharging soldiers the same way colleges treat graduates—as future alumni whose successes would raise the overall prestige of the institution and whose positive experiences would boost good will toward the institution—it was “[desirable to confer upon the discharged soldier as much opportunity and status in his home community as possible.”<sup>66</sup> Since the Morale Branch could not directly place soldiers in jobs, the agency supported other organizations in doing this. The agency published an open letter from the Assistant Secretary of War Arthur Woods, which urged chambers of commerce to assist returning veterans in their search to find jobs.<sup>67</sup> The agency's propagandists also praised civilian newspapers and magazines that made soldiers look good to civilian employers. They praised *Life* magazine in particular, whose posters and stories consistently portrayed the soldier in an honorable light.<sup>68</sup> According to the historians of demobilization Cromwell and Wilson, such portrayal of the doughboy were widespread. “Publications of every sort,” they enumerated, “motion picture theatres, ministers in their pulpits, and school-teachers in their classrooms joined the effort to make the whole United States think of its obligations to the returning troops.” These efforts were augmented by the civilian agencies of the United War Work Council, who did their own part to promote the veteran as an exemplary citizen and worker. One Red Cross/U.S. Employment Service poster quoting Arthur Woods urged employers to “Put Fighting Blood in Your Business.” In their efforts to promote the soldiers in the eyes of the public, then, the Morale Branch had a significant tailwind. According to Cromwell and Wilson, that the overall campaigns to exalt the soldier in the eyes of society were successful can be testified to by the fact that hundreds of employers wrote letters to the government's employment bureaus, who insisted that the veterans who they hired had benefitted from military experience.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Munson, *Management of Men*, 572-73, 577.

<sup>67</sup> Arthur Woods, letter to the Chamber of Commerce, dated March 26, 1919 and slated for publication; enclosed in Grosvanor B. Clarkson, March 25, 1919; Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

<sup>68</sup> “A Word to Heroes,” 1.

<sup>69</sup> Cromwell and Wilson, *Demobilization*, 108-9.

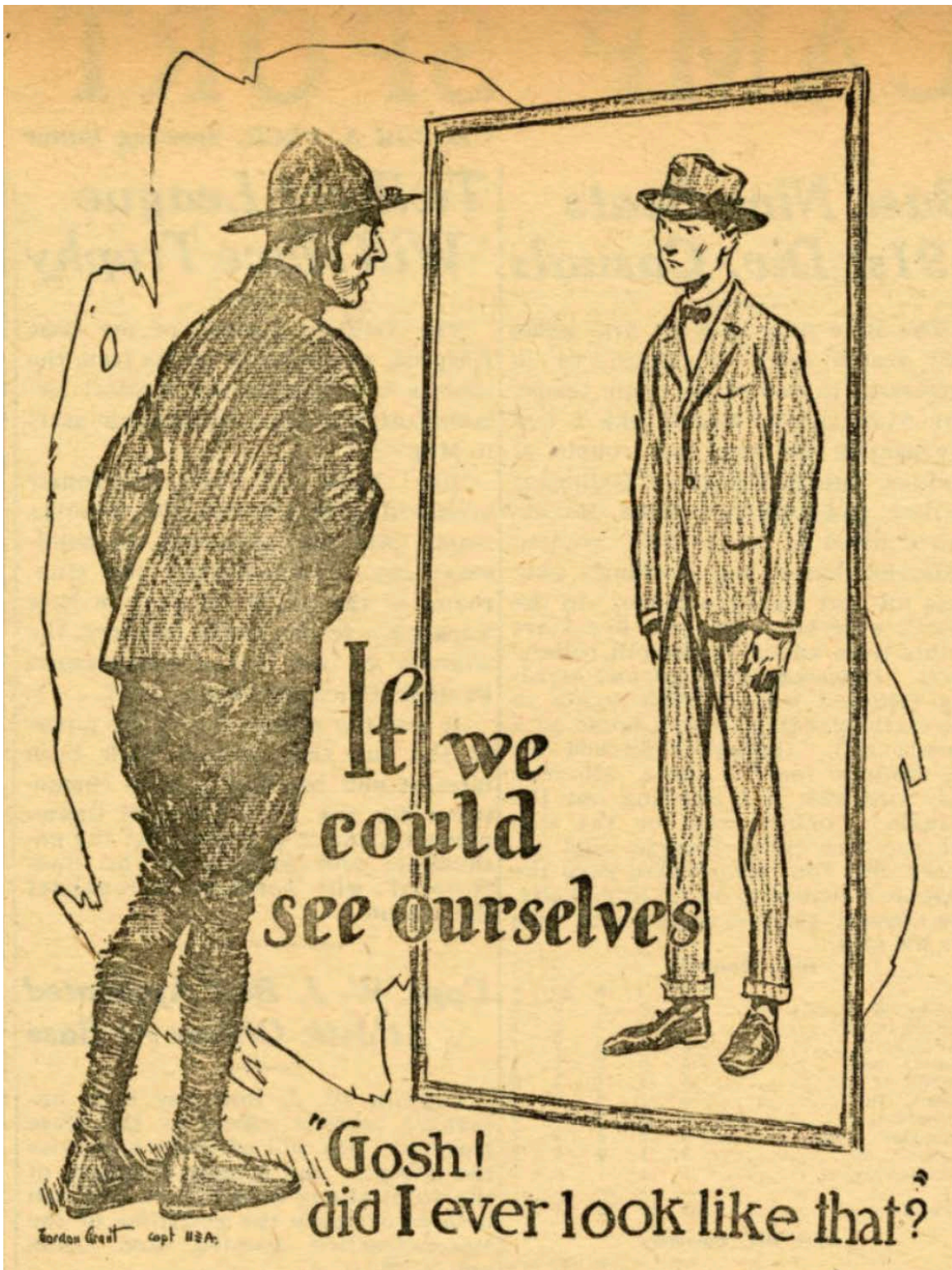
While the Morale Branch may have been limited in its capacity to directly appeal to the public, it had many opportunities to shape how the soldier perceived himself. In countless editorials, illustrations and posters, the agency sought to make the soldier see himself as dignified and competent. In one characteristic example, an illustration in a May issue of *Trench and Camp* showed a uniformed soldier looking in a mirror, in which stood an upright, professionally-dressed civilian. A caption below this reads: "If we could see ourselves," and a speech bubble depicts the soldier asking himself: "Gosh! Did I ever look like that?" indicating that for some soldiers, the shift back to civilian life would take some adjustments in self-perception. (See Figure 6.4) In another figure, the morale agency addressed the prospect that the returning veteran might resent those who did not serve in the military. "If you fellows had been in the army you would be holding up your heads instead of a lamp post," read the caption of one such illustration in a mid-June issue of *Trench and Camp*. (See Figure 6.5) Another figure in *Trench and Camp*, this one a cartoon, showed a grimacing business mogul negotiating "My kingdom for an O.D. shirt!" indicating that the honor of military service symbolized by the military uniform was worth more than the monetary value of an entire business enterprise.<sup>70</sup> In both of these instances, the Morale Branch seemed to place the veteran into a privileged place within a series of social, sexual and cultural hierarchies, perhaps as a way of comforting or compensating him for the likely frustrations he would face in returning to a country he had supposedly fought to defend.

