

RESEARCH REPORT

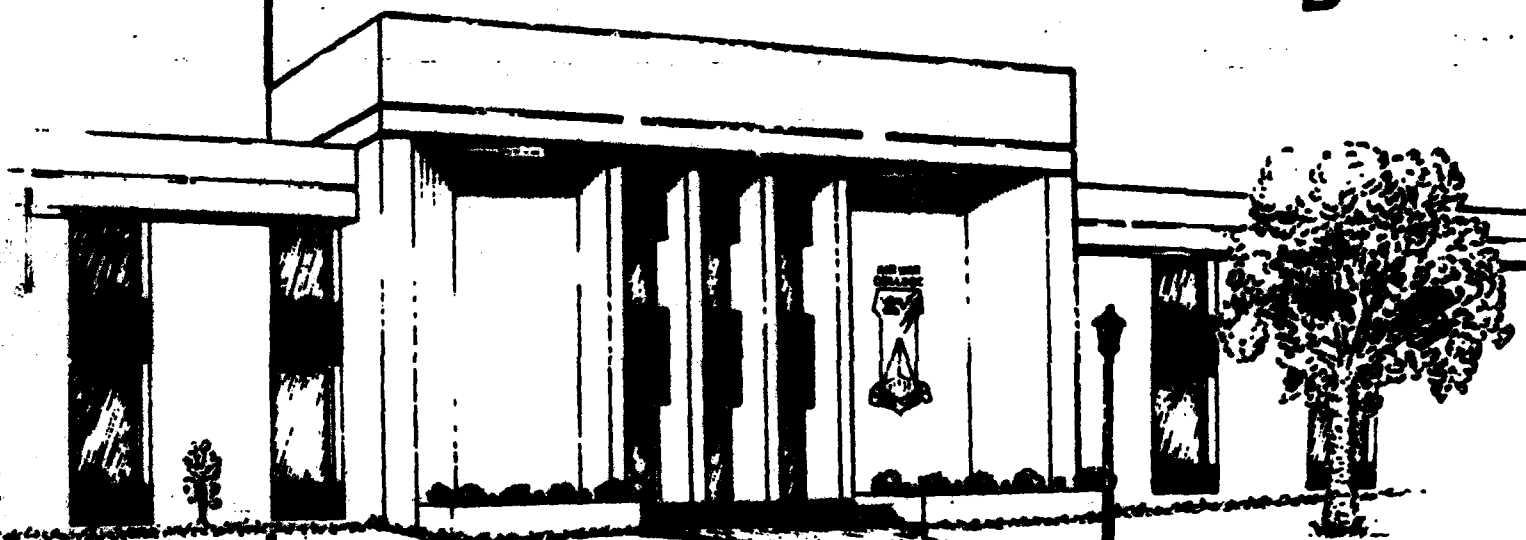
THE AMALGAMATION CONTROVERSY, 1917 - 1918:
AMERICA'S FIGHT FOR INDEPENDENCE

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THE AMALGAMATION CONTROVERSY, 1917-1918:
AMERICA'S FIGHT FOR INDEPENDENCE

by

Maxwell C. Bailey
Lieutenant Colonel, USAF

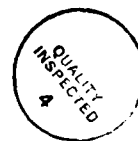
A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
IN
FULFILLMENT OF THE RESEARCH
REQUIREMENT

Research Advisor: Dr James A. Mowbray

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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AIR WAR COLLEGE RESEARCH REPORT ABSTRACT

TITLE: The Amalgamation Controversy, 1917-1918: America's Fight for Independence

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The paper is a historical case study of a significant issue in America's coalition warfare experience. From America's declaration of war in April 1917 until just prior to its first offensive as an independent army at St. Mihiel in September 1918, the French and British pressed for American manpower to be amalgamated by small groups--individuals, companies, battalions--into existing French and British formations. General John J. Pershing bore the responsibility for America's fight for independence. His reasons range from protecting American national interests to distinct strategy and tactics. The French and British case was based on security assistance, including shipping, war materiel, and training programs. The acrimony of the debate, the extreme divergence of views, and the seriousness of the threat--a series of German offensives--illustrate the strains a coalition must weather to succeed on the battlefield. The conclusion offers insights, drawn from the controversy, to today's coalition warrior.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Alliances

