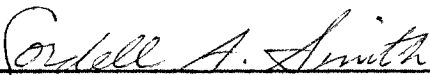
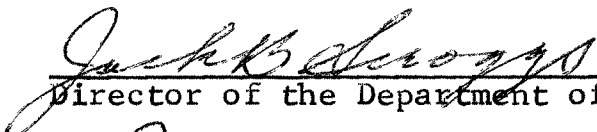


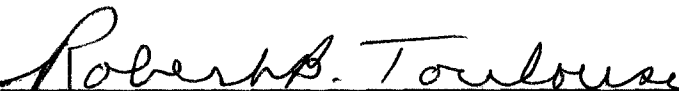
THE DIPLOMACY OF AN ARMY: THE AMERICAN  
EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IN FRANCE,  
1917-1918

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## CHAPTER I

### ENTRY AND INDECISION

In 1914 the great war, thought impossible by some and long awaited and anticipated by others, burst upon European civilization. From the Balkans it spread to Belgium, to France and Russia, and then overseas to Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. As this war of unprecedented extent unfolded, the United States of America watched with mixed detachment and horror.

From the time Germany violated Belgian frontiers, the sympathy of the majority of Americans began to lean toward Great Britain and France, perhaps as a result of historical, cultural, and linguistic ties, perhaps as a reaction to "the rape of Belgium", or perhaps because of the traditional American fear of militarism. But in spite of the sympathy for the British and French and Belgians there was little feeling that America should enter the war; the majority of Americans viewed the war as an essentially European affair.

Several aspects of the conflict caused irritation in the United States. Great Britain's far-flung blockade and restrictions upon neutral shipping and their seizure of contraband caused friction and disagreement. Irritating though this was, the disagreement with Imperial Germany

was far more serious. Many Americans were repelled by an apparently callous disregard of human life by Germany in its waging of unrestricted submarine warfare. The final evidence of German international blundering was the "Zimmerman Telegram".<sup>1</sup> Wilson felt forced to ask Congress for a declaration of war, and Congress, on April 6, 1917, declared war upon Germany with only fifty-six dissenting votes.<sup>2</sup>

When the United States entered the war a fundamental question arose. The question was whether the United States would furnish the Allies--Great Britain, France, and Italy--anything other than supplies and money. Wilson apparently first thought the American participation in the war would be confined primarily to economic aid, with the United States Navy acting in concert with the Allied navies in order to help cope with the submarine menace.<sup>3</sup>

At the time of the declaration of war, the United States had 127,588 men in the Regular Army. The National Guard had 80,446 men in Federal Service and 101,174 men still under

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<sup>1</sup>Barbara Tuchman, The Zimmerman Telegram (New York, 1958).

<sup>2</sup>Josephus Daniels, The Wilson Era (Chapel Hill, 1956), p. 34. Congressional Record, 65th Congress, 2nd Session, LV (Washington, 1917), 261, 412, 413.

<sup>3</sup>D. M. Smith, The Great Departure (New York, 1965), p. 84; Anne Wintermute Lane and Louise Herrick Wall, editors, The Letters of Franklin K. Lane (New York, 1922), pp. 252, 253; Josephus Daniels, The Cabinet Diaries of Josephus Daniels, edited by E. David Cronon (Lincoln, 1963), p. 142.

state control. In addition there were the Regular Army Reserve of 4,767, the Officer Reserve Corps of 2,000 men, the Enlisted Reserve Corps of 10,000 men and the National Guard Reserve of 10,000 men.<sup>4</sup> This army of 335,995 was miniscule compared to the mammoth continental armies, and in the technical services the main forces were not equipped for a European war. For example, the nation began the war with only enough artillery to equip an army of 220,000, with ammunition reserves in commensurate amounts.<sup>5</sup> It was obvious that this tiny force was inadequate to fight in the continental war of millions.

Nor was Congress prepared to commit the United States Army to a European war in 1917. For example, Senator Thomas S. Martin of Virginia was heard to say, "Good Lord! You're not going to send soldiers there, are you?"<sup>6</sup>

While the debate continued in the United States, first over entry into the war and later over the extent and the nature of the United States participation, the War Cabinet of Great Britain was already debating how to use American manpower in the most efficient manner. The War Cabinet, the

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<sup>4</sup>R.F. Weigley, History of the United States Army (New York, 1967), pp. 357, 358. U.S. Department of Commerce, Historical Statistics of the U.S. (Washington, 1960) p. 736.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 362.

<sup>6</sup>Fredrick Palmer, Newton D. Baker: America at War (New York, 1931), I, 120.

highest governmental organization in Great Britain, operated in an ad hoc fashion with both duties and structure undefined. The War Cabinet, formed from a coalition of parties, had been organized in December 1916 with five members, with the goal of furthering national unity and pursuing the war effort more efficiently than was possible with existing organizations.<sup>7</sup> The head of the War Cabinet was David Lloyd George, the Prime Minister and a Liberal. Lloyd George, a quick-witted Welshman, had become Prime Minister in December 1916, after holding a series of other governmental posts. The man had a quick mind, unconventional ideas, and a bias against the Regular Army. Among the five members of the War Cabinet other than the Prime Minister, Andrew Bonar Law was the only one to hold a major office of state, the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, and he was included in the War Cabinet not because of this office, but because he was Leader of the Conservative Party in the House of Commons. Two members of the War Cabinet were peers, Lord Curzon and Lord Milner. Lloyd George used them to take much of the detailed work off his shoulders. Curzon specialized in analyzing problems before the full Cabinet, and Milner concentrated upon the mass of paper work which came to the War Cabinet. The last original member was Arther Henderson who represented Labour.

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<sup>7</sup>Maurice Hankey, The Supreme Command (London, 1961), II, 577-581.

His membership in the War Cabinet, from which he soon resigned, was a gesture toward Labour to complete the facade of national unity. Arthur James Balfour, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, because of his office, was a frequent visitor at the War Cabinet and senior military and naval officers also regularly attended it.<sup>8</sup>

In Great Britain, the shortage of manpower increasingly weakened the British army in France. Until 1916, Great Britain had relied upon volunteers, not conscription. The debate in Great Britain over the advisability of conscription rather than a volunteer army had been long and agonized, but by December 1916 it had become obvious that voluntary manpower alone was insufficient to meet the army requirements.<sup>9</sup> Early in 1917 Sir William Robertson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, and thus the most important military officer for the British Empire and Commonwealth, requested an additional 500,000 men for the army by July. This request was in addition to the projected total that was to be made available through conscription. The War Cabinet refused his request. The British army in 1917 took into its ranks only 800,000 men in contrast to 1,200,000 the previous year. The shortage of manpower in Great Britain was made even more acute by the increasingly larger proportion of men who were unable

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>David Lloyd George, War Memoirs of David Lloyd George (Boston, 1937), III, 276, 277.



to return to duty after being wounded.<sup>10</sup> By the third year of the war, the proportion of men who had been wounded more than once had risen, and this reduced the number of men who could be rehabilitated successfully. In summary, the manpower situation of Great Britain had deteriorated, and the government had been forced to institute a severe "combing out" of the available manpower--a sorting out of men employed in mines and factories in order to determine who could be spared for the army. This "combing out" procedure resulted in increasing labor troubles during the year of the Russian Revolution for Great Britain.<sup>11</sup>

In March 1917, Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig, the commander of the British forces in France, reported to the War Cabinet that the manpower shortage was having adverse effects on his army.<sup>12</sup> The first effect was to limit reinforcements only to assault divisions, and because other units in the line were not reinforced, any chance of exploiting a breakthrough when it came would be limited. The second effect was the inability to replace normal battle wastage, which Haig claimed lowered morale.

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<sup>10</sup>Sir William Robertson, From Private to Field Marshal (London, 1921), p. 301.

<sup>11</sup>Memorandum by the Army Council "Supply of men for the Army", War Cabinet 486, minute 3, March 6, 1917, CAB 23/1, Public Record Office, London, England (microfilm).

<sup>12</sup>War Cabinet 486, minute 5, March 6, 1917, CAB 23/1, P.R.O.

Haig, commander of the British army in France at the time of the United States entry into the war, was a taciturn, aristocratic Scots cavalryman. He had begun the war as commander of the 1st Corps and in 1915 had replaced the original commander of the British Expeditionary Force. There are two further important factors to be remembered about Haig: first, he was a personal friend of King George V; second, he was disliked by the Prime Minister, Lloyd George.<sup>13</sup> Personalities aside, Haig was committed to prosecuting the war in France at whatever the cost, whereas Lloyd George sought to divert British troops to other theatres in an attempt to flank the enemy.<sup>14</sup>

There was another manpower problem facing the Allies. Since 1914, the Russian armies had stood as a counterweight to Germany's might. Now in 1917 after the February Revolution, the situation in Russia was becoming questionable. And on the Italian front, the Italian military effort was being stymied in a rash of casualties and inefficiency.<sup>15</sup>

In early March 1917, just before the United States entered the war, the British War Cabinet examined the figures giving

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<sup>13</sup>Richard Lloyd George, Lloyd George (London, 1960), pp. 175, 176. Donald McCormick, The Mask of Merlin (London, 1963), p. 115. Lloyd George, War Memoirs, VI, 352, 353.

<sup>14</sup>Robert Blake, editor, The Private Papers of Douglas Haig (London, 1952). Duff Cooper, Haig (London, 1935). John Terraine, Haig, The Educated Soldier (London, 1963).

<sup>15</sup>James G. Harbord, The American Army (Boston, 1936), p. 57.

the total manpower available to the British Empire and Commonwealth.<sup>16</sup> South Africa was capable of no major increase of manpower other than labor forces. In Australia the situation was complex: there were untapped supplies of manpower, but the political question of conscription cast a shadow on the Australian government's ability even to maintain the strength of existing units. New Zealand had an additional 30,000 men available. Canada had the manpower available for two additional divisions. India, because every Indian battalion required British officers at the company level and above, was experiencing difficulty in raising sixteen new battalions. Egypt and the Sudan were of little potential help except for the possibility of their raising labor forces. Some expansion of the King's African Rifles was possible in East Africa. The white population of Rhodesia was depleted, and no further help could be expected from that source. The West African colonies were able to provide little increase in troops. Most of the white male population was reduced in the Seychelles, Ceylon, and in Mauritius, although there was a possibility of a combat unit from Hong Kong. The West Indies could furnish only labor units. The idea of conscription was unpopular in Ireland and would probably be unprofitable to enforce, because the number of British troops required to impose conscription on Ireland would not be offset by the probable number of Irish conscripts.

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<sup>16</sup>War Cabinet 41, Appendix I, January 23, 1917, CAB 23/1, PRO

On the basis of these findings, the War Cabinet recommended raising a sixth Australian division, a second New Zealand division, a fifth and a sixth Canadian division, and sending these newly formed units to France. The final recommendation stated that if the new divisions could not be formed, whatever infantry became available should be used as drafts in existing units depleted in the fighting. Alternatively, the number of infantry battalions in the Commonwealth divisions could be reduced from twelve battalions to nine battalions, a reduction which had already been ordered in English divisions.<sup>17</sup>

In this context, the War Cabinet of Great Britain saw the entrance of the United States into the war as the solution to their critical manpower shortage. The War Cabinet also discussed the possibility of Americans enlisting in the Canadian Army, and they decided to query the United States government to find out if they were favorable toward this proposal.<sup>18</sup> The War Cabinet decided that the most desirable help would be in the form of infantry and machine gun units.<sup>19</sup>

Clearly a high level mission to the United States was necessary to discuss these various possibilities. On April

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>War Cabinet 382, April 4, 1917, CAB 23/1, PRO.

<sup>19</sup>G.T. 412 presented to British War Cabinet on April 10, 1917, CAB 23/1, PRO.

10, 1917, the War Cabinet chose Arthur James Balfour, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to lead a delegation to the United States, and it gave him definite instructions.<sup>20</sup> He was to ask the United States for ships, guns, wheat, and troops. The War Cabinet also told Balfour to discuss four main military points with the United States government. First, they wanted the United States to send a regular brigade as soon as possible. Second, the United States was to train as many troops as quickly as possible with the hope of establishing a United States presence in the line by August or September of 1917. Third, all later training of United States troops would take place in France. And last, Balfour should discuss the possibility of directly recruiting Americans into the British, Canadian, or French armies. The War Cabinet realized that the last suggestion might not be feasible, but they considered it to be the fastest and most efficient way to utilize United States help and put an end to the war.<sup>21</sup> Equipped with these cabinet instructions, Balfour and the British delegation left for the United States and arrived on April 22, 1917.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>War Cabinet 116, Minute 17-22, April 10, 1917, CAB 23/1, PRO.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Robert Lansing, War Memoirs of Robert Lansing (New York, 1935), pp. 272-274, Ray Stannard Baker, Woodrow Wilson, Life and Letters (New York, 1939), VII, 32-33.

On April 25, three days after the Balfour mission arrived in the United States, a similar mission headed by Rene Viviani, a former premier of France landed at Hampton Roads, Virginia.<sup>23</sup> Viviani was Vice President of the French Council of Ministers, and included in the delegation as military representative was Marshal Joffre, hero of the Marne and former field commander of the French army.<sup>24</sup>

That these British and French missions arrived in the United States on separate ships was an indication of the state of Allied cooperation. Nor had those missions any joint plan of action to recommend to the United States once they arrived.<sup>25</sup>

Once the missions were in the United States the initial discussions concerned American loans to the Allies. On that point there was no problem; because of American enthusiasm for the cause of the Allies, America was already advancing credits with little or no thought that they would ever be repaid.<sup>26</sup> America, however, shied away from completely embracing the alliance. This reluctance stemmed from two

<sup>23</sup>Fredrick Palmer, Bliss, Peacemaker: The Life and Letters of General Tasker Howard Bliss (New York, 1934), p. 1.

<sup>24</sup>Francis Halsey, Balfour, Viviani, and Joffre (New York, 1917), p. 1; Le Temps, April 27, 1917, p. 1; The Times (London) April 21, 1917, p. 5; New York Times, April 21, 1917, and April 26, 1917, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup>William G. Sharp, The War Memoirs of William Graves Sharp, American Ambassador to France, 1914-1916 (London, 1931), pp. 189-190; Edward M. Coffman, The War to End All Wars (New York, 1968), p. 8.

<sup>26</sup>Harbord, American Army, p. 20.

basic reasons: the first was a basic distrust of Europe, and the second the Wilsonian vision of why America entered the war.<sup>27</sup>

The American mistrust of Europe was of long standing and had been accentuated by its policy of isolation from European affairs. Sir William Wiseman, Chief of British Intelligence in the United States, observed, before the entry of the United States into the war, that American opinion would be opposed to any formal treaty of alliance with the Allies. He also noted the lingering mistrust of Great Britain that stemmed from the American Revolution.<sup>28</sup>

In spite of the long standing American attitude toward Europe, the American people as well as the American government gave the French and British missions a friendly, enthusiastic welcome. Joffre was lionized in this country.<sup>29</sup> The requests that both missions made were similar. According to Josephus Daniels, Secretary of the Navy, the prime request was for money.<sup>30</sup> Joffre was the only one to say that the situation was so serious that American troops were needed in large

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<sup>27</sup>Charles Seymour, The Intimate Papers of Colonel House (Boston, 1926-1928), III, 54, 70.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 30, 31.