One way in which the Morale Branch sought to alter the soldier's self-perception was by encouraging him to maintain his appearance. Morale theorists regularly linked the desirable soldier to physical posture, as exemplified by G. Stanley Hall, who claimed that the upright posture of soldiers made them seem to be the apex of human evolution, and that "his dress must be immaculate," especially at military parades, while "his every movement must speak of vigor," carrying "a certain atmosphere of tonic, out-of-door healthfulness and life abounding that is a mental and physical tonic to all he meets and is the very opposite of weakness, invalidism, or flabbiness."<sup>71</sup> As it had done during the war, the morale agency used diegesis to direct the soldier's attention to his own posture and appearance, relying on narration as a means of dramatizing his experience and cultivating a degree of self-perception and subsequent motivation. One poster produced by the Morale Branch depicted two soldiers—one lean and standing up straight with a crisp hat, tidy uniform, and an angular jaw; the other with a slack face, a chubby body, a downcast gaze and slumped posture, with a wrinkled uniform and crumpled hat. Below the soldiers, a block of text asked "WHICH will make the better citizen?"

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<sup>70</sup> *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Vol. 2, No. 38 (June 24, 1919), 2.

<sup>71</sup> Hall, *Morale*, 142.



**Figure 6.4:** *Trench and Camp* illustration showing a veteran standing in front of a mirror, surprised by the sight of the reflection of himself as a civilian.



**Figure 6.5:** June, 1919 *Trench and Camp* illustration showing a veteran shaming a couple of civilian men for not having served in the military.



**Figure 6.6:** Morale Branch poster encouraging men to look after their personal appearance and posture—clear stand-ins for being moral and disciplined.

WHICH would you give the job to?"<sup>72</sup> (See Figure 6.6) Here, the propagandists seemed to suggest, the soldier's ascension in the social, cultural, and economic hierarchies of civilian life would not be automatic. If the veteran was experiencing a lack of success in his postwar life, this Morale Branch propaganda seemed to suggest, it may very well be his own fault.

### Conclusion

Despite the rapid demobilization strategy and the fact that the federal government lacked a comprehensive plan for reconstruction, and that Congress severely underfunded the USES, the economic depression that many had anticipated never came, nor did unemployment reach

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<sup>72</sup> "Which will make the better citizen? Which would you give a job to?" (poster); W.D.—History of Morale Branch, Records of the Historical Section Relating to the History of the War Department, 1900-41; Historical Section records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 131, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

dire levels.<sup>73</sup> While unprecedented labor strikes shook the nation in 1919, there was certainly no revolution.