Strong alliance relationships form the cornerstone of US national security policy. "Our defense policy is based on the fundamental premise that we will not seek to offset Soviet power alone, but in conjunction with our allies throughout the globe."¹ With an alliance system integrating the US through bilateral or multilateral security commitments with 43 other nations, it is difficult to conceive of a future conflict which would not be in some sense a coalition effort. There are obvious benefits to a coalition strategy. "Our alliance strategy enables us to husband our limited resources, meld them with those of our allies, and employ them effectively to deter aggression or, should deterrence fail, defend our interests and restore peace on terms acceptable to us and our allies."² But such a strategy must recognize important limitations and "the predictable difficulties that arise from time to time in an alliance relationship must be measured against the enormous value that these ties bring us and our friends."³

The "predictable difficulties" are the logical outgrowth of perhaps the only fundamental truth that can be agreed upon about the nature of coalitions. What can safely

be said is that coalitions are entered into for reasons of national self interest. It is only when the self interests of the individual nations coincide that coalitions can be formed and be successful. Yet even within successful coalitions there are predicable differences in national interests which must be recognized and reconciled, or at least understood. One need only to look at today's North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance to illustrate the potential for conflict among alliance partners.

As one strategist notes, "For more than 30 years predicting the imminent demise of NATO has been a growth industry."⁴ The nations of the alliance agree on the defense of NATO territory through deterrence but on almost nothing else. And, the areas of disagreement are across the spectrum of national interests. They include out-of-Europe regional security interests; economic conflicts over trade and defense spending; technology transfer to the Soviets; and, the response to terrorism. Even with basic agreement on defense policy there is significant disagreement among the nations on military strategy and doctrine. Contentious issues in the military sphere include first use of nuclear weapons or even the viability of the nuclear deterrent.⁵ In the conventional arena, the nations have profound differences with the official NATO doctrine of Follow-On-Forces-Attack (FOFA). One challenge is that the doctrine conflicts with US AirLand Battle doctrine in that

it does not plan for integrated use of conventional, nuclear, and chemical weapons and does not subscribe to cross border attack by ground forces. AirLand Battle is viewed as an offensive doctrine and thus contrary to the defensive nature of the alliance.⁷ There is also disagreement about how far forward defense is viable. Germany, logically, takes the most extreme view that no loss of territory even for a maneuver advantage is acceptable.⁸ Can a coalition be effective with such seemingly fundamental differences in national interests and even military strategy and doctrine?

Security Assistance

One important aspect of US alliance strategy is security assistance. Security assistance consists of sales and grants of military equipment as well as training and education programs. "Security assistance programs enhance our strategy by developing strong, self sufficient, and reliable allies. Security assistance directly supports our national defense goals by helping us retain access to foreign bases and training areas for our forward-deployed forces, gain critical overflight privileges, and promote equipment standardization and interoperability."⁹ Note that this description of objectives stresses the self sufficiency of allies. For while war materiel and training enhances the military capability of coalition, it does not

change the fundamental national self interest nature of alliances. As Congressman Les Aspin noted, other countries

. . . have to look to their own national security interests . . . Because we have limited leverage, even if we provide them the arms, we had better make pretty sure that their national security interests at least in the use of that weapon, are consistent with ours. We cannot use arms sales as leverage with other countries . . . We must, however, be sure that if we give arms to other countries, they will use them in ways that further our national security interests.¹⁰

This limited ability to influence a coalition partner through arms while understood is often frustrating. The US has had limited ability to control Israel, a major beneficiary of US security assistance, as it pursues Israeli national interests. And, two important allies on the NATO Southern Flank, Greece and Turkey, place severe limitations on US freedom of movement in the Mediterranean despite huge US security assistance programs.

With the above as background it seems that coalitions have almost insurmountable odds against them. Yet the United States has fought two successful coalition wars in this century and the NATO alliance has contributed to maintaining over 40 years of peace. The existence of predictable stresses and strains on alliance relationships is not synonymous with failure of the alliance.

The Amalgamation Controversy

To illustrate how coalitions function despite often fundamental differences, this study examines a controversy between the US and Britain and France surrounding America's

involvement in World War I, its first venture from an isolationist posture into the complex arena of international power politics. The controversy was over how American manpower, desperately needed by war weary allies after three years of fighting, could be best, and most quickly, employed against Germany. The two possibilities were either as an independent army or amalgamated as small groups-- individuals, companies, battalions--into existing British and French formations.