<sup>29</sup>New York Times, April 26, 1917, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup>Daniels, Wilson Era, pp. 51, 52; David F. Houston, Eight Years with Wilson's Cabinet (Garden City, 1926), I, 280.

numbers.<sup>31</sup> The British military representative on the Balfour delegation was not insistent on his request for an American military force of about 500,000 men to be on the line by late 1917 or early 1918.<sup>32</sup>

It was at these meetings that the initial "amalgamation" proposals were brought forth. Amalgamation was the proposal that United States troops be absorbed into the Allied armies, possibly as individuals but more likely as battalions or regiments. That is, the United States would not field an independent army.

The United States refused amalgamation for two reasons. The first reason was the uncertainty that existed in the minds of the administration as to what the United States' ultimate participation would be. The second reason was the reluctance of Woodrow Wilson to commit himself to any agreement that would restrict his movements.<sup>33</sup>

When the initial amalgamation proposals were refused, Joffre was quick to urge that one American division be sent

<sup>31</sup>Sharp, War Memoirs, p. 170.

<sup>32</sup>G.T.M. Bridges, Alarms and Excursions (London, 1938), p. 173.

<sup>33</sup>Franklin K. Lane notes an excellent example of Wilson's reluctance to be bound in the use of the term "ally" when the relationship of the United States and the Allies were referred to. Lane felt that Wilson did not use the term "ally" because of the possible restrictions. Diary entry, March 1, 1918, Lane and Wall, Letters, p. 266; Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (New York, 1969), p. 594; Ruhl Bartlett, Policy and Power (New York, 1965), pp. 142-147; Samuel Flagg Bemis, A Diplomatic History of the United States (New York, 1936), pp. 611, 612.



to France immediately. Joffre wanted this division in order to boost the morale of the French people.<sup>34</sup> In spite of their enthusiastic welcome, both missions felt that the United States would be unable to equip an independent army large enough to play any important role in the defeat of Imperial Germany.<sup>35</sup> Even Joffre stated that he did not feel that the United States would have to commit more than 500,000 American troops.<sup>36</sup>

Sending even a single organized American division to France presented a problem, because the United States Army had no organized tactical unit even as large as a division. However, on May 2, 1917, Major General John M. Pershing, commanding the Southern Department of the army at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, was directed to select five regiments to be formed into a division for service in France. Pershing selected the Sixteenth, the Eighteenth, the Twenty-sixth, and the Twenty-eighth Infantry Regiments and the Sixth Field Artillery Regiment. These were all regular regiments and had seen recent service on the Mexican border. These

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<sup>34</sup>J.J.C. Joffre, The Personal Memoirs of Marshal Joffre, translated by T. Bentley Mott (New York, 1932), II, 574, Houston, Eight Years, I, 280.

<sup>35</sup>Palmer, Baker, I, 152.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., I, 178.

regiments plus additional artillery and auxiliary units were to make up the First Division in France.<sup>37</sup>

There was a considerable delay on the decision about the size and composition of the division. Even the number of officers required for the troops deployed had not been clearly decided. In the Federal Service in 1917 there were 9,000 officers of whom 5,791 were regular officers.<sup>38</sup> As they were eventually organized the United States divisions included 979 officers and 27,082 men and when support elements were included the grand total approached 40,000 men.<sup>39</sup> The American divisional formations were huge when compared to contemporary European divisions of 5,000 to 12,000 men. The first reason for this difference was that Pershing felt the endurance of a large division would be superior to that of a smaller division.<sup>40</sup> The second reason was probably that with fewer divisional formations the number of general officers required would be less.

When Pershing was first summoned to Washington, he was under the impression that he was to command the initial divi-

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<sup>37</sup>U.S. Army, Historical Division, Order of Battle of the United States Land Forces in the World War (1917-1919) (Washington, 1949), II, 1375-1377.

<sup>38</sup>Harbord, American Army, p. 28.

<sup>39</sup>U.S. Army, Historical Division, U.S. Army in the World War, 1917-1919 (Washington, 1948), XIII, 341, table I. This work will be cited hereafter as U.S.A.

<sup>40</sup>Weigley, U.S. Army, p. 386; John J. Pershing, My Experiences in the World War (New York, 1931), I, 15.

sion that was to be sent to France.<sup>41</sup> Baker informed him on May 12, 1918, that Wilson had decided to send him to Europe as Commander-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Force which was to be composed of "several divisions." Pershing noted that; "The numbers could not then be fixed, of course, as the plans of the War Department were not fully developed until later."<sup>42</sup> The plan in Wilson's mind had evolved from one division to a multi-divisional force.

No Commander-in-Chief had yet been selected for the American Expeditionary Force. Pershing's rivals, all senior to him were Leonard Wood, J. Franklin Bell, Thomas H. Barry, Hugh L. Scott, and Tasker H. Bliss, but all of them were either too old or in questionable health.<sup>43</sup> According to Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War, Pershing's main rival was Leonard Wood. Wood had several factors that worked to his disadvantage. The easiest to document was his failing health. He had taken a serious fall that required an operation to relieve the pain. Because of this operation he was forced to wear a protective helmet-like device on his head, and he was left with a severe limp. Less easily docu-

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., I, 15.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>43</sup>Palmer, Baker, I, 161-166; Weigley, U.S. Army, p. 374; Harvey A. DeWeerd, President Wilson Fights His War (New York, 1968), pp. 202, 203.

mented but no less detracting was his involvement in the "preparedness" controversy and his constant criticism of Wilson.<sup>44</sup>

Pershing was a regular Army officer who had compiled an outstanding record of service in troubled areas such as Cuba, the Philippines, and the Mexican border. Among other assets, he had caught the eye of Theodore Roosevelt and had been jumped from Major to Brigadier General. He was a hard, taciturn, and competent soldier, and his outlook upon matters was analytical, but not overly flexible or sensitive.<sup>45</sup> Baker was particularly impressed with Pershing's Mexican service. He was impressed with the manner in which Pershing handled the political as well as the military and diplomatic side of the affair. Because of these circumstances, Pershing was designated as Commander-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Force on May 27, 1917.<sup>46</sup>

When Pershing took over command of the A.E.F., one of the basic problems that would recur over and over arose. This problem was the apparent abdication of Wilson from his role as Commander-in-Chief.<sup>47</sup> Wilson apparently had no interest in military affairs. For example, in his conversations with

<sup>44</sup>DeWeerd, Wilson, p. 203.

<sup>45</sup>Richard O'Conner, Black Jack Pershing (New York, 1961), pp. 13, 14.

<sup>46</sup>Instructions: Baker to Pershing, May 26, 1917. U.S.A. I, 3.

<sup>47</sup>Houston, Eight Years, I, 279; Seymour, House, III, 12.

General Bridges, military topics were never discussed.<sup>48</sup>

Another example is the fact that Pershing had only one war-time meeting with his Commander-in-Chief. He expected that Wilson would say something about the role that the American army was to play in the fight against Germany, especially the relationship with the Allies, but Wilson said nothing at all about this subject.<sup>49</sup>

While Wilson took little direct part in the military side of the war, the evidence seems to indicate that he trusted Pershing to organize an independent American army in Europe. At a Cabinet meeting early in the war, Wilson gave his clearest statement in regard to Pershing's power and the amalgamation question. Wilson said, "No, we will leave to General Pershing the disposition of our troops, but it must be an American army, officered and directed by Americans, ready to throw their strength where it will tell most." He concluded, "It may not be impossible before the war is over that we shall have to bear the brunt. We must be prepared for any demands for all the agencies necessary to supply our army and secure victory."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Bridges, Alarms, p. 175.

<sup>49</sup>John J. Pershing, My Experiences, I, 37; Baker, Wilson, VII, 95.

<sup>50</sup>Josephus Daniels, The Life of Woodrow Wilson (Chicago, 1924), p. 282.

Few Generals have ever had a free hand for a less defined mission than Pershing when he left the United States for Europe. He was unable to find anyone in Washington who could tell him how many men would be needed or the organization and equipment that would be required. In short, the A.E.F. was to be virtually his creation from the very beginning.<sup>51</sup>

The letter of instruction which Baker sent to Pershing upon his appointment contained the following instructions. "In military operations against the Imperial German Government, you are directed to cooperate with the forces of the other countries employed against that enemy; but in so doing the underlying idea must be kept in view that the forces of the United States are a separate and distinct component of the combined forces, the identity of which must be preserved." Baker continued, "This fundamental rule is subject to such minor exceptions in particular circumstances as your judgement may approve. The decision as to when your command, or any of its parts, is ready for action is confided in you, and you will exercise full discretion in determining the manner of cooperation." Baker concluded with the following statement; "But, until the forces of the United States are in your judgement sufficiently strong to warrant operations as an independent command, it is understood that you will cooperate as component of whatever army you may be assigned to by the

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<sup>51</sup>Palmer, Baker, I, 180.

French government."<sup>52</sup> This last statement by Baker was reasonable because the fighting was in France and the French army was the senior service present; therefore, the French government was the logical agency for coordination of the movement and deployment of troops within France.

Pershing's instructions said in essence that he was to cooperate with the Allies but that he was also to retain his independence. The instructions seemed to say: use the American troops as reinforcements of the Allied armies in a real emergency, but an independent United States Army is the ultimate goal. That is, the goal was to use an independent United States army to defeat the German army; cooperation with the Allies was a secondary goal and to be sought only if absolutely necessary.

With these indefinite instructions, Pershing, accompanied by an embryonic staff, left for Europe aboard the S.S. Baltic on May 28, 1917.<sup>53</sup> He first landed in England and then went to France, still as the commander of one division of a vaguely conceived multi-divisional force.

The plan to send a large expeditionary force to Europe was not formulated immediately. It evolved from the initial decision to send the First Division overseas, and to use it as a nucleus for training and organizing American troops

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<sup>52</sup>Pershing, My Experiences, I, 38, 39; Baker, Wilson, VII, 62.

<sup>53</sup>U.S.A., I, 4.

once they were in France.<sup>54</sup> General Bliss, Acting Chief-of-Staff, said on May 28, 1917, that no plans existed for sending large forces to France or for setting up the organization of an American front in France.<sup>55</sup> The initiative for sending large numbers of troops was a cable sent by Pershing on July 6, 1917, in which he said at least 1,000,000 men would be needed in France.<sup>56</sup> Baker had sent over a commission headed by a Colonel Chauncey B. Baker to survey the situation independently of Pershing and report to Washington. Initially there was a great deal of friction between Colonel Baker's commission and Pershing, but eventually Pershing got them to agree to his view of the manpower situation.<sup>57</sup> The mission then reported back to Baker and called for the raising of a 3,000,000 man army on July 11, 1917.<sup>58</sup> From these reports the decision was made to send a large American army to France. This decision is yet another example of the vagueness that surrounded the goals of the A.E.F. Harvey DeWeerd feels

<sup>54</sup>Pershing, My Experiences, I, 78.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Cable: Pershing to Baker, July 6, 1917, U.S.A., II, 17.

<sup>57</sup>Pershing Diary, July 7, 1917. Pershing Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Box 4-5; Pershing, My Experiences, I, 78.

<sup>58</sup>Cable: Baker to Baker, July 11, 1917. U.S.A., II, 93.



that the idea of an American army in France was "a cumulative and evolutionary" concept.<sup>59</sup>

One thing that strengthened Pershing's independent position but which also led the Allies to be pessimistic about American military efficiency was the lack of provision for an effective general staff. A general staff in the European sense did not exist in the United States. The Chief-of-Staff was a military administrator.<sup>60</sup> The lack of an effective general staff organization when America entered the war gave the Allies the impression that the United States was inefficient and unable to field a modern army.

Wilson apparently gave little thought to the appointment of a strong general staff. In the year that followed the American declaration of war the United States had four Chiefs-of-Staff. Immediately after the declaration of war, Wilson sent Major General Hugh L. Scott, then the Chief-of-Staff, on a mission to Russia. Scott was then replaced by an Acting Chief-of-Staff, Major General Tasker H. Bliss. Both of these

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<sup>59</sup>DeWeerd, Wilson, p. 209. By November 11, 1918, there were slightly less than 2,000,000 men in France.

<sup>60</sup>DeWeerd, Wilson, p. 204. When the United States entered the war, the U.S. Army was governed by The U.S. Field Service Regulations, 1914. These regulations did not mention the existence of a General Staff. The position of Chief-of-Staff was provided for but no duties were defined. Elihu Root was the modern American founder of the General Staff concept under President Theodore Roosevelt. Root's concept was changed by the 1914 regulations. See: Robert Bacon and James B. Scott, The Military and Colonial Policy of the United States: Addresses by Elihu Root (Cambridge, 1924) and Elihu Root, Five Years of the War Department (Washington, 1904).

officers were approaching the retirement age at the time of their appointments.<sup>61</sup> The eventual Chief-of-Staff, General Peyton C. March, described Scott and Bliss as "fine old fellows" but said that neither was equipped to be the Chief-of-Staff in wartime.<sup>62</sup> Bliss was followed by another Acting Chief-of-Staff, Major General John Biddle. Biddle was described by Baker as a good soldier, a gentleman, but not one who had the proper amount of energy for the job at hand.<sup>63</sup> It was not until March 4, 1918, that Major General Peyton C. March was appointed Chief-of-Staff. March proved to be a man with the strength and vision necessary to provide an efficient general staff organization. Nevertheless the United States had been in the war for almost a year before an effective general staff was organized. This situation led the Allies to press their proposals for amalgamation.

Another problem which contributed to the desires of the Allies for amalgamation was the inability of the United States Army to provide its own necessary equipment. Because of this inability the United States was forced to rely upon the Allies for assistance. At the beginning of the war the United States

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<sup>61</sup>DeWeerd, Wilson, pp. 204, 205.

<sup>62</sup>Letter: March to Baker, October 5, 1932. March Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Box 1.

<sup>63</sup>Letter: Baker to Fredrick Palmer, May 19, 1930. Baker Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Box 184.

had not chosen the rifle with which to arm its troops; this was solved by modification of an existing British model which was already being manufactured in this country. The problem of supplying adequate artillery was met less easily. The United States finally decided to adopt French artillery for the A.E.F. and in August 1917, the French began to provide artillery pieces; even as late as the armistice, in November, 1918, when the A.E.F., had 3,400 pieces of artillery, only 477 were of American manufacture. In combat the A.E.F. expended nearly 9,000,000 rounds of artillery ammunition. Slightly less than 9,000 of these rounds were of American manufacture; the others were French.<sup>64</sup>

The Allies therefore were putting forth great efforts to arm the A.E.F. Further, it was their opinion that without their aid there simply would not be an American army in the field for nearly two years. This feeling was to lead to the many amalgamation proposals that were to follow.

Pershing met with the British War Cabinet on June 11, 1917 and informed the War Cabinet that the United States would have 175,000 to 200,000 men in the field by November, 1917.<sup>65</sup> The British, in spite of these predictions, still saw some problems. Balfour maintained that it was exceedingly difficult

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<sup>64</sup>Leonard P. Ayers, The War With Germany (Washington, 1919), p. 87. DeWeerd, Wilson, pp. 206-207.

<sup>65</sup>War Cabinet 160, minute 14, June 11, 1917, CAB 23/1, PRO.

to get the United States to make the preparations necessary for fielding a modern army.<sup>66</sup> The estimate by the British delegation in the United States, was that the United States could only field 500,000 men by the end of 1918. Based upon this, Robertson forecast that because of the slow arrival of the Americans, the period of greatest danger would be between March and August 1918.<sup>67</sup>

When the United States was drawn into the great European war, the military effort the United States would provide was uncertain. Upon entry the United States Army was manifestly unprepared to participate in a continental war. The Allies promptly sent delegations to the United States in an attempt to specify what was to be required of the United States. Although Joffre requested troops, the Allied Missions mainly requested steel, money, and ships. Only after Pershing had been sent to Europe was the goal of the A.E.F. made any clearer.