For the morale theorists, who held great aspirations for motivating society, the morale programs during demobilization were about much more than the so-called “Battle of Brest.” Demobilization offered a chance to infuse the country with the discipline and responsibility that they and their morale agency had worked hard to instill in the soldiers—whether or not they had seen combat, and whether or not they returned physically or mentally intact. This ambition blended the idealism and the push for industrial productivity that held the Wilson coalition together. Yet, in spite of the idealism that informed the Morale Branch’s approach to motivating the men, there was something inherently manipulative about the morale agency’s machinations during demobilization, just as there had been during the war. It is difficult to believe, reading through the agency’s files, that the drive to urge men to be disciplined and productive was for their own benefit. While the agency preferred to motivate the men in affirming ways, there was always the underlying threat that the nonconforming or unproductive man would suffer, in addition to economic hardship, a social death because the women in his life would shun him for failing to live up to the standards that the propagandists claimed that she expected of him. For the men behind the girl, this strategy of compulsion was clearly in effect—it was part of the looming threat behind their affirmations of the returning soldiers and veterans.

This ethical shortcoming reveals itself in the writings of the morale theorists, too. While there was a pervading, idealistic concern among the morale theorists about the capacity of citizens to work together, these strategists showed remarkably little concern about the possibility of the men’s exploitation in the enterprises and organizations within which this cooperation took place. The morale theorists were more concerned, it seems, with abating radicalism in the United States than with improving the actual living conditions of the men who served in the country’s military. Even the government’s efforts to secure employment can be understood—at least in part—as an effort to stave off labor unrest and political revolution. A failure to secure jobs for returning soldiers, some within the military, Congress, and Wilson administration thought, “will open a fertile field to the Bolshevistic emissaries who now are seeking to win converts from the ranks of the involuntary jobless and discontented,” as one pamphlet, which gained traction among the director general of the U.S. Employment Service and among US senators put it. “*Work, not words, is the antidote for Bolshevism.*”<sup>74</sup> All of this points to the way that the government instrumentalized idealism in service of profit and pacification—an instrumentalization that the morale programs were, in many ways, at the heart of.

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<sup>73</sup> Noggle, *Into the Twenties*, 75-76.

<sup>74</sup> Senator William Borah, quoted in Noggle, *Into the Twenties*, 72.

The messaging of the Morale Branch and its echoes in the press likely shaped the attitudes and behaviors of the men as they reentered civilian life as veterans. In the first place, the Morale Branch's ambition to inspire a personal sense of legacy seems to have been fulfilled. While the idealism that inspired American belligerency collapsed with the failure of the League of Nations and the ongoing political instability of Europe, the personal stakes of the conflict continued to live on. According to David Kennedy, even after witnessing the failures of Wilsonian idealism in the aftermath of the war, veterans "tried nevertheless to salvage their individual sense of the war's significance in their private lives and memories."<sup>75</sup> While the division between idealism and economic performance/efficiency was perhaps temporarily held together by the belief in so-called "industrial morale," there appears to have been a deep rift inside many of the returning veterans—a "divided mind," as Burl Noggle has described it—as the men settled back into a peacetime routine and sought to make sense of their wartime experiences. The American historian Dixon Wecter thought that the man returning from Europe in 1919 couldn't believe, deep down, that the war had been anything more than "a grim struggle for survival against the Hun"—that he couldn't bring himself to fully believe that it had really been about "saving the world for democracy."<sup>76</sup> The army's camp newspapers testify to this divided mind. An August 1919 editorial in *Trench and Camp* entitled "Is It Merely A Matter of Nerves?" mentioned the "jumpy" nerves of the returning soldier, and speaks to the regret many men felt about the "blunders" and "mistakes" they had made on the battlefield. The editorial urges the reader to enjoy "the banquet of victory," rather than "grovel in the garbage pail for evidence that the cook made a few mistakes." "The war is over," the editorial reassured,

[it] has been fought and won. We made our mistakes, paid the price of learning, learned, and gained the victory. Now our nerves are 'jumpy' and we question the price, and question our own actions, and question our comrades' behavior, and forget the thousand good deeds and high actions and wise decisions to whimper over the odd meanness and the few low tricks and inevitable portion of human error in judgment and selection. The phase will pass.<sup>77</sup>

For some, the fear and moral injury of war never did pass, as evidenced by the prevalence of veteran suicide in the years following the war's end.<sup>78</sup> A young generation of

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<sup>75</sup> Kennedy, *Over Here*, 221.

<sup>76</sup> Noggle, *Into the Twenties*, 27.

<sup>77</sup> "Is It Merely A Matter of Nerves?" *Trench and Camp*, Camp Upton, Long Island, N.Y. edition, Vol. 2, No. 45 (August 12, 1919), 7.