General John J. Pershing bore the responsibility for America's fight for independence. But, his resistance was motivated by reasons other than securing his personal command. His reasons run the gamut from national sentiment to military strategy and tactics. Similarly, the French and British case was built on other than a condescending view of America's military capability. Their case was founded on security assistance including shipping, war materiel, and training programs. These were provided to try to get American soldiers to the front. Yet this generous assistance was not able to pry America from its employment concept. The amalgamation controversy raged against the backdrop of the German offensives of March-July 1918 which threatened to win the war. The acrimony of the debate, the extreme divergence of views, and the seriousness of the threat make some of today's crises seem tame compared to the amalgamation controversy. It is, therefore, an excellent

case study in the strains an alliance can and must weather
if it is to succeed on the battlefield.

CHAPTER II

PERSHING'S TASKING

The amalgamation controversy was the product of a degree of American military unpreparedness which seems incredible viewed backward from seventy years. The fact that the American army was small and scattered is understandable. But, the almost total lack of mobilization and war planning, and initial preparation actions, that would seem prudent with Europe at war for nearly three years is hard to comprehend.

Upon America's declaration of war on 6 April 1917 the United States Regular Army totaled only 133,111 officers and men stationed throughout six military departments. Only in Major General John J. Pershing's Southern Department were there enough troops to form a tactical unit as large as a division. The officer strength of the army was actually 18% below its authorization. An additional 80,446 National Guard troops were in Federal service and immediately available.¹ On paper, an additional 122,000 men in various reserve categories were potentially available.² But how were these reserves and any additional men to be raised, equipped, trained, and employed against Germany in the now declared war?

The war planning that had been done was totally inapplicable to the strategic situation in 1917. A

conceptual plan did exist, but it envisioned a call-up of 1,000,000 volunteers to fight a defensive war against Germany on our Atlantic coast.³ Only upon severance of diplomatic relations on 3 February 1917 had a short War College Division of the War Department memorandum been drafted sketching some tentative, and very general, initial preparations.⁴

Mobilization planning was only slightly more advanced. The War College Division had proposed a National Army Plan to the Chief of Staff, and on to the Congress, in February 1917. This proposal, based on universal military service, allowed for an army totaling over 3,000,000 men. The plan, however, was conceptual in nature with no proposals as to how this program would be brought into being.

There were several reasons for this lack of pre-planning. One reason was the small size of the General Staff which was restricted by law to only 41 officers, only 19 of whom could be stationed in Washington.⁵ The routine administrative business of the Army precluded much strategic planning by such a small staff. But the most important cause was President Woodrow Wilson's very strong anti-war sentiment, a reflection of traditional American isolationism from European affairs. The President was so opposed to war, and especially this one, that he was

actually philosophically opposed to war planning as making it more likely.⁶

With such a small army and no real plan the initial American assumption was that its contribution would be primarily economic--money and war materiel.⁷ It was, therefore, a surprise that what the French and British wanted and needed most was what we were least prepared to supply--manpower.

The Balfour and Viviani Missions

Within three weeks after America's declaration of war, the British and French sent formal missions to the United States to coordinate American participation. While economic assistance was discussed including cancelling existing and future war debts,⁸ both governments concentrated on the need for American manpower.

The British mission was headed by Arthur J. Balfour, former Prime Minister and current Foreign Secretary. But, it was Major General Tom M. Bridges, a division commander literally just out of the field on the Somme, who would first propose amalgamation. Bridges believed that the best way to make American presence felt was to immediately field a division in France and send all available naval forces in the North Atlantic. Additional manpower should be raised and sent "half-trained" to "complete their training in England and France and to be brigaded as battalions with the allied troops."⁹ This would allow all available

training and scarce shipping to be concentrated on raw combat power without the services of supply troops associated with larger military organizations. Nor would these services be needed since the British and French had extensive support systems and war materiel industries smoothly functioning after three years of war. Equally important, the British and French had existing command structures, staffs, and plenty of officers down to at least brigade level.¹⁰ The problem was the war had used up all the fighting men! This was the crux of the amalgamation proposal which would change little until the final resolution of the issue.