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<sup>66</sup>War Cabinet 164, Minute 9, June 15, 1917, CAB 23/1, PRO.

<sup>67</sup>Sir William Robertson, Soldiers and Statesmen (New York, 1926), II, 250.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SLOWLY INCREASING BUILD-UP

After the unsuccessful Allied offensives during the summer of 1917 the Allies felt that their need for United States troops had become urgent. Their requests for American troops became numerous and vociferous, and were made to the Supreme War Council and in Washington. During this period, from July 1917 until March 1918, the number of United States troops in Europe increased with agonizing slowness.

In late 1917, the Allies again made a series of amalgamation proposals. During the summer of 1917 both the British and the French armies launched offensives. The French army embarked upon the Nievelle offensive which resulted in enormous numbers of casualties and a mutiny affecting a large proportion of the French army and the British army in France committed itself to the Paschendale offensive which resulted in large numbers of casualties. This bloodletting in the summer of 1917 sapped what little reservoir of confidence and strength remained to the Allies.

The French army, after the failure of the Nievelle offensive, reorganized from top to bottom. General Henri Pétain was installed as the commander of the French army, and he was

able to restore discipline to his mutinous divisions by promising, among other things, to engage in no more offensives and to wait for the Americans.<sup>1</sup>

The British armies were also forced to rebuild after the summer campaign of 1917. In spite of conscription the British army was using its last exploitable reserves of men. They were forced to set the age of liability to conscription from seventeen to fifty. Among others, Robertson, chief of the Imperial General staff, thought that delaying all military action until the arrival of the Americans was impractical. He felt that the American organization for the waging of modern war was inadequate and, thus, it would be dangerous to depend upon them.<sup>2</sup> Haig agreed and felt that the British army should "take some action" before the Americans arrived in great numbers.<sup>3</sup> He apparently felt that Robertson was correct in his estimation of the American army.

The British and French governments were well aware of the morale value to the Allied cause of the American troops. Arrangements were made to parade the first American troops which landed in Europe through London in August, 1917.<sup>4</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup>Harvey A. DeWeerd, President Wilson Fights His War (New York, 1968), pp. 184, 185.

<sup>2</sup>Sir William Robertson, Soldiers and Statesmen (New York, 1926), II, 230, 231.

<sup>3</sup>Duff Cooper, Haig (London, 1936), II, 101.

<sup>4</sup>War Cabinet 214, minute 5, August 14, 1917, CAB 23/1, Public Record Office, London, England (microfilm).

French also were able to cheer themselves after the 1917 failures by the thought of the stream of American troops arriving in France.<sup>5</sup>

Lloyd George was worried about the slow rate of progress of the American military buildup. To speed military preparations, he invited a United States mission to Great Britain on September 26, 1917, to arrange the cooperation needed for waging the war. The mission had as its leader Edward M. House, the long time political confidant of President Wilson, and included Admiral W. S. Benson, Chief of Naval Operations, and General Tasker H. Bliss, Chief of Staff of the Army.<sup>6</sup> This mission left the United States on October 28, 1917,<sup>7</sup> and arrived at Plymouth, England on November 7, 1917 after a perilous voyage across the north Atlantic.<sup>8</sup>

After some private staff conferences and some public ceremonies, the American mission met with Lloyd George at 10 Downing Street on November 20, 1917. The Prime Minister stressed the urgent necessity of increasing rifle strength on the Western Front, and noted that the Italian situation added

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<sup>5</sup>J. J. C. Joffre, The Personal Memoirs of Marshal Joffre, Translated by T. Bentley Mott (New York, 1932), II, 566.

<sup>6</sup>Charles Seymour, Intimate Papers of Colonel House (New York, 1925), III, 174; David Lloyd George, War Memoirs of David Lloyd George (Boston, 1933-1937), V, 396.

<sup>7</sup>Seymour, House, III, 207.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 209.

to the exhaustion of France and adversely affected the Allied manpower situation. It was Russia which was the most alarming. The Communist Revolution had just occurred there, and Russia was in the process of withdrawing from the war, which would release thirty to forty German divisions for use in France. Lloyd George summarized the remarks on manpower by saying, ". . . . you should help France and the Allies in the battleline with as many men as you can possibly train and equip at the earliest possible moment. . . ."9

The second of the subjects taken up by the Prime Minister was the shipping situation. With this conversation began the argument over the composition of the United States Army in France. The shipping problem was aggravated by the differences of opinion between the United States and the Allies about the composition of United States military formations to be sent to Europe. The Allies were short of combat troops, not staff and supply forces. The Prime Minister feared that the United States would use precious tonnage to transport non-combatant forces and thus not help the Allies as rapidly as if only combat troops were shipped. The British felt the brigading of the United States forces into existing British and French formations, until United States divisional formations were available, would be the most effective method to reinforce the Allied armies.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Lloyd George, War Memoirs, V, 401-404.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 410.



The mission then went to France and on November 25, 1917, House and Bliss met with the new prime minister of France, George Clemenceau, and General Pétain at Clemenceau's office.<sup>11</sup> The discussion centered around the effective force of the French army and its relationship to the future arrival of American troops. Pétain stated to House and Bliss that the French army at his disposal then possessed one hundred and eight divisions of competent troops. This figure included all the troops at the front and in reserve. He said that French losses to that date had been 2,600,000 men killed, wounded, disabled, or taken prisoner. Pétain stated that eight divisions of this total would have to be transferred to Italy around the beginning of 1918, which would leave one hundred divisions for service in France. Because the French divisions each contained 11,000 men, the strength of the French army in France would be approximately 1,100,000.<sup>12</sup>

Pétain estimated that the number of German soldiers employed on the Western Front was approximately equal to the number of Allied forces there, but there was no way to estimate the size of the German reserve accurately. He further suggested that the Germans might be able to transfer as many

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<sup>11</sup>U.S. Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States, 1917, Supplement, I, The World War (Washington, 1931), p. 317.

<sup>12</sup>Telegram, House to Wilson, November 26, 1917, Ibid., p. 318.

as forty divisions from the Russian front if they were not tied down by either the Russians or the Rumanians.<sup>13</sup>

Pétain expressed displeasure at what he claimed was the unsatisfactory speed with which the American troops employed in France were being trained. When asked how many American troops he desired at a fixed date, he replied that he desired as many men as possible as soon as possible, but they must be soldiers and not merely men. The Americans replied that Pétain must give some number and a fixed date in order to provide a goal for American planning. Pétain said that the Americans must have a million men available for an early 1919 campaign and another million in reserve. The final report by House endorsed Pétain's requirement of 1,000,000 American troops by the end of 1918.<sup>14</sup>

As the Allied military situation became ever more gloomy, Pershing, on December 2, 1917, sent a cable to the Secretary of War and the Chief-of-Staff in Washington about the number of American troops required by the end of June, 1918.<sup>15</sup> Pershing reinforced the report of the House mission when he pointed out that the collapse of Russia and the success of the armies of the Central Powers in Italy had improved German

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<sup>13</sup>Supreme War Council, notes of a conference, November 25, 1917. U. S. Army Historical Division, U. S. Army in the World War (Washington, 1948), II, 81, 82. Hereafter cited as U.S.A..

<sup>14</sup>Seymour, House, III, 260.

<sup>15</sup>Cable: Pershing to Baker, December 2, 1917, U.S.A., II, 88.

morale. He felt that there was a distinct probability of a large scale German offensive on the Western Front, which could be dangerous even though the French army was deployed to meet such an offensive. Pershing estimated that the Central Powers would not be able to concentrate fully on the Western Front for several months, but he felt the goal of the Central Powers was to embark upon an offensive before the arrival of the American army in force. With the Russian army out of the war, Pershing estimated the Central Powers could concentrate 250 to 260 divisions on the Western Front and still leave forces sufficient to guard the Eastern and Italian fronts, and this estimate did not include Turkish or Bulgarian divisions. After adjusting the number of Allied divisions in France to cover those which had been ordered to Italy, Pershing said the Central Powers would have a 60 per cent advantage. The Allies had possessed a 30 per cent advantage during the summer of 1917 and had failed dismally.

Pershing therefore felt that it was of the utmost importance to act quickly. Pershing estimated that the minimum amount of troops that the United States should have in France by the end of June, 1918, should be four army corps or twenty-four divisions in addition to troops serving in the rear. Robertson, Bliss, and Foch, the French Military Representative to the S. W. C., apparently agreed that this was the minimum figure at which to aim. Pershing felt that it should be placed no higher because of limits on transportation. In the cable

Pershing discussed the American shipping tonnage required to bring over troops. He thought that it was sufficient for his proposed twenty-four divisions, although the allotment of this much shipping to troops and not military supplies would be hard to achieve because of the scarcity of shipping. Because the Allies were very weak, Pershing felt that America must come to their aid during 1918, 1919 would be too late. Pershing thought that unless American aid was substantial during 1918, the Allies could not hold on. He recognized in this cable that there was a severe shortage of artillery and ammunition in the A.E.F., and he stated that the French and British would be able to make up the American shortage without any great difficulty.<sup>16</sup>

In a letter to the Chief of the French military mission with the headquarters of the A.E.F. on December 4, 1917, Pétain stated his intentions regarding the use of the American army. He wrote that the situation on the Northeast Front might force the French command to utilize American troops in the line before divisional training and organization had been completed. "Therefore", Pétain wrote, "I consider it necessary for you to endeavor to accustom the American high command to the idea that American regiments, indeed even American battalions, could well be called upon to serve as separate units, in the

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

cadre of a large French unit and under the orders of the French command."<sup>17</sup>

As the German threat to the Allied armies increased on the Western Front, the Allies began to press Wilson and Baker to provide more manpower. The result of these requests was a letter Baker sent to Pershing on December 18, 1917. In that letter Baker sent Pershing instructions which covered the American government's attitude toward amalgamation. The letter began with a background statement: "Both English and French are pressing upon the President their desire to have your forces amalgamated with theirs by regiments and companies and both express belief in pending drive by Germans somewhere along the line of the western front." The second part of the statement represents the thinking of Baker and Wilson in regard to the role of the A.E.F. "We do not desire loss of identity of our forces but regard that as secondary to the meeting of any critical situation by the most helpful use possible of the troops at your command." The message continued, "The President wishes you to have full authority to use the troops at your command as you deem wise in consultation with the French and British Commanders in Chief." Baker finished the statement by reaffirming Pershing's authority: "The President's whole purpose is to acquaint you with the representations made here and to authorize you to act with

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<sup>17</sup>Les Armees Francaises, Tome VI, Part 1. (hereafter A.F.), cited in U.S.A., II, 100.

entire freedom in making the best disposition and use of your forces possible to accomplish the main purposes in view."<sup>18</sup>

The tone of this message was exceedingly mild. It clearly brought out the willingness of the United States government to amalgamate its troops should the situation demand it, but showed that the American government did not favor amalgamation unless a true emergency arose. The message further revealed that there was no desire to curtail the authority of the commander in the field, although in view of the likely political unpopularity of amalgamation, it may have been an attempt to shift responsibility to Pershing should amalgamation be necessary. Since Pershing had openly expressed his opposition to amalgamation, though, the Allies had now begun to put pressure on Washington not Pershing. It seemed more productive to talk to Baker or Wilson about amalgamation than to talk to Pershing.

The French Ambassador in Washington wrote the French military attaché in London on December 20, 1917, and told him that Baker had wired Pershing and said that in compliance with the request of Great Britain and France, the President agreed to the American forces being, if necessary, amalgamated

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<sup>18</sup>Baker to Pershing, December 18, 1917, Edward M. House Papers, cited in David F. Trask, The United States in the Supreme War Council (Middletown, 1961), p. 72.

with Allied units.<sup>19</sup> The French Ambassador added that Baker had said the smallest United States unit to be amalgamated would be a company, and Pershing was left with the ultimate authority to decide this matter after consultation with the British and French commanders. Baker suggested American forces be used at the junction of the British and French armies. This decision was also left to Pershing.

In a meeting of the British War Cabinet on December 21, 1917, the Prime Minister read a telegram received from Washington. The telegram contained a paraphrase of the telegram sent by Baker to Pershing which gave Pershing the final decision over the amalgamation of American forces. The War Cabinet requested Lord Milner to see Pershing in Paris and to urge him to fulfill the request of the British government and the British General Staff.<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, the extent to which the French army under Pétain was relying upon the arrival of American manpower was illustrated by a directive Pétain issued concerning the Western Front. In this directive Pétain said that because of the Russian defection, the conditions of the conflict had changed, and the conduct of operations must be changed accordingly.

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<sup>19</sup>Letter, J.J. Jusserand (French Ambassador in Washington) to French Military Attaché in London, December 20, 1917, U.S.A., II, 123.

<sup>20</sup>War Cabinet 304, minute 12, December 21, 1917, CAB 23/1, Public Record Office, London (microfilm). U.S.A., II, 123, 124.

The French commander stated: "The Entente will not recover its superiority and manpower until the American army is able to place large scale units into the fighting lines." The General further stated that until that time the French army under a "penalty of irremediable attrition" would maintain a defensive attitude with the idea of resuming an offensive sometime in the future that would bring ultimate victory.<sup>21</sup>

In an attempt to revitalize the offensive power of the French army, Pétain proposed to train large elements of the American army with the French army.<sup>22</sup> On December 23, 1917, Pétain and Pershing met to discuss Pétain's proposal. Pétain expounded upon the need for the more rapid training of American units. He pointed out the prospect of the German army launching a large scale offensive effort in the near future. Pétain stated that he was willing to continue the American training effort as envisioned for the First and Twenty-sixth Divisions but suggested amalgamating other divisions.

Under this plan the First Division would be deployed immediately to the front, and the Twenty-sixth Division during a two month period would undergo regiment by regiment training in the French divisions. These two divisions then would form a nucleus for an independent American army.

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<sup>21</sup>A.F., VI, 1, Annexes, Part 1: Directive, U.S.A., II, 104, 105.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.



Pershing countered that the training of the First Division was not finished because the cadres had been dispersed throughout the various schools of the A.E.F. He further stated that the First Division lacked basic infantry training, and that if the divisions were sent to the front it would be at the expense of training. The American commander did say, however, that if the necessity arose the First Division would enter the front to relieve French units, but he hoped this would not be required before February 1. Pétain responded that his intention was to take advantage of the offer to use the First Division in the line to relieve elements of the French army. He, Pétain, agreed not to do this before February 1, 1918, and was willing to use the First Division in a defensive sector and not in an offensive sector. Pershing inquired if the area in which the First Division was to be employed corresponded with the American sector of the future, and Pétain replied in the affirmative but said that divisions dispersed within the French army for training would be used up and down the entire line.

Pétain reiterated the advantage in time that would be gained by using amalgamation as a training device. In his opinion, a regiment could be qualified to enter the front line after four months training under the amalgamation plan, whereas, he pointed out that First Division regiments if they were trained in some other manner, might require eight months

to become fully qualified for combat. Pétain then repeated the need for American troops to build French morale.

Pershing declared that he appreciated the problem of morale, and he stated that he was interested in American troops going into the line as soon as possible. In spite of this, he did not concede his stand opposing amalgamation. He stood firm on the issue of an extensive American training program in France. Pershing did, however, promise to consider using regiments that had been through the American training cycle in French divisions.

Pétain again urgently requested that amalgamation be attempted. A suggestion that Haig had made in a letter concerning possible amalgamation was discussed at the interview. Haig had proposed that American troops be routed through England and use English training facilities. He further suggested that American troops enter the front at the junction of the British and French armies. Pétain, by using this letter, was attempting to bring pressure to bear upon Pershing to agree to some form of amalgamation.<sup>23</sup> The meeting concluded with Pershing and Pétain still in disagreement over American training cycles, although Pershing did agree to attempt to speed up the training of American troops.