<sup>78</sup> J. A. Smith, M. Doidge, R. Hanoa, and B. C. Frueh, "A Historical Examination of Military Records of US Army Suicide, 1819 to 2017," *JAMA network open*, Vol. 2, No. 12 (2019), e1917448. This article documents the historical suicidality among active-duty soldiers (rather than veterans) in the U.S. Army, but suicide among World War I veterans has been examined by historians of other allied countries. See, for example, Yves Tremblay, "Du suicide, militaire et bibliographique," *Bulletin d'histoire politique*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Fall, 2010), 115-127.

writers, rejecting the supposed nobility of the war, aired their disenchantment in the form of irony, cynicism, and skepticism, in books like John Dos Passos's *One Man's Initiation, 1917*, and *Three Soldiers*, Thomas Boyd's *Through the Wheat*, and Laurence Stallings's *Plumes*.<sup>79</sup> For others, it seems, violence against those who questioned the morality of the war offered a familiar way of reassuring themselves of the righteousness of their cause—a means of staving off moral injury.<sup>80</sup> That some veterans engaged in fervent, anti-radical violence is unsurprising, given the way in which the military's propaganda encouraged them to relate to patriotism in insecure and intimate ways; to see their own personal legacies as being tied to that of the nation. Nevertheless, it is clear that Morale Branch leaders worried about violent behavior on the part of veterans, as an illustration in a May issue of *Trench and Camp* sought to reconcile the encouraged violence and pugnacity of wartime with the encouraged pacifism of civilian life. The caption read: "The American Soldier: In war, brave and invincible. In peace, gentle and courteous." (See Figure 6.7) A poem by Edith M. Thomas entitled "Soldier, My Soldier" published in the Morale Branch-administered hospital newspaper *The Come-Back*, sought to comfort the shell-shocked soldier: "Peace has grown strange to you / Peace must be learned! / All the swift stream of your blood has been turned / Unto fierce strife—not so soon can it cease / From the rhythm it kept, and be slowed unto Peace."<sup>81</sup> Just as military and War Department leaders needed to produce pugnacity in the enlistee to make him into an effective soldier, they also, and contradictorily, needed to cultivate pacifism in the returned veteran.

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<sup>79</sup> Kennedy, *Over Here*, 221-22.

<sup>80</sup> For an explanation of moral injury, and its significance to the United States military, see Brett T. Litz, Nathan Stein, Eileen Delaney, Leslie Lebowitz, William P. Nash, Caroline Silva, and Shira Maguen, "Moral Injury and Moral Repair in War Veterans: A Preliminary Model and Intervention Strategy," *Clinical Psychology Review*, Vol. 29 (2009), 695-706.

<sup>81</sup> Edith M. Thomas, "Soldier, My Soldier" (poem for publication); Correspondence, Correspondence Relating to Service Periodicals and Publications 1918-21; Morale Branch records; Records of the War Department General and Special Staffs, Record Group 165; Box 3, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.



**Figure 6.7:** June, 1919 *Trench and Camp* illustration emphasizing that, while men may have been violent and ruthless in wartime, they should be “gentle and courteous” as veterans.

## Conclusion:

### Reconsidering the Role of Sexualized Motivation in American History

This dissertation has examined the American morale campaigns of the First World War, focusing especially upon how these campaigns used the allure of sex to motivate young men to fight in that conflict. In covering the morale agencies and their operative discourses, the dissertation has addressed the glaring lacuna of motivation in both the history of sexuality in the United States and in so-called “new military history.” By shifting the locus of inquiry from morality and venereal disease to motivation and morale, the research has offered new insight into familiar agencies such as the Commission on Training Camp Activities (CTCA) and the Committee on Public Information (CPI), showing how these agencies were crucial in stoking the motivation of both soldiers and civilians.

This dissertation has unearthed a “parasexual” logic at the heart of the military’s morale programs that relied on the productive tension between sexual stimulation and sexual restraint. While this demanded, in the first place, a policing of the physical environments of soldiers in order to make sex “hard to find,” the crescendo of this strategy was a much more ambitious effort to reshape sexual desirability criteria and the overall social dynamics between men and women. Ben Anderson claims that the techniques for securing morale during a period of mass mobilization requires intervention into “a range of factors seemingly unrelated to morale,” and that, therefore, “the governance of morale becomes the governance of life.”<sup>1</sup> In seeking to create a motivating urge, guided by a narrative of chivalrous heroism, the American morale apparatus orchestrated a careful intervention into what G. Stanley Hall called “the whole question of the relation of the sexes in all its aspects.”<sup>2</sup> This was a core aspect of the wartime morale programs, and, to the great extent that CTCA welfare organizations served to cultivate morale among the soldiers, they played a key role in generating a sexual economy built upon an endlessly deferred, parasexual tension that rested upon both sexual coercion and social and sexual stimulation at the same time. The men who staffed the Military Morale Section, the Morale Branch, the various CTCA organizations, and the CPI leveraged gender and sexuality to motivate soldiers to fight; thus, they were the men behind the girl behind the man behind the gun. In order to motivate soldiers, the men in the morale agencies simulated women’s approval, disapproval, and encouragement, in posters and newspaper editorials. The morale agencies’ staff writers and illustrators imbued this tension with a higher meaning and purpose within the

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<sup>1</sup> Ben Anderson, “Modulating the Excess of Affect: Morale in a State of ‘Total War,’” in Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, eds., *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 177.

<sup>2</sup> G. Stanley Hall, *Morale: The Supreme Standard of Life and Conduct* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1920), 110.

romantic narratives of their editorials and other forms of morale-boosting propaganda, which, in their use of diegesis and visuality, encouraged men to literally embody a heroic role in an imagined romantic plot, and, while doing so, to endure the real misery of a faraway and unpopular war.