The French mission was headed by former Premier Rene Viviani. Marshal Joseph Joffre, the former Commander-in-Chief, would speak for France's military needs. Like the British, Joffre favored immediate dispatch of at least a division to show American commitment. He also favored half-trained men who would finish training under British and French officers in France. However, he favored the formation of an independent American army. The French had come to America with a proposal similar to Bridges' amalgamation concept.¹¹ Joffre reversed this because he believed American participation would be greater if fighting on its own. He also believed that tactically "it was bad to divide an army."¹² Finally, his report on the mission notes the importance of "gratifying and safeguarding

American self-respect" and that an independent army was the only solution acceptable to the American General Staff.¹³

The issue was now defined with two opposing proposals: amalgamation or independence, how would America fight?

Issues Debated

Some Americans still believed that actual fighting would not be necessary. The mere fact that America was raising a large army which could potentially be decisive on the Western Front would surely be enough to make Germany surrender.¹⁴ Less naive people began seriously considering the amalgamation issue.

Herbert Hoover, the administration's Food Administrator, was among those who favored amalgamation. Hoover believed that American manpower could be recruited with the promise of pensions and best used after a short training period in the war-experienced French army. These men could then serve as a cadre for American army expansion "if we decided to go further into this matter."¹⁵

Tasker H. Bliss, Deputy Chief of Staff, in a memo on the subject to Chief of Staff Scott on 4 May 1917 also saw merit in the amalgamation proposal. Bliss was most concerned with the shortage of American shipping and saw the proposal as perhaps the only way to transport the right kinds of troops and get them quickly into the fight.¹⁶

But the prevailing American opinion favored an independent American army as reflected in the thoughts of Secretary of War Newton Baker, Bliss, and especially President Wilson. Baker had practical concerns noting American habits, food, and temperament were different than the British and French. He was even concerned that "the French view of the sex privilege of soldiers, in sharp contrast to our own attitude on the sex question would prevail, to the horror of our people."¹⁷ Of course he had deeper concerns that casualties "under alien command" would be resented at home, and finally, that Americans would end up fighting for other countries' national interests which would be different than our own.¹⁸

After nearly a month of further staffing, Bliss (now acting Chief of Staff with Scott on a mission to Russia with Elihu Root) wrote to Baker with the Army's view. Bliss had decided that piecemeal application of American manpower under amalgamation would not produce a decisive result. Instead the French and British must hold on and wait until American strength could be built for "the final, shattering blow."¹⁹ His letter also reflected a mistrust of what the French and British wanted our help for:

When the war is over it may be a literal fact that the American flag may not have appeared anywhere on the line because our organizations will simply be parts of battalions and regiments of the Entente Allies. We might have a million men there and yet no American army and no American commander. Speaking frankly, I have

received the impression from English and French officers that such is their deliberate desire.²⁰

President Wilson was equally mistrustful of the Entente powers. While it would be some time before he clearly defined America's war aims in his Fourteen Points, it was clear at a very early stage that his war aims were different than the other countries fighting Germany and the other Central Powers. The European countries were naturally focusing on basic issues such as territorial adjustments and war reparations. In fact by the spring of 1917 there was a rather intricate series of secret treaties that carved up the post-war world and of which Wilson was aware.²¹

Wilson wanted something more. As early as December 1916 in response to a German peace plan, Wilson was already talking of a permanent peace assured through "the establishment of a new international order in which all nations would take part."²² In other words, fight not for the establishment of borders but to end all wars.

His guidance was thus to "remain aloof"²³ from the French and British. In fact we would fight not as "allies" but as "associates."²⁴

So, having considered everything from "a new international order" to maintaining America's sexual standards, Secretary Baker tasked General Pershing on 26 May 1917 to command the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) in France initially consisting of five regiments totaling

12,000 men, an unspecified number of others to follow. The guidance on independence was clear.

In military operations against the Imperial German Government you are directed to cooperate with the forces of the other countries employed against the 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.²⁵

CHAPTER III

THE STRATEGIC SITUATION, DECEMBER 1917

The French and British initially accepted the American position on independence. Pershing's one division American Expeditionary Force (A.E.F.) marched through Paris on the 4th of July, 1917 and on to further training for Western Front combat behind the French lines. In the United States, the War Department wrestled with drafting, training, equipping, and transporting at least 1,000,000 men to France by May 1918.¹ Through the summer and fall of 1917 Pershing, in conjunction with the War Department, revised this requirement to a minimum of four army corps of twenty-four fighting divisions with six additional replacement divisions totaling approximately 1,500,000 men by the end of June 1918. This 30 Division Plan formed the basis for early mobilization efforts and was ultimately realized on the way to the final American mobilization.²

By the end of November 1917 the strategic situation facing the opponents of the Central Powers had dramatically changed. In desperation the French and British began to look again for American manpower. The pleas, threats, and demands for amalgamation began in earnest and would continue almost until the end of the war. Four aspects of the change in the situation in late 1917 must be examined: the collapse of the Russian army, a near total German-Austrian

victory on the Italian front, the slow buildup of the A.E.F., and the manpower situation of France and Britain.