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<sup>23</sup>A.F., VI, 1, Annexes, Part 1: Report U.S.A., II, 105-107.

As 1918 began, the manpower situation of the British army in France looked serious. Haig felt that the American army would be unable to operate in divisional strength until 1919.<sup>24</sup> During this period, the British army would be facing severe shortages of manpower. The army was well below strength, and the manpower requirements for 1918 could not be met.<sup>25</sup> Haig was extremely worried and contemplated the reduction of the army by sixteen to eighteen divisions.<sup>26</sup> The British army was not only hampered by excessive casualties but also by politics. Lloyd George was holding back needed reinforcements in England from Haig because he feared that they would be wanted in another offensive.<sup>27</sup>

Robertson, with clear foresight, wanted to aim for a decision in 1918 instead of 1919, because of the ever increasing American manpower.<sup>28</sup> He also felt that the Germans would press for a decision before large numbers of American troops arrived.<sup>29</sup> Robertson further predicted that when the

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<sup>24</sup>Cooper, Haig, p. 207.

<sup>25</sup>Robertson, Soldiers and Statesmen, II, 273.

<sup>26</sup>Robert Blake, editor, The Private Papers of Douglas Haig (London, 1952), p. 280.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., pp. 207-238; Lloyd George, War Memoirs, V, 133-193.

<sup>28</sup>Robertson, Soldiers and Statesmen, II, 269.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 272.

Allies rebuffed the German offer of negotiations late in 1917, they would redouble their military efforts.<sup>30</sup>

The composition of the American forces to be sent to Europe was constantly discussed by the United States and Great Britain. The main reason for this was the shortage of available shipping, most of which was British.<sup>31</sup> On January 2, 1918, Haig proposed to Pershing that the Americans send infantry formations in advance of full divisional staffs. These formations would be brigaded temporarily with British units and would be released when American divisional formations were available.<sup>32</sup>

Robertson visited Pershing ten days later and found that Pershing had scarcely considered the proposal. Pershing's objections were two-fold: he wanted the divisions to come over intact; and he thought that the United States battalions would not do as well under British command as they would under their own senior officers.<sup>33</sup>

During the course of this meeting, it became clear that each side held diametrically opposed positions on shipping allocation. Pershing wanted to use the tonnage for a total of thirty-six intact infantry divisions, but Robertson wanted

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 278.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 274.

<sup>32</sup>Lloyd George, War Memoirs, V, 412-413.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 413.

to bring over only infantry battalions. The British were reluctant to divert already slender shipping resources from vital tasks to bring noncombatant personnel from the United States.<sup>34</sup>

Although the Allies viewed the military situation with alarm, in January 1918 Pershing did not consider the situation quite so dangerous. In a cable to the Chief-of-Staff, Pershing said that he did not think that an emergency existed which would require the use of companies or battalions of the United States troops in either the British or the French armies.<sup>35</sup> He further stated that he would not employ United States troops in such a manner except in a grave crisis. In his cable, Pershing listed three objections. The first was that he thought it was desirable to maintain the national identity of the United States troops. His second objection was that it would be difficult to reconstitute dispersed companies and battalions into divisions without disrupting the Allied divisions in which they were serving. His third objection was that since United States troops were trained in both the British and the French armies, much confusion and loss of efficiency would result when they were formed into American divisions, because of the fundamental differences between the British and French military systems.

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 413-414.

<sup>35</sup>Cable: Pershing to Chief of Staff, January 1, 1918, U.S.A., II, 132.

Pershing pointed out that the British and the French armies were highly critical of each other, and both competed for United States troops to serve in their ranks. He said that he had selected what he thought were the best units from each of the armies involved. Pershing said that the First Division would be in the trenches by about the middle of January and ended the cable by saying that he was in the process of determining what would be the American sector and the manner of employment of the United States troops.<sup>36</sup>

A week later on January 8, 1918, Pershing cabled Washington and again discussed the amalgamation of American divisions. In this cable, Pershing said that the French had not been entirely frank and felt that they wanted to use United States regiments for duty other than advanced combat training. He did, however, acknowledge that a certain amount of instruction with the French troops was in progress, and he expected to continue this part of the training. Pershing further noted that the A.E.F. was making extensive use of British and French instructors. He reiterated his willingness to use his forces piecemeal in the event of an emergency, but noted that at this particular time, he did not feel that any emergency existed. Pershing felt that there was no apparent reason for the United States to break up its divisions into regiments for service among the British and the French

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

armies. He ended by reiterating the necessity for the integrity of United States forces.<sup>37</sup>

In answer to Pétain's continuing request for the rapid deployment of American troops, a meeting was arranged between Pétain and Pershing on January 11, 1918.<sup>38</sup> One of the subjects discussed was the employment of American units with the French and British armies. The First Division involved no controversy between Pétain and Pershing. Pétain proposed that the Twenty-sixth division deploy each of its four regiments into the line, brigading each one of those regiments with a different division of the French army. Pershing, after ascertaining the location of the projected deployment, agreed to the proposal. The Second Division generated no discussion. Pershing stated that he was going to expedite its training and organization.

The Forty-second Division, however, was the topic of a lengthy discussion. Pétain was reluctant to take Pershing's suggestion about the training of the Forty-second Division. Pershing wished to keep two regiments under the United States training cycle and put two regiments under the French cycle where they would be brigaded into French divisions. Pétain's refusal was based upon the concept that upper echelon staffs,

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<sup>37</sup>Cable: Pershing to Chief of Staff, January 8, 1918, U.S.A., II, 148, 149.

<sup>38</sup>A.F., VI, 1, Annexes Part 1: Report of conversation between Pétain and Pershing on January 13, 1918, U.S.A., II, 155-157.

which were far more difficult to train than combat troops, would not be trained as a unit under this plan. Pétain countered by suggesting that the entire Forty-second Division be put into the hands of the French command and stated that at the conclusion of their training, the Forty-second Division could then be compared with the Second Division in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the various methods of training. Pershing, however, maintained his view that it was necessary for the staff of the Forty-second Division to maintain close observation of the training of the two brigades. Pershing closed the discussion with the suggestion that the Forty-second Division be trained in the same manner that the Twenty-sixth Division was being trained. To this proposal Pétain assented.<sup>39</sup>

On January 11 Pétain and Pershing discussed the possibilities of the use of Negro regiments in the French army. This particular episode was unique and informative because the four Negro regiments involved were the only United States troops to be directly amalgamated on a permanent tactical basis into an Allied army.<sup>40</sup>

The evidence suggests what might have happened to larger numbers of United States troops if large scale amalgamation had taken place. Pétain specifically asked for Negro troops

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Diary, January 11, 1918, John J. Pershing Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, box 4-5.



at this meeting on January 11, although it is not clear whether he asked for Negro troops along with other requests for amalgamation at this same meeting. Pétain may possibly have thought that the United States considered the Negro troops as colonial troops, and, a request for colonial troops might be granted more readily than for "national" troops.<sup>41</sup> Pétain may also have asked for Negro soldiers because France's Negroes were performing well. At this time France was the second greatest colonial power in the world and made extensive use of colonial troops. Some of their more successful soldiers were their black Senegalese riflemen, who had earned a reputation for bravery and courage.

The four Negro regiments which were eventually amalgamated into the French army were the 369th, 370th, 371st, and 372nd Infantry Regiments of the Provisional Ninety-third Division. In his book on his war experiences Pershing wrote that he consented to those four regiments being temporarily amalgamated with the French army, because the A.E.F. had no brigade or divisional organization for these four regiments in France. Pershing added that each of these regiments was to go to different French divisions until such time as they could be reorganized as the Ninety-third Division.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>A.F., VI, 1, Annexes Part 1: Report of conversation between Pétain and Pershing on January 13, 1918. U.S.A., II, 156. Pétain also asked Pershing to evaluate the effectiveness of these regiments.

<sup>42</sup>John J. Pershing, My Experiences in the World War (New York, 1931), I, 291.

To take the experience of one regiment--the 371st--as an example, it was organized as the First Provisional Regiment "Colored" on August 31, 1917.<sup>43</sup> When it was organized the army had not yet decided whether to use Negro troops in combat units, wrote Chester D. Haywood who served in the 371st Infantry during its entire existence. Ordered to France, the 371st Infantry debarked at Brest on April 23, 1918 and the other three regiments followed shortly.<sup>44</sup> Immediately upon the arrival of the 371st, it was informed that it would be armed, equipped, and organized as a French Infantry Regiment.<sup>45</sup> Once that regiment was assigned to the French army it had very little contact with the A.E.F., nor did any of the other Negro Regiments in France. The 371st Infantry did, however, have contact with the 372nd Infantry simply because they were incorporated within the same French division. Haywood states that from July 1, 1918, until after the armistice no Americans visited the regiment.<sup>46</sup>

On June 12, 1918, two of the Negro regiments were assigned to the 157th French Division, which would be composed of three regiments; two of the regiments were the 371st and 372nd Infantry Regiments and the third regiment would be the

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<sup>43</sup>Chester D. Haywood, Negro Combat Troops in the World War (Worcester, 1928), p. 1.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

333rd Infantry Regiment of the French army, a regiment of white troops. The divisional artillery, cavalry, engineers, and other services were all French white units.<sup>47</sup>

In an interview between Pershing and Pétain on May 19, 1918, the subject of the Negro troops serving with the French army was discussed. Pershing--whose commands as a junior officer had been of Negro troops--raised doubts about the command aptitude of the Negro officers within the Negro regiments. He asked the French to report all cases of inaptitude on the part of Negro officers. Pershing suggested that a French officer be placed beside each Negro field officer. Pershing felt that the method gave good results when applied by the English to "Hindoo" officers. Pershing further stated that he had no objection to the French employing, if necessary, the Negro troops by battalions instead of by regiments.<sup>48</sup>

The French were pleased by the performance of the Negro troops and continued to press for more American troops to serve within their ranks. On June 3, 1918, March cabled to Pershing that the French had contacted him and said that they could train and use all the Negro infantry regiments that the United States could supply.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup>General Order 215 of the French Army, Ibid., pp. 56-57.

<sup>48</sup>Notes of an interview between Pershing and Pétain on May 19, 1918. U.S.A., II, 413-414.

<sup>49</sup>Cable: March to Pershing, June 3, 1918, U.S.A., II, 446.

Pershing, although he agreed to amalgamate these four regiments in the French army, nevertheless remained interested in returning them to his control in order to form the Ninety-third Division.<sup>50</sup> On August 24, Pershing requested Marshal Foch to return the four Negro regiments to American control. Foch replied to Pershing's request on August 26, 1918, and in his letter claimed that withdrawing the four regiments from French control would have "serious consequences". He wrote that if these units were withdrawn the Commander-in-Chief of the French armies of the North and Northeast would be obliged to withdraw two of his combat divisions and would be unable to bring these divisions up to strength again. At this time such an action, he wrote, was "unthinkable". Foch closed the letter by saying, "After thus bringing the facts to your attention I feel sure that you will agree with me that any change made this day in the employment of the colored regiments of the American 93rd Infantry Division which have been trained and used as combat units, would have unfortunate consequences. . . ." <sup>51</sup>

The four regiments finished the war in the French army. The evidence seems to indicate that the French were able to make quick and efficient use of them, and Foch's response to Pershing indicates, as well, that if the amalgamation proposals

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<sup>50</sup>Pershing, My Experiences, I, 291.

<sup>51</sup>A.F., VII, Vol. 1, Annexes, Part 2: Letter: Foch to Pershing, August 26, 1918, U.S.A., II, 585.

had been accepted in the beginning, and if all units had been amalgamated and used as successfully and efficiently as these four Negro regiments, Pershing would have had a difficult, if not impossible task, if he had later tried to withdraw them in order to form an independent American Expeditionary Force.

In an effort to coordinate the Allied war effort and the use of American troops, Pétain, Haig, and Pershing held a conference on January 19, 1918. The tone of the conference showed the urgent desire for American combatant troops in Europe. One of the two subjects discussed was deployment of American units with the British army. Pershing started the conference by bringing up a request from Robertson that he, Robertson, allocate special tonnage for transport of American battalions to France provided that the American battalions be attached to British units for training. The troop total was to be 150,000 men. The stipulation was that these units were not to be from troops already en route nor were they to be diverted from American or French sectors, and they were to be transported entirely in British ships. The idea of the plan was to increase the total number of American troops en route to France. The distinction was made at the conference that these American units were to be placed in British training areas; they were not to be attached to the British army when their training was complete. Arrangements were made for the

units to be transported to the American zone and American control after completing their training.<sup>52</sup>

On January 24, 1918, the senior military officers of France, Britain, and the United States met at the French General Headquarters at Compiegne. Representing France were Foch and Pétain; Great Britain, Haig and Robertson; and the United States, Pershing.<sup>53</sup> The meeting covered several points, but the two most important ones were the general military situation of the Allies and the use of American forces in France. The observation was made that the German divisions now numbered possibly two hundred and that the coming German assault could easily be far more bloody than the assault at Verdun. Pétain stated that the French army, because of limited manpower, would await the German assault and would remain basically on the defensive. He revealed that the French army had been forced to break up five divisions. Pétain said that the total divisions that might have to be broken up because of manpower shortages could reach twenty before the end of 1918. Almost everyone seemed to agree upon the idea of a counteroffensive to match the German offensive, to which Pétain said, "Nothing without the Americans."

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<sup>52</sup>A.F., VI, 1, Annexes, Part 1: Report of January 20, 1918, U.S.A., II, 165, 166.

<sup>53</sup>Minutes of conference held on January 24, 1918, U.S.A., II, 178-181.

Robertson inquired about the extent of the American cooperation in the French line. Apparently by May the Allies could expect one American army corps of four divisions. Pétain pointed out, however, these divisions would not be ready for combat and that it would be highly desirable to amalgamate these American forces into French divisions. The proposal was to brigade one American regiment in each French division. The regiment would not just be assigned for training; it would be an integral part of a French combat division. This procedure would be followed until the American army was strong enough to assume an independent role.

Pershing opposed this saying that the day would come in which an offensive effort would be required of the American army and then an independent American army would have to be in existence. He further declared his opposition to the amalgamation of the American troops with Allied formations except for training cycles and pointed out the difficult language problems that would be presented by large scale amalgamation with the French army. Pershing once more reiterated that amalgamation with Allied troops for battle would not take place except in a dire emergency. Apparently no more was said of the amalgamation proposals during this particular meeting. What the men at the meeting attempted to say, however, was basically that Allied armies were having severe manpower problems and they were facing the largest German army they had ever faced. American troops were not

arriving in sufficient numbers fast enough to be of assistance to the Allies. Thus, amalgamation was brought forth as a solution to this problem.<sup>54</sup>

The next day, January 25, the British War Cabinet met, and a French report concerning the American army was read. The report concluded that there would be eight divisions in France in March, 1918, fourteen in June, twenty in September, and twenty-eight in January, 1919. However, each of these divisions would require six months training in France before they could hold the line. This meant that there would be only four combat divisions ready by July and eight by October. Now in January only one United States division was ready for battle, and a second division was just entering training. It would only take one-sixth of the time to train these battalions as compared to the time necessary to train divisional formations.<sup>55</sup>

In spite of Pershing's previous agreement to the 150 battalion transportation proposal a problem had developed. At the War Cabinet meeting on January 26, 1918, the issue of the program was further discussed. Robertson had met with Pershing and Bliss, and Pershing was adamant that he would agree to the 150 battalion idea only if the staffs were brought along.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Lloyd George, War Memoirs, V, 417.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 418.