This dissertation has also highlighted the centrality of exclusion and hierarchy within the War Department's designs for shoring up the motivation of American soldiers. Not only did War Department leaders see the exclusion of Black soldiers from predominately White combat units as being essential for the White soldiers' morale, but they also used parasexual motivation as a reason to exclude Black soldiers, who they deemed insusceptible to being motivated. Alongside the exclusion of Black soldiers, the military and morale leaders used insignia, media representation, and enforced distance to create sexual hierarchies among both men and women, casting sexually-active women and male pacifists and underperforming soldiers as undesirable, while rendering men and women who played strategically-advantageous roles in the war as sexually desirable. By controlling the symbols and the means of attaining desirability, the morale campaigns sought to canalize and capitalize on the desires of soldiers and their civilian counterparts.

Some of the historians of the CTCA's wartime sexual control program—operating on the assumption that it was primarily meant to reform all of American society with a purity-oriented social and sexual morality—have assessed that the CTCA was ultimately unsuccessful, because of the relative openness of sexual culture in the 1920s.<sup>3</sup> Yet, as the preceding chapters have argued, despite the rhetoric of lecturers, social hygiene pamphlets, and the various reformers who the War Department deputized to work with and influence soldiers, wartime sexual control was more fundamentally concerned with motivation. If one understands these programs as a series of attempts to instill morale, as opposed to morality, the claim that they failed becomes difficult to substantiate. This is clear if one traces the continuities between the programs' social logics and those of postwar culture.

At a general level, the concept of morale became a central tenet of social control after the war. As Daniel Ussishkin has convincingly argued in his book *Morale: A Modern British History*, the concept of morale, far from merely offering an explanation for why men march off into battle, constitutes a key to understanding the affective basis of modern society. Morale formed the backbone of what would eventually become human-relations management in the workplace, and, larger than this, can be thought of as being at the heart of a broader modern, efficient management of the "life-world" (that is: the phenomenological reality that we, as living beings, inhabit) in democratic societies. According to Ussishkin, the societal push for good

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<sup>3</sup> Nancy K. Bristow, *Making Men Moral: Social Engineering During the Great War* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), xix; Jeffrey P. Moran, *Teaching Sex: The Shaping of Adolescence in the 20th Century* (Cambridge MA.: Harvard University Press, 2000), 69, 71.

morale has become so ubiquitous since the middle of the twentieth century that it is rarely argued for or commented upon.<sup>4</sup>

As this dissertation has demonstrated, parasexual motivation was a key component of morale during the war. There was a great deal of continuity between the parasexual motivational strategies of the morale programs and the sexual culture of the early 1920s. In the first place, as many social historians have pointed out, the period was not the sexual panacea that it has sometimes been imagined to be. During the war, in their efforts to make sex “hard to find,” federal, state and local authorities shuttered the nation’s red light districts, and incarcerated many unmarried, sexually active women. This targeted policing continued after the war, as David Pivar has demonstrated.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, the CTCA’s prohibition of the sale of alcohol to soldiers, along with various states’ wartime passage of prohibition acts, prefigured the federal prohibition of the sale alcohol. Reformers targeted the saloon for a wide variety of reasons, but one of these was that they wanted to tame Americans’ sexual behaviors.<sup>6</sup> In the meantime red light districts did not reopen, but in their place, new kinds of commercial establishments cropped up, using romantic, emotional and sexualized appeals to sell their products and services. Rather than selling sex directly, one might argue, the postwar city sold it indirectly, by offering commodities and leisure experiences that advertisers and popular culture linked to romantic gratification.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Daniel Ussishkin, *Morale: A Modern British History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 134-38.

<sup>5</sup> David J. Pivar, *Purity and Hygiene: Women, Prostitution, and the ‘American Plan,’ 1900-1930* (Westport, CT.: Greenwood Press, 2002), 216-225. For further analysis of the ongoing federal targeting of sexual activity after the war, see Jessica R. Piley, *Policing Sexuality: The Mann Act and the Making of the FBI* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 2014), 131-158.

<sup>6</sup> The temperance movement, which provided much of the reformist backbone for prohibition, was deeply concerned with sexual morality, and the control of sexual behavior was part of the impetus for organizations such as the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) to organize against the sale and consumption of alcohol. On the WCTU’s anti-prostitution organizing and overlap with other moral reform efforts, see Barbara Leslie Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism and Temperance in Nineteenth Century America* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), 125-128. There were many overlaps between later organizations that campaigned for prohibition, such as the Anti-Saloon League and organizations that opposed prostitution, such as New York City’s Committee of Fourteen (which spun out of the Anti-Saloon League) and similar such organizations in other cities. See Gilfoyle, *City of Eros*, 303-305. For a description of the ways in which many anti-saloon and anti-alcohol activists worried about sexuality, see Norman H. Clark, *Deliver Us from Evil: An Interpretation of American Prohibition* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1976), 59-67.

<sup>7</sup> Sexual triumph and romantic bliss were key features of what Roland Marchand calls the “social tableaux” of advertisements in this period—the social and spatial environments in which advertisers presented commodities. The purpose of these was to transfer a sense of the good life surrounding the products onto the products themselves by implying that this version of the good life might be accessed through the consumptions of the products. Roland Marchand, *Advertising the American Dream: Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 164-205. According to Eva Illouz, this period witnessed two important processes: “the romanticization of commodities and the commodification of romance.” The former “refers to the way in which commodities acquired a romantic aura in early twentieth-century movies and advertising imagery,” whereas the latter “concerns the ways in which romantic practices increasingly interlocked with and became defined as the consumption of leisure goods and leisure technologies offered by the nascent mass market.” Eva Illouz, *Consuming the Romantic Utopia: Love and the Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 26.

Not all forms of parasexual restraint and allure were imposed in a top-down fashion, however. Cultural practices and social norms played their own part in creating a competitive sexual economy. In youth culture, as Paula Fass has shown, while peer groups in the 1920s exhibited permissive attitudes concerning speaking about sex and experimenting with limited forms of sexual activity, they simultaneously imposed social norms and taboos about how far a couple could go, and under what conditions. For most of these young people, according to Fass, only non-intercourse forms of sexual intimacy were acceptable outside of marriage, and only if there was a strong romantic bond in place first.<sup>8</sup> As Beth Bailey has demonstrated, many young women in the 1920s expected to be “treated” and entertained within the context of a “date” as American courtship migrated, by the 1920s especially, from the private home to new, co-ed, commercial amusement establishments.<sup>9</sup>

Tracing another continuity from wartime to peacetime, the evidence of men’s sexual and romantic frustration in the 1920s is abundant. While many women strained under the pressures of walking the knife’s edge between being alluring and being respectable, some men, under the financial pressures of paying for elaborate dates, complained about how expensive, and, in their minds, unfair, this transactional form of courtship was for them. One man, as Beth Bailey notes, insisted that “‘nice girls’ cost a lot.”<sup>10</sup> Responding to the high cost of dating, as Joanne Meyerowitz points out, a 1919 headline in the *Chicago Tribune* read “Man Getting \$18 a Week Dares Not Fall in Love.”<sup>11</sup> As Timothy Gilfoyle has argued, men in the 1920s mostly pursued sex with women who were not sex workers, within the context of romantic relationships, and in this arrangement they were perhaps less free than men had been in the late nineteenth century, when they could more easily purchase sex directly.<sup>12</sup> It would have been tedious, expensive, time-consuming, and difficult for many men to pursue sexual intimacy—especially with multiple partners—in the 1920s, given the narrowing effects of increasingly defined desirability criteria

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<sup>8</sup> Paula S. Fass, *The Damned and the Beautiful: American Youth in the 1920’s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 260-270.

<sup>9</sup> On the relationship between dating and these new commercial establishments, see David Nasaw, *Going Out: The Rise and Fall of Public Amusements* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1993), 113.

<sup>10</sup> Beth L. Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 22-23.

<sup>11</sup> Joanne J. Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift: Independent Wage Earners in Chicago, 1880-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 103.

<sup>12</sup> Timothy J. Gilfoyle, *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790-1920* (New York: Norton, 1992), 313.

and the growing expectation among both men and women that sex should occur exclusively within monogamous and romantic relationships.<sup>13</sup>

The modern, commercialized city of the 1920s perpetuated a parasexual logic. Late in the decade, Wilhelm Reich commented upon a key difference between urban life in the Soviet Union and in the West. In Soviet cities, where women had far more sexual agency, and where, he said, casual sex was far less stigmatized and widely practiced, the cities had much less sexualized imagery or overt sexualized behavior in public. In the West, by contrast, where urban denizens were constantly bombarded with sexualized imagery in advertisements, in shop windows, in magazines, and in films, actual sex was far more repressed. The hypersexualized city, in Reich's view, might itself be read as a symptom of repression.<sup>14</sup> According to Carolyn Dean, in the period following World War I, American cities were affectively-fraught places, full of alluring commercial enticements and visual pleasures—both “seductive and dangerous.” Crucially, many men experienced these cities in sexualized ways—they felt all the stimulation of the city as romantic and sexual frustration and trepidation. In these tantalizing settings, women became allegories of the city, with its “mass culture and the dehumanizing effects of modernity.” Susan Kingsley Kent, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar have argued that many men in Britain experienced the alienation of war as a resentment toward women—the demographic who, represented on enlistment posters and out in public urged them to go to war.<sup>15</sup> According to Dean, many men experienced a similar form of displaced alienation toward women for the alienation that they felt in commercialized cities. Women, in this view, were both “seductive and illusory”—full, it seems, of the same kinds of provocative false promises as the billboards and shop windows.<sup>16</sup> The city, like the alluring woman, occupied the visual field with promises of a wide array of pleasures, but rarely delivered on these promises.