Although President Wilson had approved the 150 battalion plan he did not trust the British in their proposal to furnish shipping for it. Wilson was evidently afraid that the British would give priority to the program and take shipping from the other United States formations that required transportation to Europe. Baker pointed out to Wilson that Pershing had agreed to the plan only if the tonnage allotted for transport of the American army would be increased. The President realized the complex situation and complicated relationships between British shipping tonnage and the American manpower, and he wrote to Baker: "I have one fear about this one hundred and fifty battalion plan. It is that, whatever they may promise now, the British will when it comes to the pinch, in fact cut us out from some of the tonnage they will promise us for our general program in order to make sure of these battalions." Wilson added, ". . .or will promise us less for the general program than they would otherwise have given."<sup>57</sup> The result was that the United States government now basically opposed amalgamation and no consideration would be given to these proposals unless the British were able to provide additional shipping for American troops. Pershing was given further authority to recall American troops that were loaned temporarily to the Allies whenever he felt that it was justified.

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<sup>57</sup>Letter: Wilson to Baker, January 20, 1918. Ray S. Baker Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Box

Although Pershing may not have realized it, this policy strengthened his hand in dealing with the Allies.

Pershing seemed to accept the 150 battalion plan provided that it did not act as a hindrance to the development of an independent United States army in Europe. Bliss, who was the former Chief-of-Staff of the Army and who had arrived in Europe to be the United States Military Representative to the Supreme War Council, was under the impression that Pershing had approved the proposal in principle. Soon after his arrival he conferred with Pershing and found him still opposed to the 150 battalion plan.<sup>58</sup> Pershing stressed to Bliss the absolute necessity of a consolidated American military position when dealing with the Allies. Hereafter, Bliss was very diligent in his efforts to ascertain Pershing's opinion on a matter before expressing his own, and his willingness to defer to Pershing reduced a source of potential conflict.<sup>59</sup>

In private Bliss was not as staunch an opponent of amalgamation as Pershing was, but his loyalty to Pershing was unwavering. He believed that the military situation in France could be greatly relieved by the use of American troops if they could arrive and be used quickly enough. Bliss, in private, was convinced of the need for amalgamation. He felt that the British would be motivated to supply needed shipping

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<sup>58</sup>Cable: Pershing to Bliss, January 13, 1918, U.S.A., III, 17-18.

<sup>59</sup>Pershing, My Experiences, I, 304-305.

if they thought they would receive combat troops in return. This private opinion of Bliss's raised the future possibility of disagreements between him and Pershing as the Allies braced for the expected spring German assault.<sup>60</sup>

Pershing's continuing opposition to the 150 battalion program resulted in inter-Allied negotiations which culminated in the adoption of the six division plan. Britain agreed to transport six complete infantry divisions to Europe on the understanding that they were to be temporarily integrated into the British army for training. The British Prime Minister reluctantly agreed to the new proposals after the realization that neither Pershing or Bliss would agree to the 150 battalion proposal as stated.<sup>61</sup>

The so-called six-division program came before the second session of the Supreme War Council on January 30, 1918. The Supreme War Council was a political organization set up in late 1917 to coordinate the activities of the Allies, and it functioned during the trying times of 1918. The Supreme War Council met about once a month. The heads of governments or their appointed representatives and one other person sat in on the meetings. Until the armistice negotiations in October, the United States was without political representation on the

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<sup>60</sup>Trask, Supreme War Council, p. 77.

<sup>61</sup>Fredrick Palmer, Bliss, Peacemaker: The Life and Letters of General Tasker Howard Bliss (New York, 1934), pp. 221-222; U.S.A., III, 29-34.

Supreme War Council, a procedure that was logical in view of Wilson's policy of non-political alignment.<sup>62</sup>

The major suborganization of the Supreme War Council was the Military Representatives. In theory, but not in actuality, these men were supposed to be independent of their national army commanders. Bliss, the American representative throughout, did an excellent job in a difficult situation, which was not helped by the lack of political representation. The military representatives met frequently and their organization was separate from, and distinctly subordinate to, the regular Supreme War Council, although they were called upon from time to time to participate in the main meetings.<sup>63</sup>

At this meeting of the Supreme War Council on January 30 both Haig and Pétain pleaded for the amalgamation of American troops into their command. During discussion of the six division question Pétain forcefully stated that unless this were done the American army could not make a significant contribution during 1918. Pershing brought forth a compromise solution which had seven elements. First, infantry and auxiliary troops of these six divisions would train with the British. Second, the artillery elements would be trained in the use of French equipment. Third, higher command members and staff officers would be assigned for training and experience

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<sup>62</sup>Trask, Supreme War Council, p. 39.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., pp. 38-46.

in corresponding units in the British army. Fourth, when fully trained, the United States battalions would be reformed into regiments, and that when the artillery was fully trained all the units comprising each division would be united under their own officers for service. Fifth, the above plan would be carried out without interference with the plan then in operation for bringing over American forces. Sixth, the question of supply would be arranged by agreement between the American and British commanders. Seventh, and last, questions of arms and equipment could be settled in a similar manner.<sup>64</sup> Haig specifically concurred with the proposal of the plan to group the trained battalions into regiments and finally into American divisions.<sup>65</sup>

During the third session of the meeting of the Supreme War Council both Haig and Pétain renewed their plea for the amalgamation of United States troops into British and French formations. In the opinion of Haig, the entry of American troops by battalions or regiments into British and French divisions, not only for training but also for fighting, was the most effective way that America could aid the Allied cause. Haig also pointed out the possible saving in tonnage by concentrating on combat forces as opposed to support forces. He emphasized that the suggested amalgamation was only temporary:

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid., pp. 77, 78.

<sup>65</sup>Supreme War Council, minutes of meeting of January 30 and January 31, 1918, U.S.A., II, 185-188.

once the United States Army was an independent force, the amalgamated American units would be returned. Unless this were done Haig said reductions of British divisions would be required, and the war would enter a critical stage.

The Italian delegate to the Supreme War Council, Baron Sonino, twice asked whether the American government would allow small units of each United States division to be amalgamated with the British and French divisions in order to improve the emergency situation. Bliss defended Pershing's stand against amalgamation. His defense of the American plan for an independent American force was sweeping. Bliss pointed out that for the United States to agree before the emergency even existed to amalgamate small units into the British and French divisions would create a difficult situation, and strongly emphasized that the United States was doing everything possible to effect maximum utilization of American manpower. Bliss noted that the day before the British government had agreed to transport six American divisions and have their infantry battalions train with the British army. If an attack took place while these battalions were being trained, they would hardly be withdrawn from the battle to form an independent division. Pétain and Pershing had reached an agreement by which the American divisions would receive their final training in the French line, Bliss added, and said that obviously these divisions would not be withdrawn in the face of a large scale German assault. Bliss summed up

this part of the speech by saying, "if the crisis should come, the American troops will undoubtedly be used in whatever way their services will be most effective, either in defense or offensive with the British and French troops with whom they are at that time serving." Bliss, however, followed this statement with the following declaration: "It is to be clearly understood, however, that this training of American units with British and French divisions, whether behind the lines or in actual combat on the line, is only a stepping stone in the training of the American forces." He concluded, ". . .that whenever it is proper and practicable to do so these units will be formed into American divisions under their own officers." Bliss finished his defense of the American stand by saying that permanent amalgamation of American forces with the British and the French would be intolerable to the American public.<sup>66</sup>

Because of the desperate need for American manpower, the Allies could not afford to antagonize the Americans. Because of this, Bliss described the prevailing mood in Europe at that time: "I doubt if I could make anyone not present at the recent meetings of the Supreme War Council realize the anxiety and fear that prevades the minds of political leaders."<sup>67</sup>

During the summer of 1917 the British and French armies sustained frightful casualties in abortive offensives, and

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Letter: Bliss to Baker, February 2, 1918, cited in Trask, Supreme War Council, p. 79.

to alleviate this, the period from July of 1917 to March of 1918 was marked by a series of amalgamation proposals both at the Supreme War Council and in Washington. These proposals were repeatedly refused by Pershing but Pétain requested, and received, four Negro regiments that were amalgamated into the French army. The amalgamation was successful in a utilitarian sense, but Pershing was unable to get the regiments returned until after the war. Pershing and Pétain had a deep disagreement over the training cycle for the first four American divisions. The British offered to transport 150,000 infantry to France so long as they were sent by battalions. Pershing refused and a compromise settlement which provided for the transportation of six complete divisions was arrived at.



## CHAPTER III

### THE PERSHING--MARCH FEUD

The status of the American Expeditionary Force in relation to Washington was a vexing problem throughout the First World War. The A.E.F. was a military force unprecedented in American experience which contributed to its uncertain status. This uncertainty was personified in the Pershing--March feud. This relationship had two basic reasons for existence: the first was the lack of guidelines concerning command relationships between the Chief-of-Staff in Washington and the Commander-in-Chief of the A.E.F.; the second was the clash of personalities, aggravated by distance and limited communication between Pershing and March.

The United States Army had to be overhauled entirely. Woodrow Wilson's doctrine of "neutral in thought as well as deed" had not allowed realistic military planning for the eventuality of American involvement in the European war. He had little interest and less knowledge about the workings of the military forces and, thus, was strongly inclined to leave matters in Pershing's hands. Consequently, when Pershing was appointed the commander of the American Expeditionary Force in France in 1917, he received no plan of action from Washington. Pershing was sent to France with little more than a vague order to beat the armies of Imperial Germany. He was forced

to organize the army both administratively and tactically from the foundations upward.

An important characteristic of Pershing's personality was his pride. Additionally his occasionally blunt language, and his desire for an independent role for the American Expeditionary Force complicated the situation. President Wilson and Secretary Baker were willing to give Pershing broad powers.<sup>1</sup> In the only wartime meeting between Pershing and Wilson, the President did not mention anything about his desires in regard to the cooperation of the American army with the armies of the Western Allies.<sup>2</sup>

The first four Chiefs-of-Staff of the Army did not exercise their powers and influence in a manner that might have been expected of the senior officer of the United States Army. This posed no significant difficulties for Pershing, however, because he had a very easy and comfortable relationship with these four men. In effect they were Pershing's representatives in Washington rather than Pershing being their representative in France.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Fredrick Palmer, Newton D. Baker: America at War (New York, 1931), I, 150.

<sup>2</sup>John J. Pershing, My Experiences in the World War (New York, 1931), I, 37.

<sup>3</sup>Harvey A. DeWeerd, President Wilson Fights His War (New York, 1968), p. 228.

Peyton C. March was the artillery commander of the A.E.F. under Pershing and had been known in that post as a man of ruthless efficiency and strong opinions.<sup>4</sup> They seem to have had a good relationship in France.<sup>5</sup> In fact, March was offered the post of Chief-of-Staff of the army in the fall of 1917, and he told Pershing that he did not want it. On Pershing's recommendation, therefore, he was passed over for that post.<sup>6</sup>

On January 26, 1918, March was assigned as Chief-of-Staff of the Army and arrived in Washington on March 4, 1918, to take over the position from Major General John Biddle.<sup>7</sup> Biddle's actions for the three and a half months that he had held the post had been unimpressive. They seemed to indicate that he thought his position was temporary and therefore he had postponed many decisions. Even though there was a war in France, Biddle had kept peacetime business hours. Generally he left the office by around 5 o'clock in the afternoon, the few times that he returned in the evening it was because a special cable had arrived requiring his attention. Not only had he failed to keep a rigorous schedule for himself, but

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<sup>4</sup>Palmer, Baker, II, 155-158.

<sup>5</sup>Edward M. Coffman, Hilt of the Sword (Madison, 1966), p. 48.

<sup>6</sup>Peyton C. March, Nation at War (New York, 1932), p. 35.

<sup>7</sup>Coffman, Hilt of the Sword, p. 54, March, Nation at War, p. 40.

he also failed to require a rational wartime schedule of his subordinates. An example of this came when March went to the department after dark and found one single duty officer in the code room and the corridors stacked with unopened official mail.<sup>8</sup>

Pershing thought he had sufficient authority for his role as Commander-in-Chief of the A.E.F., and he felt that the role possessed a special relationship to the President and the Secretary of War. Because of complete lack of planning and guidance which Pershing had inherited with his appointment as Commander of the A.E.F., he developed an independent frame of mind. Therefore, after March's appointment, Pershing was unable to feel particularly comfortable while working with a strong Chief-of-Staff in Washington who wished to work as the coordinator of the entire military program, not just for the A.E.F. Pershing wrote in defense of his role, "in the absence of any preparation for war beforehand, the principle can hardly be questioned that the Commander at the front and not the staff departments in Washington should decide on what he needs." Pershing continued: "The employment of our armies in Europe had been fully covered by general instructions and there were no problems of strategy or questions concerning operations that devolved upon the war department staff. These were matters for the Commander-in-Chief for the A.E.F. to determine." In this same passage, Pershing hinted that his

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<sup>8</sup>March, Nation at War, pp. 39-40.

view of the role of the Chief-of-Staff might have been different if some guidance had been available upon his appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the A.E.F. That is, if he had not been forced to create and organize virtually every detail that pertained to the A.E.F., Pershing's attitude might have been different.<sup>9</sup>

A Chief-of-Staff, by definition, should be the senior army officer by position, if not by rank. Pershing, however, partly because of the weak role played by the previous Chiefs-of-Staff, and partly because of his desire for an independent role in France, did not recognize March as the professional head of the army and principal military advisor to the Secretary of War. Pershing apparently thought of the Chief-of-Staff in Washington as an assistant to the Chief-of-Staff of the A.E.F. In his view the position of Chief-of-Staff was to coordinate and expedite the requests of the A.E.F. However, March had a different view of the position of Chief-of-Staff. March felt that the President as Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces exercised his power first through the Secretary of War, and then through the Chief-of-Staff to the various army commanders. March's clarity of vision was accurate because in spite of the fighting in France, the bulk of the army remained in the United States. However, so long as France was the military theater where American troops were

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<sup>9</sup>Pershing, My Experiences, I, 319.

active, something might be said for a special relationship between the theater commander and the Commander-in-Chief. This relationship would become far more cumbersome when the war became a multi-theater conflict. For example, the weakness of Pershing's idea was demonstrated when the United States embarked upon the intervention in Russia.<sup>10</sup>

The first point of friction in the March--Pershing feud and the spark which ignited the controversy was promotion policy. March requested from Pershing on March 27, 1918, a list of recommendations for promotion to brigadier general and major general. Pershing sent the required list with ten nominations for major general and seventeen for brigadier general, and he also added four additional men to the brigadier general list. The four additions were all in the staff corps. When Pershing received the final list of recommendations from Washington the list contained only three of his nominations to major general and about half of the brigadier generals were men that Pershing had not nominated. Pershing cabled his disapproval to Washington and asked that the confirmation of these promotions be held until he was able to respond with a revised list.<sup>11</sup>

March's abrupt retort to this cable indicated the conflict these men were to face throughout the rest of the war. His

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<sup>10</sup>DeWeerd, Wilson, pp. 228-229.

<sup>11</sup>Palmer, Baker, II, 208-209; Coffman, Hilt of the Sword, pp. 58-59.

response indicated that as Chief-of-Staff he commanded the bulk of the army and Pershing commanded only one element of that army. March further declared that within the limited sphere of Pershing's command his suggestions were "especially valuable", and that he regarded the suggestions from Pershing as he regarded suggestions from any of the subordinate commanders. March then trod heavily upon the toes of Pershing by saying "there will be no change in the list of nominations already sent to the Senate."<sup>12</sup> At this time March was a major general and Pershing was a full general.