The idea that sex was a powerful motivator—not to be altogether repressed or indulged in without caution—was part of the postwar cultural zeitgeist. In the years following World War I, as Elspeth H. Brown has demonstrated in her history of modeling, “the production of desire became central to the sale of goods,” and for this, ad agencies used the “managed, de-eroticized, public sexuality” of models to produce and entice “commercialized feelings” among consumers, which could then be “channel[ed]” and “direct[ed]” into affectively-charged brands.

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<sup>13</sup> Of course, this is not to discount the greater degree of freedom that many women—particularly middle-class women—enjoyed, nor romantic intimacy that many relationships provided to both partners. For an account of the shift that took place in American intimacy, between the late nineteenth century and the mid-twentieth century, see Steven Seidman, *Romantic Longings: Love in America, 1830-1980* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 65-91.

<sup>14</sup> Wilhelm Reich, *Sex-Pol Essays, 1929-1934*, ed. Lee Baxandall (New York: Verso, 2012 [1972]), 98.

<sup>15</sup> Susan Kingsley Kent, *Making Peace: The Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century, Volume 2: Sexchanges* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 258-323.

<sup>16</sup> Carolyn Dean, *Sexuality and Western Culture* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996), 38-39.

Here, the sexuality of the model was all the more effective because of its distant inaccessibility.<sup>17</sup> Advertisements both benefitted from and helped to drive an emerging consumer culture that, as T. J. Jackson Lears explains, was “a muddle of calculated self-control and spontaneous gratification”—a highly therapeutic culture in which “The Energies of Men” were embraced, rather than denied, and where morality was replaced by morale as the primary motivator of hard work and conforming social behavior.<sup>18</sup> In a symposium about sexual morality hosted by *The Nation* in the early 1920s, many of the contributors, despite disagreeing on other issues, agreed that sex was a powerful motivator, and that some balance should be struck between “obscenity” and “piety,” as the editor of the published proceedings put it. Just like military mobilization, many believed that postwar industrial mobilization was also guided by the romantic aspirations of an increasingly companionate conception of love. One contributor claimed that sexually-motivated love was “an agent of transformation [and] the source of power underlying the creativeness of man,” while another explained, in similar terminology, that the interaction between men and women was “the creative agent in human life, . . . ma[king] labor endurable to them.”<sup>19</sup>

Parasexual motivational logic seems to have pervaded a wide array of human endeavors in early twentieth-century American life, ranging from the personal to the professional spheres. Sex education literature, much of it produced by the American Social Hygiene Association, in addition to being written in a style that Julian Carter calls “frank reticence,” sexualized the sexually self-restrained—essentially attempting to make the characteristic of sexual self-reservation itself sexy.<sup>20</sup> Just as the morale theorists and the CTCA had exalted the “right kind” of women, social hygiene and other educational guides that circulated widely in the 1920s idealized the beauty of “pure” women and girls, and stigmatized women and girls who were sexually active. Winfield and Jeannette Hall’s widely-circulated *Manual of Sex Hygiene* advised boys to stay away from girls belonging to a lower social class than themselves, and insisted that “[a]ny girl. . . who is not a good enough girl to associate with your sister, not a good enough girl to be invited to your home to meet your parents . . . is not a good enough girl for you to have anything to do with,” and bombastically asserted that “[a]ny association whatsoever with such a girl or woman can only result in humiliation, shame, scandal, and perhaps in disease,

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<sup>17</sup> Elspeth H. Brown, *Work! A Queer History of Modeling* (Durham: Duke University, 2019), 4-6.

<sup>18</sup> T. J. Jackson Lears, “From Salvation to Self-Realization: Advertising and the Therapeutic Roots of the Consumer Culture, 1880-1930,” in Richard Wightman Fox and T. J. Jackson Lears, eds., *The Culture of Consumption: Critical Essays in American History, 1880-1980* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), 3, 12-13.

<sup>19</sup> Freda Kirchway, “Introduction,” in ed. Freda Kirchway, *Our Changing Morality: A Symposium* (New York: Albert & Charles Boni, 1924), v; Beatrice M. Hinkle, “Women and the New Morality,” in *Our Changing Morality*, 235; Edwin Muir, “Women—Free for What?” in *Our Changing Morality*, 80.

<sup>20</sup> Julian B. Carter, *The Heart of Whiteness: Normal Sexuality and Race in America, 1880-1940* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 122-123.

degradation and death.” The portion of the book for girls insisted that they strive to be innocent and pure, but also dazzlingly beautiful (with these characteristics clearly collapsing into one another in the authors’ framing).<sup>21</sup> This sexualization of innocence was also clearly packaged and sold to Americans in Hollywood films, where, as Gaylyn Studlar has demonstrated, producers sought to allure adult audiences with “juvenated” female characters who toed the line between innocent girlhood and sexualized adulthood. According to Studlar, young Hollywood movie stars like Mary Pickford played to what Studlar calls a “pedophilic gaze” that found sexual titillation in observing “the adorable and innocent ‘child-woman’ [personifying] nostalgic ideals of femininity that were inseparable from erotic value but also moral value.”<sup>22</sup> The same logic seems to have been in operation in magazines too. In a throwaway line in *Public Opinion* (1922), Walter Lippmann noted that “the magazines with the large circulations prefer the face of a pretty girl to any other trade mark, a face, pretty enough to be alluring, but innocent enough to be acceptable.”<sup>23</sup> This sexualization of innocence, it seems, was a parasexual society’s natural ideal, since it represented a kind of artificially-scarce value that can only drive fantasy; never gratification. The sexualization of innocence is the ultimate scarcity ideal, since any attempt to convert desire into pleasure by engaging in sexual activity with an innocent woman or girl would diminish the very innocence (defined narrowly as sexual inexperience and/or naïveté) that made her desirable in the first place.<sup>24</sup>