A similar situation regarding promotion of officers within the A.E.F. arose on July 6, 1918. Pershing had recommended promotion for four of his ablest colonels, but March failed to heed Pershing's recommendation.<sup>13</sup> Apparently, March was attempting to strike a balance with promotions of officers serving in the A.E.F. and those in the rest of the army, and so he refused to promote Colonel Paul B. Malone. This action caused Pershing to write in his diary that March's promotion policy would not bear a good investigation.<sup>14</sup> Baker was aware of this area of contention between Pershing and March and to solve it he intended to work out an army-wide promotional

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<sup>12</sup>Cable: March to Pershing, April 24, 1918, United States Army in the World War (Washington, 1948), II, 342. This work will be cited hereafter as U.S.A. See Palmer, Baker, II, 209, which gives a very good discussion of the episode, and Coffman, Hilt of the Sword, p. 110.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Pershing Diary, August 22, 1918. Pershing Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Box 4-5.

policy, but the war ended before it could be carried out.<sup>15</sup>

During March's first month as Chief-of-Staff a Congressman suggested that staff officers on duty in Washington be required to wear a white band on their sleeves. March reacted by calling for an investigation to determine the number of newly commissioned officers who had been posted directly to duty in Washington D.C. March, as a seasoned soldier, protested adamantly against a delineation between staff and field officers. The staff officers themselves agitated for posting to the combat units in France, perhaps in reaction to public sentiment. For the professional, it was virtually a career requirement to go to France, and March realized the necessity for professionals to serve in France. He stated, "It is a tragedy in the lives of many of them, that most civilians do not remotely comprehend."<sup>16</sup> The tragedy was the inability of the professional officers to gain actual combat experience in France.

Both the A.E.F. and the War Department had great need of trained staff officers. Therefore, those staff officers assigned to duty in Washington had little chance of ever being assigned to the A.E.F. in France. General March attempted to eliminate this problem and at the same time coordinate the

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<sup>15</sup>DeWeerd, Wilson, p. 229; Pershing Diary, August 22, 1918, Pershing Papers, Box 4-5.

<sup>16</sup>Palmer, Baker, II, 210.



War Department and the A.E.F. He cabled his idea for solving this problem to Pershing on March 14, 1918.<sup>17</sup> In this cable, he alluded to the apparent lack of proper coordination between the A.E.F. and Washington, and he proposed a plan to interchange staff officers between Washington and the A.E.F. March suggested the interchange of thirty officers from Washington for thirty officers from the A.E.F. The plan, as envisioned, would eventually involve a complete exchange between Washington and France and thus insuring a greater degree of understanding and cooperation as well as experience in France for effective staff officers. His plan called for rotation that would send the most experienced field officers back to Washington and the more informed Washington staff officers to France. March earnestly hoped that the staff officers then serving in Washington would be given a chance for active service in the field rather than being punished for "good work" by being kept in Washington for the duration of the war.<sup>18</sup>

The plan to rotate staff officers was to raise yet another specter of conflict between March and Pershing. General Harbord, Pershing's Chief-of-Staff, suspected the scheme from the very start. He believed that the plan derived from March's personal ambition, and he described the plan to Pershing negatively. In Harbord's opinion, the plan was

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<sup>17</sup>Cable: Adjutant General's Office to Pershing, U.S.A., II, 239.

<sup>18</sup>Coffman, Hilt of the Sword, p. 60-61.

selfish, inconsiderate, and short-sighted regarding the task that faced Pershing in France.<sup>19</sup> Pershing was an experienced enough soldier to see the value in the plan, but he was not able to carry out the scheme because he simply did not have the trained officers to spare.

Pershing did, however, recommend to March that staff officers from Washington be transferred to the staff of the A.E.F. March communicated with Pershing and was very careful to explain that in no way did he mean to prejudice the efforts of the A.E.F. and that any officers recommended by Pershing or the general staff would be acceptable to March. At this Pershing consented and in May a group of thirty A.E.F. officers were ordered to the War Department. However, only three of them were considered fit for General Staff duties by a War Department board.<sup>20</sup> After this fiasco, the exchange continued in a half-hearted manner, and the plan was never fully consummated. The failure of this plan doomed any hopes that staff officers in Washington had of ever seeing duty in France during the war.

In July 1918 another source of friction developed between March and Pershing because of the attempt to reform the

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<sup>19</sup>Letter: Harbord to Pershing, March 16, 1918, James G. Harbord Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Pershing-Harbord Correspondence, 1917-1922.

<sup>20</sup>Coffman, Hilt of the Sword, p. 61.

Service of Supply of the A.E.F.<sup>21</sup> The background of this situation was the serious logistical problem that faced the A.E.F. in France. By the early summer of 1918 it was clear that the men and supplies coming through the French ports were not being handled well and it appeared that a stronger and more centralized organization was needed to handle the supply system for the A.E.F.<sup>22</sup> The Commander of the Services of Supply was Major General Francis J. Kernan. Kernan was an able officer, but he lacked the forceful personality that seemed to be necessary for the successful handling of this particular assignment. This shortcoming was recognized both by Pershing and by Washington.<sup>23</sup> In late May 1918, Sir William Wiseman, chief of British Intelligence in the United States, and the British ambassador, Lord Reading, talked with Wilson's unofficial advisor and intimate friend, Colonel Edward M. House, about the problem of Pershing assuming too much personal responsibility over the A.E.F.<sup>24</sup> Lord Reading then candidly advised House that it would be a mistake to heed the advice of Lloyd George, who had suggested the

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<sup>21</sup>James G. Harbord, The American Army (Boston, 1936), p. 351.

<sup>22</sup>Cable: Pershing to Baker, July 27, 1918, U.S.A., II, 553.

<sup>23</sup>James G. Harbord, Leaves From a War Diary (New York, 1925), p. 349.

<sup>24</sup>Interview: Coffman with Sir William Wiseman, December 14, 1960, cited in Coffman, Hilt of the Sword, p. 105.

appointing of an American civilian with overall powers in France. Lord Reading admitted that Lloyd George was interested in someone to either circumvent or control Pershing.<sup>25</sup> Colonel House came from the conference convinced that Pershing was burdened with too much personal responsibility. Prior to Lloyd George's suggestion, House had talked to Pershing about the load which he, Pershing, was carrying.<sup>26</sup> He wrote to Wilson on June 3, 1918: "What I have in mind to suggest to you is that Pershing be relieved from all responsibility except the training and fighting of our troops. All his requirements for equipping and maintaining these troops should be on other shoulders."<sup>27</sup> Whereupon, Wilson sent House's letter to Baker and March for action. On July 6, 1918, Baker asked for Pershing's reaction to three suggestions: his first suggestion was that Pershing be relieved of full responsibility in the handling of the A.E.F. supply problem. His second was the Major General George Goethals, famed for his administration of the Panama Canal Zone, take over supply responsibilities in a coordinate rather than a subordinate position to Pershing. And his third was that Vance McCormack

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<sup>25</sup>Charles Seymour, The Intimate Papers of Colonel House (Boston, 1928), III, 447-448.

<sup>26</sup>Letter: House to Wilson, May 20, 1918, Edward M. House Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, Drawer 119, Folder 129, cited in Coffman, Hilt of the Sword, p. 105.

<sup>27</sup>Harbord, American Army, pp. 354-355; March, Nation at War, pp. 193-197.

relieve Pershing of diplomatic and logistical responsibilities.<sup>28</sup>

When Baker's letter making these suggestions reached France, Pershing was furious. He immediately appointed Harbord, commanding the Second Division at that time, to be the Chief of Services and Supply. Harbord suspected the letter to be yet another installment of the plot by March to weaken the power of Pershing in France. He did not accuse Baker of being in on this plot to unseat Pershing. In fact, Harbord said that the letter from Baker was a fine and upright letter. What Harbord did suspect was that the idea behind the letter was supplied by March.<sup>29</sup>

Pershing cabled an urgent message to the War Department in which he said that any division of responsibility within the A.E.F. or any coordinate control would be fatal. He further promised that Harbord would soon have the services of supply functioning in a smooth, efficient manner. Pershing declined the services of Vance McCormack on the grounds that Bliss, the Military Representative to the Supreme War Council, could handle the diplomatic work. Harbord, for his part, observed that Pershing did not need any help in the diplo-

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<sup>28</sup>Coffman, Hilt of the Sword, p. 106.

<sup>29</sup>Harbord, American Army, p. 35.

matic field, "because Pershing was one of the most successful diplomats of the World War."<sup>30</sup>

Within a few days after Pershing had received Baker's letter proposing the changes in the administration of the A.E.F., Pershing sent a confidential message to Baker in which he complained of the curt tone of March's cable. In this cable Pershing also suggested that his promotion lists were not being forwarded properly by March because of personal animosity on the part of March against the officers involved.<sup>31</sup>

Although Pershing did not implement the changes as proposed by March in the administration of the A.E.F., the desired results were accomplished in a different manner. Under the forceful Harbord, the Services of Supply were reorganized. Pershing was relieved of much of the diplomatic burden. Bliss, the former Chief-of-Staff of the Army was detailed to handle the diplomatic duties at the Supreme War Council. These changes left Pershing less encumbered in his direction of the actual operation of the war, and he was able to spend less time with administrative matters. While the results of March's suggestions were beneficial, Pershing was irritated by March's role in the proposals.<sup>32</sup> In spite of the good results which came from the changes implemented by

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 344.

<sup>31</sup>Letter: Pershing to Baker, July 28, 1918, Pershing Papers, Box 19.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

Baker's letter, both Pershing and Harbord blamed March for the attempt to put Goethals into a position of coordinate authority with Pershing.<sup>33</sup> Pershing's opinion was that, "The officer or the group of officers who proposed such a scheme to the secretary could not have had the success of the high command in France very deeply at heart or else they lacked understanding of the basic principles of organization."<sup>34</sup>

Harbord was even more harsh in his criticism of the proposals. He said that the authors of those proposals did not have the best interests of the A.E.F. at heart.<sup>35</sup> Although Harbord continued to suspect that the proposals were basically the work of March, he wrote Pershing on September 23, 1918, that the idea of sending Goethals to France with coordinate authority was Baker's own idea and was agreed to by March.<sup>36</sup>

There was yet another factor which contributed greatly to the clash between March and Pershing. There was an unconfirmed rumor in France that March had designs on Pershing's job as commander of the A.E.F. Evidently this was one of the reasons why Pershing's objections to Goethals' suggested position in France were so strong. General Leonard Wood,

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<sup>33</sup>Pershing, My Experiences, II, 187-191.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 181.

<sup>35</sup>Letter: Harbord to Pershing, September 23, 1918, Pershing Papers, Box 87.

<sup>36</sup>Harbord, American Army, p. 344.

now the head of the Western Division of the United States Army, heard in late September of 1918 that there was considerable friction between Pershing and March and that March hoped to relieve Pershing.<sup>37</sup> The story spread to France where the validity was widely accepted. When Goethals heard of the story and of his alleged part in the plot to unseat Pershing, he disclaimed any knowledge of the proposed changes.<sup>38</sup> And March himself, when he was presented with the story said, "there was never any consideration given to the question of a successor of General Pershing during my entire tour of Chief-of-Staff of the Army as far as I am aware."<sup>39</sup> This is probably true, especially when the personalities and policies of Baker and Wilson are considered.

There were two attempts on the part of the Allies to have Pershing replaced as Commander of the A.E.F. Neither of these attempts reached the War Department. In June 1918, Jan Christian Smuts of South Africa recommended that he, Jan Smuts, be given command of the combat elements of the A.E.F. and that Pershing be put in charge of the logistical

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<sup>37</sup>Leonard Wood Diary, September 30, 1918, Leonard Wood Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Box 11.

<sup>38</sup>Letter: Goethals to his Son, August 25, 1918, George Goethals Papers, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress, Box 2.

<sup>39</sup>March, Nation at War, p. 261; Palmer, Baker, II, 369.



command. Lloyd George promptly stifled this suggestion.<sup>40</sup>

In October 1918, Clemenceau became impatient with Pershing and sought Foch's aid in sending a letter to Washington asking for Pershing's replacement. Foch refused to bend to the desires of Clemenceau and the war was over before Clemenceau took further action.<sup>41</sup>

One of the best personal assessments of the Pershing-March affair was made by Douglas MacArthur. MacArthur, at that time a Brigadier General, and later a personal friend of both Pershing and March, thought that much of the controversy was caused by the fact that Pershing's staff had poisoned his mind toward March. MacArthur concluded: "I am convinced that there would have been no trouble between Pershing and March if they could have conferred."<sup>42</sup>

Many of the differences between Pershing and March were still unsolved when the armistice was signed. However, while the correspondence between the two men reveals disagreement throughout, the tone remained friendly. The two men both

<sup>40</sup>William Keith Hancock, Smuts, The Sanguine Years (London, 1962), pp. 482-485. The offer was not made public until 1954. The offer was made in a letter from Smuts to Lloyd George on June 8, 1918, cited in Frank Owen, Tempestuous Journey (Hutchinson, 1954), pp. 476-477.

<sup>41</sup>Ferdinand Foch, The Memoirs of Marshal Foch, Translated by T. Bentley Mott (New York, 1931), pp. 434-436; Georges Clemenceau, Grandeur and Misery of Victory (New York, 1930), pp. 81-85.

<sup>42</sup>Edward M. Coffman, The War to End All Wars (New York, 1968), p. 186.

possessed extremely strong personalities and they were both installed in positions which had no precedent in the history of the United States. Combined with the tension, the crisis, and the responsibilities of war and the tradition of long-standing conflict between field commanders and staff officers, friction was an inevitable result.<sup>43</sup>

Pershing, as Commander-in-Chief of A.E.F., had initially received an unstructured appointment, that is, an appointment with neither definition nor limit. His relationship with the first four Chiefs-of-Staff of the Army were amiable and without friction. All of them tended to act as Pershing's subordinates, not his superiors. Pershing believed that he had a special relationship with the President. When March became Chief-of-Staff in March 1918, the relationship began to change. March assumed that he was the senior officer in the army and thus would exercise some control over Pershing. The war ended before the arguments over spheres of responsibility could be settled.

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<sup>43</sup>Coffman, Hilt of the Sword, p. 118.

## CHAPTER IV

### PERSHING'S STAND VICTORIOUS

On March 21, 1918, the long expected German offensive struck the British Fifth Army in Flanders. When the Allied leaders realized the magnitude of the assault they returned to the amalgamation proposals with increased vigor.

On March 26, 1918, General Ferdinand Foch was designated as Allied Generalissimo by the Doullens agreement.<sup>1</sup> The agreement read:

General Foch is charged by the British and French Governments with coordinating the actions of the Allied Armies on the Western Front. He will reach an understanding to this effect with the commanders-in-chief, who are invited to furnish him with all the necessary information.

This initial agreement was clarified and expanded on April 3, 1918, by the Beauvais agreement. In this revised agreement the American government was made a direct party to the arrangement. Foch was entrusted with the "strategic direction of military operations." According to the Doullens agreement, each national commander had "full control of the tactical employment of their forces" as well as the right of appeal to the respective governmental heads.<sup>2</sup> The German offensive had

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<sup>1</sup>Lord Maurice Hankey, The Supreme Command (London, 1961), II, 791; Ferdinand Foch, The Memoirs of Marshall Foch, translated by T. Bentley Nott (Garden City, 1931), p. 264; U.S. Army Historical Division, U.S. Army in the World War, 1917-1919 (Washington, 1948), II, 254. This work will be cited hereafter as U.S.A.