Sexual desire also pervaded professional culture in the 1920s, manifesting in the “sexualization of the workplace,” as Julie Berebitsky puts it. In a way that resembles the CTCA’s war camps, the newly gender-integrated offices of the interwar period embraced the objectification of women, and encouraged “expressions of (hetero) sexuality in the workplace,” which many employers saw as a key driver of male sociability and perhaps even hard work.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Winfield Scott Hall and Jeannette Winter Hall, *A Manual of Sex Hygiene* (Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, 1913), 31-32, 76.

<sup>22</sup> Gaylyn Studlar, *Precocious Charms: Stars Performing Girlhood in Classical Hollywood Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 30.

<sup>23</sup> Walter Lippmann, *Public Opinion* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1922), 76. Lippmann was, in many ways, the person who first conceptualized the Committee on Public Information, urging President Wilson to found such an agency. He also advised the CPI and the Morale Branch on how to bolster morale. Lawrence Arthur Cremin, *American Education: the Metropolitan Experience, 1876-1980* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 338; “Second Conference on Control of Morale,” May 15, 1918, W. D.—War College and War Plans Division Subordinate Offices—Army War College Historical Section; Record Group 165; Box 131 (Liason & Communication, Orders & Publications); National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, 14.

<sup>24</sup> Michel Houellebecq has made a related point, observing that western societies simultaneously began to heavily sexualize youth, and implemented age-of-consent laws—further evidence, for him, of capitalist society’s designs to maximize desire without ever taking seriously the prospect of actually gratifying that desire. See Benjamin Boysen, “Houellebecq’s Priapism: The Failure of Sexual Liberation in Michel Houellebecq’s Novels and Essays,” *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, Vol. 43, No. 3 (Sept. 2016), 485.

<sup>25</sup> Julie Berebitsky, *Sex and the Office: A History of Gender, Power, and Desire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 15, 61.

According to Freudo-Marxist Herbert Marcuse later in the century, it was undoubtedly the case that the “sexy office and sales girls” and “the handsome, virile junior executive and floor walker” inspired both hard work and peaceable compliance in the bureaucratic company and broader social order. “This mobilization and administration of libido,” he insisted, “may account for much of the voluntary compliance, the absence of terror, the pre-established harmony between individual needs and socially-required desires, goals, and aspirations.” This account of the pacifying and motivating qualities of “controlled satisfaction” in the workplace testifies to the degree that the morale theorists’ visions of a libidinally-charged industrial morale appears to have triumphed after the war.<sup>26</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to fully document, describe, or demonstrate the broader significance of parosexuality in American history and culture. Hopefully future research can accomplish this. But it is perhaps worth imploring scholars to take morale and parosexual motivational structures more seriously when they analyze American culture. Historians have not paid much attention to the way that reformers, government officials, and commercial institutions in the early twentieth century intentionally sought to shape sexual eligibility criteria during this period, or how many elites thought that encouraging sexual choosiness among women was an effective means of motivating men. Nor have historians attended to the deeply “parosexual” nature of the burgeoning consumer culture in the interwar period, wherein a residual conservatism about sexual promiscuity and the simultaneous sexualization of culture worked synergistically to spread consumer desire. Moreover, there is relatively little historical scholarship that deals with the broader history of motivation—even less so within the history of gender and sexuality. This presents major opportunities for new scholarship, because the organization of volition, particularly in such ways as can cause a person to engage in dangerous, unpleasant, or self-detrimental activities, is an indispensable part of modern statecraft, consumer capitalism, and social and cultural hierarchies—not just under conditions of total war.

As scholars confront the harms of unqualified positive thinking and try to make sense of why motivation is suffering a crisis, and why many people (especially young people) are gripped by despondency and frustration, they might consider the history of morale, and take account of what it took to build widespread motivation in the first place, beginning, at least in the American experience, with parosexuality and its various gendered, racialized, and classed exaltations and exclusions.<sup>27</sup> In today’s world of “incels” and “heteropessimism,” many sexually-frustrated men cast blame upon women, rather than on the structural and institutional forces that shaped the

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<sup>26</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964), 74-75.

<sup>27</sup> Barbara Ehrenreich, *Bright-Sided: How Positive Thinking is Undermining America* (New York: MacMillan, 2009); Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

hierarchical and extractive sexual economies in which they seek and engage in relationships. By historicizing sexualized motivation in the First World War, this dissertation has attempted to make a small start at redrawing some of the fault lines of the gender war, and at redirecting blame for sexual frustration and manipulation on institutions and elites.

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