<sup>2</sup>Hankey, Supreme Command, II, 792. Foch, Memoirs, p. 276.

forced the allies to adopt, for the first time, a unified military command.

On March 27, 1918, the Supreme War Council met at Versailles.<sup>3</sup> At this meeting, General Giardino, the Italian Military Representative, returned to a proposal presented two days earlier by General Sir Henry Rawlinson, the British Military Representative. The essence of the subject that Giardino brought up was the usage and cooperation of American forces in the Allied forces.

Pershing spoke to the group and referred to the previous agreement. The agreement provided for the transporting to Europe of six United States divisions by the British. Once these divisions were in Europe they were to be assigned to the British Army for training.

At this meeting on March 27, Pershing expressed a desire to help the Allies, but he was unwilling to commit himself to large scale infantry reinforcements for either the French or the British. He pointed out that if he agreed to supply large numbers of infantry both to the French and the British Armies, the United States, in effect would be giving up any hope of becoming an independent force. The United States would become merely a source of manpower to keep British and French divisions at full strength, Pershing claimed, and he said that such a course would be unwise for either the Americans or the Allies. A better procedure might be for the Allies to consolidate their weaker divisions, which would

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<sup>3</sup>Supreme War Council Meeting, Minutes of March 27, 1918, Military Representatives, U. S. A., II, 255-257.

mean a reduction in the number of divisions the Allies were keeping in the line. Then as the American divisions became battle ready they could replace British and French formations.

In view of the large numbers of British casualties Pershing did agree to allow the infantry of the six divisions being transported by the British and which were to be trained by the British, to come under British control on the condition that these units be returned to American control when requested. Because of the present emergency Pershing urged that the transportation of the infantry of American divisions slated to be trained with the British army be given priority.

Giardino noted that Pershing's proposals apparently only referred to the six division plan, and he asked whether the United States would furnish replacements to Italy if the German assault exhausted the number of Italian effectives. Pershing evaded the question and circumvented Giardino by stating that the discussion was only about the present emergency and the question of United States troops for Italy could only be settled by the United States government.

Pershing then attempted to clear up the confusion about American reinforcements for the Allies. He pointed out that he had agreed to the proposal that the British transport six divisions and then train the infantry - the artillery and auxiliary services were to follow later. Pershing said

that because of the present emergency he proposed that the infantry of these six divisions be transported first. He noted that this procedure had been regularly followed with divisions assigned to the trenches for training. Pershing pointed out that if the divisions were assigned to the Allied armies for training and were involved in a fight they would, of course, participate and noted that Pertain, the commander of the French army, was satisfied with the agreement. Pershing emphasized that reinforcement of the British and French divisions by drafts of American troops had not been contemplated.

Giardino took up his point once again. The United States, he said, was committed to transporting two complete divisions per month, but if they transported infantry only, and not the service formations, they could in fact transport the infantry of approximately four divisions each month. If the United States sent only infantry the Allies would receive more effective help sooner. Rawlinson concurred with Giardino and pointed out that the decisive battle was apparently being fought at the present time. Rawlinson renewed his request that infantry and machine gun units be given priority, adding that the British and the French armies each required the infantry of approximately six divisions.

Pershing reiterated his proposal to bring over first the infantry of the six divisions and allocate them to the British for training, thus aiding the British during the

present emergency. He said that the French and American armies had worked out an arrangement regarding the training and transportation of American troops that was satisfactory both to Petain and him. He closed his statement by saying that he did not think it was necessary to make a radical change at the present time. Pershing then left the meeting.<sup>4</sup>

After Pershing left the meeting, the United States Military Representative showed a rare display of anger and disagreement with Pershing.<sup>5</sup> Bliss made the statement, "General Pershing expressed only his personal opinion and that it is the military representatives who must make a decision."<sup>6</sup>

In spite of the six division agreement, the British government was desirous of obtaining additional prompt American reinforcements. Therefore, Lloyd George sought to affect the opinion of Wilson and the American public. He cabled Lord Reading, the British Ambassador in the United States, on March 27, 1918, stating in the strongest possible terms the necessity of bringing timely American reinforcements across the Atlantic.<sup>7</sup> Lord Reading answered Lloyd George on the same day with an analysis of public opinion

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>David Trask, The United States and the Supreme War Council (Middletown, 1961), p. 81.

<sup>6</sup>U.S.A., II, 257.

<sup>7</sup>David Lloyd George, War Memoirs of David Lloyd George (Boston, 1937), V, 257.

in the United States and the effect of the renewed German offensive. The most important statement in the message was Lord Reading's opinion that the United States now finally realized that Germany could only be beaten in the field. Lord Reading felt that public opinion in the United States had lost faith in the possibility of a negotiated peace with Germany. Lloyd George had attributed the United States's faith in the possibility of a negotiated peace as the main factor leading to the lethargic military preparations in the United States.<sup>8</sup>

The Military Representatives to the Supreme War Council at the meeting of March 17, 1918, issued Joint Note Number 18, on the subject of American reinforcements for the Western Front. The representatives said that the security of France could be assured only by taking the three steps during 1918. First, the Allies must maintain the strength of the British and the French troops in France and provide for American reinforcements arriving at the rate of not less than two divisions per month. Second, they must request the American government to assist the Allied armies by permitting temporary service of American units in Allied army corps and divisions. These reinforcements, however, had to be obtained from units other than those American divisions presently serving the French army. Third, until otherwise directed by the

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 426, 427.



Supreme War Council, only American infantry and machine gun units should be transported to France.<sup>9</sup>

The War Cabinet of Great Britain at its meeting of March 27, 1918, discussed the assistance that United States troops in France would provide. One of Rawlinson's reports was read in which Rawlinson said that Pershing would not agree to put American battalions in British divisions because of his desire for an independent American army. However, Pershing did agree to send American engineers to the front and to put American divisions into the line in defensive areas of the French factors, thus freeing French divisions to aid the British.<sup>10</sup>

At the same meeting, Lord Milner discussed several items that had been covered with Pershing. The first item was a request for American divisions to relieve several French divisions which could, then support British army in the field, the second item was that only American infantry should be shipped to France from the United States; and the third item was that American engineering troops, which were not actively employed making fortifications for the

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<sup>9</sup>Military Representatives of the Supreme War Council, Joint Note 18, U.S.A., II, 257, 258.

<sup>10</sup>War Cabinet 374, March 27, 1918, CAB 23/5, Public Record Office, London, England (Microfilm). Extract from minutes of War Cabinet 374 of March 27, 1918, U.S.A. II 258, 259.

American army, should be transferred behind the Allied front to help with the construction of secondary defensive works.<sup>11</sup>

The United States's answer was not long in formation. Bliss cabled the President on March 28, 1918, with the recommendations of Baker, who was in Europe on an inspection tour, in regard to Joint Note 18. Baker recognized the common problems involved, admitted the critical state of the Allied armies in the face of the "Ludendorff Offensives", and pointed out the desire for an independent American army. Baker recommended that Joint Note 18 be approved with the following assessments. The goal of the American government was to render full cooperation therefore, the preferential transportation of American infantry and machine gun units was vital. Such units would be under the direction of the commander of the A.E.F., and would be assigned by him for training and employment. The commander of the A.E.F. would use these and all military forces of the United States under his command in such manner as to render the greatest military assistance. In closing, Baker reaffirmed to Wilson that the United States was determined to have its various military units collected as speedily as the military situation and the state of their training would permit.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Telephone message, Lloyd George to Lord Milner March 27, 1918, U.S.A., II, 259.

<sup>12</sup>Cable: Baker to Wilson, March 28, 1918, U.S.A., II, 261, 262.

The "Ludendorff offensives" continued unabated, and Pershing met with Pétain, Clemenceau, and Foch. At this meeting on March 28, 1918, Pershing said, "I came to tell you that the American people would consider it a great honor that our troops should be engaged in the present battle. I ask this of you in my name and theirs. There is no question at this moment except fighting. Infantry, artillery, aviation, and all we have is yours." Pershing continued, "Do with it as you choose. Other forces are coming as numerous as shall be necessary." Pershing closed his statement by saying, "I am here for the express purpose of telling you that the Americans will be proud to be engaged in the greatest battle of history".<sup>13</sup> This statement was evidently for morale purposes rather than military because there was little change in Pershing's operations.

On March 29, 1918, March answered Bliss's cable of March 28 to the President and said that the President concurred with the Joint Note 18 issued by the Military Representatives. March told Bliss that he, Bliss, was authorized to decide questions about immediate cooperation or replacement.<sup>14</sup> This cable was followed by a second cable on March 30, 1918, from the War Department to the American section of the Supreme War Council at Versailles, which

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<sup>13</sup>Verbal statement from Pershing to Foch on March 28, 1918, as recorded in G.H.Q., A.E.F., War Diary, Book II: page 446, U.S.A., II, 262.

<sup>14</sup>Cable: March to Pershing, March 29, 1918, U.S.A., II, 264.

said that preferential treatment would be given to the transportation to American infantry and machine gun units in the present emergency.<sup>15</sup>

Pershing disagreed with and did not accept the previous proposal put forth by the Military Representatives of the Supreme War Council even when the divisions were in a training status. Because of Pershing's objection, Baker cabled Wilson urging that the arrangement as recommended by the Supreme War Council be regarded as temporary. Baker further recommended that Pershing's control over American infantry and machine gunners under this arrangement be restated.<sup>16</sup>

President Wilson cabled on March 30, 1918, that Baker and Pershing were to regard themselves as authorized to decide upon the questions involving cooperation, replacement, and amalgamation.<sup>17</sup> In short, Wilson left the control of American troops in the hands of Pershing.

During this period of time both the British and the French returned to the tactic of putting pressure upon the President in an attempt to secure a more sympathetic response. Lord Reading cabled London on April 5, 1918, about a meeting which he had with Wilson.<sup>18</sup> Reading said, "I found President

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<sup>15</sup>Cable: War Department to American Section, Supreme War Council, Versailles, March 39, 1918, U.S.A., II, 265.

<sup>16</sup>John J. Pershing, My Experiences in the World War (New York, 1931), I, 30.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 366.

<sup>18</sup>Cable: Reading to Lloyd George, April 10, 1918, U.S.A., II, 313, 314.

Wilson rather disinclined to answer specific points although he was emphatic in his assurances to me that whatever it was possible for him to do to help the Allies in the present situation would assuredly be done but that he had to consult his military advisors and be guided by them as to details." Wilson was reluctant to make decisions until he had conferred with Baker or Pershing, Reading noted, and Baker was on the high seas returning from his inspection tour to Europe at that time. The British Ambassador expected that Wilson's military advisors would object to the brigading of infantrymen and machine gun units with the British units. He said that the reason for the expected objections was because they feared retarding the formation of an independent American army in Europe. In spite of this view, Lord Reading felt confident that the President would concur in the British position. He closed his cable by saying that no word should leak out about his conversation with Wilson because of possible misapprehensions in Pershing's mind. Reading meant that Pershing might resent the British attempt to influence the President behind his back.

On April 20, 1918, Bliss wrote to March and said that the most urgent request from the Allies was for men. Bliss felt that the most effective way for the United States to bring American manpower to bear was to send over infantry and machine gun units for an indefinite period of time. They could be formed into brigades and soon would form the

complete infantry complement of a large number of British and French divisions. The brigade commanders thus given experience, would furnish the division commanders for later American divisions. Bliss seemed to think that, if another campaign followed, an independent American army could emerge from the units that had served with the British and French, and he said that if the present campaign were not followed by another campaign, "We will have avoided the horrible conclusion of having the war end without our having taken an effective part in it."<sup>19</sup>

On April 21, 1918, Lord Reading cabled Lloyd George about transportation priority of American infantry and machine gun units as well as his talks with Baker and Wilson. Baker, after consultation with Wilson, sent a memorandum to Lord Reading concerning transportation of infantry and machine gun units. The essence of the memorandum was that the United States would continue to supply throughout the months of April, May, June, and July infantry and machine gun personnel to be transported by American and British ships. The number of troops allocated per month would be approximately 120,000. These troops, under the command and control of Pershing, would be assigned by him for training and use with either British, French, or American divisions. The memorandum contained the phrase: "It being understood

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<sup>19</sup>Letter: Bliss to March, April 20, 1918, U.S.A., II, 313, 314.

that this program to the extent that it is complete American divisions is made in view to the exigencies of the present military situation." He continued: "It is made in order to bring into useful cooperation with allies at the earliest possible moment largest numbers of American personnel in the military armament needed by the Allies." Baker stated that the United States government would be free to depart from this agreement when the present emergency was over. The statement further pointed out that preferential treatment of infantry and machine gun units was not so restrictive that the United States would not feel free to carry auxiliary troops in United States flag vessels from time to time when deemed necessary by the United States government.<sup>20</sup> In short, the pleas by Lord Reading and Lloyd George had fallen upon sympathetic ears in Washington, and the United States government was apparently beginning to heed Allied requests for amalgamation of United States troops into the Allied armies.

On April 20, Foch submitted a three part report to his government on the status of the American army in France.<sup>21</sup> The first section dealt with the existing available forces in France, and the second section enumerated the arrival schedule of American divisions in France. The final section dealt with measures to increase the percentage of infantry

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<sup>20</sup>Cable: Reading to Lloyd George, April 21, 1918, U.S.A., II, 336, 337.

<sup>21</sup>Les Armées Françaises, Tome VI, Part. 2, Annexes 1st Vol.: Memorandum of April 21, 1918, U.S.A., II, 337-339.

transported to France. This report said that on April 1, 1918, there were 350,000 Americans in France and of that number 131,000 were combatant troops. If the American shipping schedule was followed, that is, infantry and then artillery and auxiliary services, only 14,000 additional infantry during the months of April, May and June would be available to the Allied armies. "These results taken in the light of the momentous crisis in numerical strength which the Allied armies face", Foch continued, "are too ineffctive for words."

Foch stated that the British army had recently lost 220,000 men and lacked the resources to rebuild nine of its divisions. The men who could be alloted to the British army under the American plan, by shipping complete divisions, would amount to approximately 70,000 infantry. Foch's report contained the suggestion that the order of shipments be changed for three months. That if during these three months priority were given to infantry and machine gun units, Foch calculated, that 300,000 to 350,000 infantry could be transported, which would allow 150,000 to 175,000 infantry each to the British and the French armies. These troops, Foch declared, were needed if the battle was to be won by the Allies. Foch then stated, "However, General Pershing, his mind set on commanding a large American army as soon as possible, without thoroughly examining present necessities and wishing to have fully constituted divisions, urges that artillery and services of each



group of three divisions shipped as soon as the infantry is transported."

Foch summed up his report and attempted to end any doubts concerning Allied manpower needs by stating that the American government should be informed of the Allied needs and how the problem might be solved. He then stated, "That these measures will not interfere with the autonomy of the American army in the future, but would only retard its realization." The report closed, Therefore, it is expedient that the American Government be requested at once that during the coming three months there be transported to France in British as well as American bottoms only infantry and machine gun units." In this report Foch emphasized the Allied army's need to enlist the aid of the French government to persuade the American government and Pershing to agree to at least temporary amalgamation for the period of the crisis.<sup>22</sup>

During the same period of time Pershing was attempting to work out a transportation priority arrangement with the British government. Upon his arrival in London, Pershing became aware of the Baker Memorandum of April 21. This memorandum was a direct result of the persistent effort of Lord Reading in Washington. The agreement provided for transportation of about 120,000 American troops per month to Europe for an indefinite period of time, and the American

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

commander retained the right to withdraw these troops at his discretion. The British government readily agreed to this, but Pershing entered into negotiation with the British government in an attempt to formulate an agreement that would be more acceptable to him. The new agreement, the Pershing-Milner agreement, that Pershing negotiated provided for temporary amalgamation of combat elements of six American divisions during May, 1918, for training purposes only. The agreement further provided that if the British were willing to furnish additional ships for troop transportation, the troops shipped would be specified by the United States. The agreement emphasized "the desirability of our organizing American units as such and uniting them into an American army at the earliest possible date."<sup>23</sup> Once more Pershing had managed to alter events to suit his wishes.

Pershing conferred with Foch on April 25, 1918.<sup>24</sup> During the entire conference, interchange between Foch and Pershing centered around extending the Pershing-Milner agreement to June and July. The Pershing-Milner agreement was an exclusive transportation arrangement involving the shipping of United States infantry formations. The Allied Commander-in-Chief during this conference paid lip service to the fact that he

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<sup>23</sup>Cable: Pershing to Baker and March, April 24, 1918, U.S.A., II, 342-344.

<sup>24</sup>Report of conversation between Foch and Pershing, April 25, 1918, U.S.A., II, 348-350; Pershing, My Experiences, II, 10-13.

wanted an American army in the field in France. In his words, "He wanted to see an American army - as soon as possible, as large as possible, as well instructed as possible - taking its place on the Allied front." He further stated "but that if we did not take steps to prevent the disaster which is threatened at present the American army may arrive in France to find the British pushed into the sea and the French back of the Loire, while they try in vain to organize on lost battlefields over the tombs of Allied soldiers." He concluded his statement: "We must look to the present needs, without considering propositions agreed to before we became engaged in present struggle."

Pershing answered that he favored bringing over American troops as rapidly as possible and placing these troops with both the British and French for a period of training, and said that during this period of training the American troops would follow into combat if necessary the troops with whom they were serving. He then declared, "We must foresee and prepare an American army fighting as such under American commanders."

Pershing finally extracted from Foch his plan for the employment of the American units. The plan called for the employment of American troops by regiments or brigades. When Pershing asked how long these American units would have to serve as regiments before they were united into brigades

and divisions, Foch evaded the question and said that it was not possible to say at the present time. Thus Pershing remained a firm advocate for training American military formations in their entirety and training brigade and divisional commanders simultaneously; while Foch remained an advocate of the position that the time for forming American divisions had not yet come. At the conclusion of the conference both Foch and Pershing remained convinced of their separate positions.<sup>25</sup>

The terms of the Pershing-Milner agreement reached Washington and Lord Reading realized that Pershing had preempted his agreement with Baker. Lord Reading brought this fact to the attention of Baker, whereupon Baker consulted with Wilson, and the decision was made to abrogate the agreement made with Reading. Once more Pershing's authority had been upheld and policies changed to suit him.<sup>26</sup>

On April 27, 1918, a conference was held at Clemenceau's request at Abbeville in France. Those present at the conference included Clemenceau, Milner, Foch, Sir Henry Wilson, and Haig.<sup>27</sup> Clemenceau complained bitterly at the conference because the Pershing-Milner agreement did not specifically allocate American troops to the French army

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Fredrick Palmer, Newton D. Baker: America At War (New York, 1931), II, 169.

<sup>27</sup>General (later Field Marshal) Sir Henry Wilson had replaced Sir William Robertson as Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

for training.<sup>28</sup> The violent French protest on the eve of an important meeting of the Supreme War Council tended to strengthen Pershing's hand in his stand against amalgamation because it precluded a solid Allied position.

The Supreme War Council met at Abbeville on May 1, 1918.<sup>29</sup> The meeting was of high level officials and among those present were Clemenceau, Lloyd George, Milner, Orlando, Foch, Pétain, Haig, Sir Henry Wilson, Pershing, and Bliss. The first item to be discussed was the deployment of American troops. Clemenceau's initial statement referred to the Pershing-Milner agreement of April 24, 1918. His main objection to the Pershing-Milner agreement was that apparently no troops were to join the French army for training. He was obviously unhappy that the French were not consulted in this matter. Pershing and Milner explained to Clemenceau that this was not the actual intent of the Pershing-Milner agreement. The intent of the agreement was merely to increase the number of American troops in Europe.

The remainder of the session on May 1, dealt with the losses that had been sustained by the French and British armies. The point was constantly raised during the conference that the French and British armies had a definite need for infantry and machine gun units. The British and French recommendations were to extend the May program for

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<sup>28</sup>Conference notes of April 27, 1918, U.S.A., II, 355-356.

<sup>29</sup>Supreme War Council, Record of Proceedings on May 1, 1918, U.S.A., II, 360-365.

transporting 120,000 infantry into June which would make yet another 120,000 infantry available to the Allied armies. Lloyd George pointed out that June would be the critical month because new conscripts in both France and Great Britain would not be available until August. The discussion on this first day of the S.W.C. closed with a statement by Clemenceau, who emphasized that in his opinion it was important to have an independent American army. Clemenceau felt it was an essential morale booster for the Allied troops to know great numbers of Americans were fighting beside them.

On the second day of meetings of S.W.C. Lloyd George brought forth a compromise agreement that provided for ratification of a policy to build an independent American army. The second provision provided for the Pershing-Milner agreement to be extended through the month of June. This meant another 120,000 infantry was to be shipped in June. The final section of the agreement postponed the July transportation priorities until the June session of the Supreme War Council. This resolution, agreed to by all parties, superceded all previous agreements about the transportation of the American army. On this note of agreement this session of the Supreme War Council dismissed.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

On May 6, 1918, the following statement was read and agreed to by the War Cabinet. "It is the opinion of the S.W.C. that in order to carry the war to a successful conclusion, an American army should be formed as early as possible under its own commander and under its own flag."<sup>31</sup> The British government had at last agreed that there must be an independent American army. The British requests for amalgamation had never been as fervent as the French requests, and from this time British acceptance of an independent American army began to increase.

Baker and Wilson were both irritated with the continual amalgamation controversy. The Secretary, however, clung to the hope that he would not have to interfere, and he could leave such decisions to the military commander in the field. But Wilson's patience with Pershing was beginning to grow thin. Wilson wanted to be sure that Pershing was not denying any legitimate requests for aid from the Allies. He finally told Baker to suggest a more sympathetic attitude to Pershing in reference to amalgamation. Baker cabled Pershing, "The President hopes you will approach any such interviews as sympathetically as possible, Particularly if the suggestion as to replacements which has been presented to him is as critical as it seems."<sup>32</sup> Pershing, however, saw through the

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<sup>31</sup>War Cabinet 405, Minute j, May 6, 1918, CAB 23/6, PRO.

<sup>32</sup>Cable: Baker to Pershing, May 11, 1918, U.S.A., II, 399.

polite language of Baker's cable and defended his position strongly. He cabled Baker that the Allies would continue to request replacements so long as they had any hope of receiving American reinforcements.<sup>33</sup>

During the month of June, Haig made the observation that Pershing's obstinacy had carried the day for his desire to command an independent American army. The Field Marshal presumed that the American divisions would be concentrated in one central area in France. Haig did, however, make the observation that the United States would probably have some trouble finding enough qualified division commanders.<sup>34</sup>

At the end of June, 1918, the American army had fourteen divisions with the French and five with the British.

The five divisions with the British were divided into two categories. Three of the divisions were ready for defensive warfare only, and two of the divisions were too inexperienced for any front line duties.<sup>35</sup> There were two reasons for the disproportionate number of divisions in the French sector. First, all of the American units that were under Pershing's control were in the French sector, as provided for in Pershing's original letter of appointment. Second, the French were in the process of training seven American divisions.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>Cable: Pershing to March and Baker, May 15, 1918, U.S.A., II, 403-404.

<sup>34</sup>Robert Blake, editor, The Private Papers of Douglas Haig (London, 1952), p. 315.

<sup>35</sup>ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Report on the status of American Divisions in France, HS British File, GHQ, Part II: Monthly Summary, July 1, 1918, U.S.A., II, 496-497.



Once more, at the sixth session of the Supreme War Council on June 1, 1918, amalgamation was discussed. The principal speeches covered the same general subjects which had been examined one month previously at the Abbeville meeting. The main subject that was discussed was the decision of the S.W.C. to inform Wilson that a force of one hundred American divisions would be required to bring the war to a victorious conclusion.<sup>37</sup>

After the meeting of June 2, 1918, there was one significant change of position which effected the amalgamation controversy. After this date, Clemenceau seemed to mellow in regard to the amalgamation of United States troops. This is not to say that he would have no future complaints about the role of the United States Army, but his later comments were generally limited to the argument that Americans take a larger role in the fighting.<sup>38</sup>

At the seventh session of the Supreme War Council, amalgamation came up for the last time in a major Allied conference. One of the most important decisions made was to furnish the United States tonnage, transport, and supply for approximately 300,000 men per month.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Cable: Pershing to March and Baker, June 25, 1918, U.S.A., II, 482, 483.

<sup>38</sup>Harvey A. Deweerd, President Wilson Fights His War (New York, 1968), p. 309.

<sup>39</sup>Supreme War Council, minutes of July 2, 1918, U.S.A., II, 498-500.

After that session of the Supreme War Council ended, the controversy over amalgamation began to fade into the background. The French and British still had hopes of forestalling the establishment of an independent American army because of their belief that the American army would not be able to operate independently until 1919. The rising tide of American reinforcements soon blunted the edge of this argument. The First Army was organized in August of 1918. The United States Army was able to conduct a limited offensive against Saint-Michel in September and soon followed this with the Meuse-Argonne offensive.<sup>40</sup>

Indeed Foch was to say on July 10, 1918, that he had favored an independent American Army. Although he would remain throughout the rest of the war the one advocate of amalgamation he would bring it up less frequently and would have less support from the British and his own countrymen. His statement of July 10 said in part,

America has a right to an American army; the American army must be. The Allied cause moreover will be better served by having an American army under the orders of its own leader than by an American army scattered all about. Therefore, it must be formed as soon as possible, at the side of the British and French armies, and it must be made as big as possible.<sup>41</sup>

Pershing had to deal with one further major situation concerning amalgamation with Allied forces. On August 16, 1918,

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<sup>40</sup>Trask, Supreme War Council, p. 95.

<sup>41</sup>Memorandum from Foch, G.H.Q., Allied Armies in France, July 10, 1918, U.S.A., II, 520-521.

Pershing was handed a confidential telegram that had been sent from Lloyd George to Clemenceau, describing a modified plan of amalgamation in which American divisions would be used. The divisions, however, were to be separated, thus dividing the United States army between the French and the British sectors.<sup>42</sup> Evidently nothing came of this suggestion, but it is important to note that the Allies no longer actively considered using the United States battalions. They were now interested in using United States divisions.

The German offensive of March, 1917, struck a serious blow at the Allied armies, and particularly the British army. This resulted in the appointment of Foch as Allied Commander-in-Chief. Yet another result was the increased demand for American troops to aid the Allied armies. Although the Allies pressed hard for emergency shipments of infantry, such as the 150 battalion program, Pershing adhered to his plan of transporting entire divisions. During this period both Baker and Wilson approached Pershing on the idea of possible amalgamation. Pershing was able to sustain his idea of an independent American army. The Pershing-Milner agreement was an attempt by Pershing to increase the number of American troops in Europe. The war ended with Pershing in command of an independent American army.

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<sup>42</sup>Cable: Pershing to Baker, August 15, 1918, U.S.A., II, 573-574.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The entry of the United States into the Great War was enthusiastically endorsed by Congress on April 3, 1917. Even after the declaration of war, however, the exact nature of American participation was unclear. Originally, President Wilson and Congress seemed to have anticipated only the use of the United States Navy and the power of American financial resources, not the commitment of a large American army to the Western Front.

Definite requests from France and Great Britain for men came soon after the American declaration of war. Both nations sent high level delegations--separately--to the United States to request money, industrial help, food, and finally, soldiers. But at this time neither nation pressed for a large commitment of soldiers; they requested, at least, one division which would be sent to France for purposes of morale. They requested also the amalgamation of American troops into the Allied armies. This last request was denied by the American leaders.

General John J. Pershing was selected to be the Commander-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Force. The A.E.F. was initially envisioned as a single division, but by the time Pershing got to Washington, the plan had already evolved to

anticipate a multi-divisional force. the exact size would be determined later through Pershing's observations and a special group appointed by Secretary of War Newton D. Baker which would be sent to Europe independent of Pershing. As it turned out, both Pershing and the independent observers recommended the same general plan: a multi-million man American army in France.

Secretary Baker and President Wilson gave Pershing a free hand in organizing the A.E.F. This venture was a new experience for the United States both politically and militarily. Upon its entry into the war the United States was grossly unprepared in both manpower and armament for war on the modern continental scale. Because of shortages both of trained men and military equipment, the Allies had to assume much of the burden of training and equipping the American army, and this large scale aid by the Allies became one of the important arguments for amalgamation. The Allies asserted that the effect of American insistence on shipping complete divisions was resulting in too few American riflemen at the front.

After the abortive 1917 summer offensives, the demand for amalgamation became more intense. During the remainder of 1917 and until March 1918, the Allies presented a series of proposals concerning the disposition of American troops. In essence the Allies wanted to train American battalions, regiments, and brigades in the Allied higher formations and

use them in combat until the American army assumed an independent role. Although Pershing made extensive use of British and French training facilities and instructors, he adamantly refused to permit the American army become a manpower pool for the Allied armies.

General Pétain asked Pershing for the use of four Negro regiments during late 1917. Pershing, who had no divisional formations for these regiments, agreed and they were amalgamated into the French army with great success. In spite of Pershing's repeated requests, they were not returned to the American army until the end of the war. This event is a possible example of what would have happened if large scale amalgamation had been attempted. The American troops would have been scattered and no independent American army would have been organized by the time of the armistice, but the Allied fighting strength might have been increased.

The lack of an effective Chief-of-Staff of the Army during the first year of American participation created another problem. Pershing thought that as commander of the A.E.F. he had a direct relationship to the President and the Secretary of War and that he was independent of the army chain of command. This was true until a former subordinate of Pershing's in the A.E.F., Peyton C. March, was appointed Chief-of-Staff of the Army in early 1918. March, none too tactfully, asserted the primacy of his new office. The change in relationships was complicated by distance, strong

personalities, and wartime difficulties, and it resulted in a feud that lasted until the end of the war. During 1918, also, there were two attempts to have Pershing replaced as the American field commander. The first was by Jan Smuts of South Africa, but Lloyd George refused to hear of it. The second was by Clemenceau in October of 1918, but Foch refused to endorse the effort.

The coming of the German offensive in March 1918, brought new pressures to amalgamate. One ploy used by the British was to offer to transport a large number of infantry battalions in British ships at the expense of fully organized American divisions. This attempt led to the Baker-Reading agreement. This agreement would have provided for large numbers of infantry units to be transported to Europe immediately with administrative staffs to follow at a later date. At virtually the same time, the Pershing-Milner agreement was formulated in Europe and Baker, upon learning about it canceled the Baker-Reading agreement. The new agreement provided for transportation of staffs and combat units of the American army. The British also agreed to increase the shipping allotment to the project so that the increase of rifle strength for the Allies would be greater. This plan included the 150 battalion plan for reinforcing the Allied armies.

The number of American troops arriving in Europe began to increase in the spring and summer. By midsummer most of the attempts to amalgamate the American troops had ceased.

There were still attempts to use American divisions within some of the different Allied army formations, but by October the United States Army was an independent army with a separate sector of operations.

Thus Pershing has successfully accomplished his mission in Europe. He had set out to help defeat the Imperial German armies with an independent American army. By the end of the war he was in command of just such a large, independent American field army. Pershing had triumphed.



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