The Russian Collapse

The loss of Russia from the war did not happen suddenly. A March 1917 workers revolt resulted in the abdication of Emperor Nicholas and the establishment of a provisional government. Fortunately for France and Britain the new government was anti-German and the Russian army, though shaky in its support for the new government and weary after two and a half years of war, was capable of a final offensive-against the Central Powers. The Russians attacked on 1 July 1917 and the large force was initially successful advancing up to 30 miles in some spots. However, when the Germans and Austrians regrouped and began to counterattack about 19 July, the Russians had no reserves, physically or morally, to fight further. Only the resistance of the Rumanian army against the Austrians in the Carpathians prolonged the fighting as the Russians half-heartedly resisted a steady advance until the "battle" of Riga on 1 September effectively ended the fighting.³

By 10 September it was apparent even to the still-organizing Americans that "the enemy's advances . . . (were) due to the disintegration of the Russian troops opposed to them rather than to any well-organized German offensive."⁴ How much longer could Russia be counted on to tie down Germans in the East?

Since yet another government ultimately came to power as a result of the collapse of the Russian army and additional workers revolts, Germany could not immediately transfer its entire strength to the Western Front. While Lenin was clearly in control of the government by 7 November it was not until 16 December that an armistice was agreed to at Brest-Litovsk "as a preparation for negotiations."⁵ Without a final settlement German military presence had to be maintained against the still potent Russian potential. And fighting continued well into the spring of 1918. One interesting Russian move was an attempt to simply declare the war over without settlement. When Germany occupied the Ukraine in response, Russia came back to the bargaining table and finally ratified the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on 29 March 1918.⁶

The collapse of Russia posed potentially disastrous consequences for the Western Front. Germany's fear of the two-front war which had driven its initial war strategy had proven justified since its forces were almost evenly divided in mid-1917: 141 German divisions on the Western Front, 141 divisions (99 German, 40 Austrian, 2 Turkish) on the Eastern Front.⁷ Given the uncertainty of the political situation, it is more significant what the Allies believed the reinforcement potential to be. On 25 November Petain, the French Commander, believed that 40 divisions could be transferred from Russia to the Western Front bringing the

German strength to about 200.⁸ Pershing believed that it was possible for the Central Powers to mass 250 to 260 divisions on the Western Front against 169 Allied divisions and still have some left for the Eastern Front and Italy. "This relative strength would give the Central Powers about 60% advantage and make it difficult to hold them (since) the allies have had about 30% advantage all summer."⁹ Events in Italy would make this bad situation even worse.

Italian Disaster at Caporetto

In Italy on 25 October 1917, a combined German and Austrian force using a mixture of conventional artillery and gas and spearheaded by a well-led corps of three Austrian divisions and one German Jaeger division under Alfred Krauss on the mountainous right wing achieved a major breakthrough. The Italian Second Army on the northern flank alone lost over 30,000 prisoners and fell back forcing the entire front to collapse just to keep contact. By mid-November the Italians had retreated almost 70 miles. Fortunately the French and the British had partially prepared for such an emergency and by 10 November French forces were in position behind the front to check a further breakthrough. By 12 December six French and five British divisions with supporting troops were in Italy, and the situation partially stabilized, but with a further loss of Allied confidence.¹⁰

One important outcome of the Italian crisis was the establishment of the Supreme War Council consisting of the prime ministers of the Allied Powers with the top military officers as representatives. Its purpose was to provide a forum "for better coordination of military action" and to oversee "the general conduct of the war."¹¹

Interestingly, the United States was not included in the first charter with language deliberately limiting membership to those powers "whose armies are fighting on (the Western) front."¹²

In a 6 November 1917 memorandum Colonel Fox Conner, AEF G-3, discussed the American situation relative to the Italian crisis. Conner noted that the majority of the forces operating against the Allies in Italy were Austrian. Direct participation by the AEF in Italy therefore wasn't possible because the United States was not at war with Austria!¹³

Colonel Conner's memorandum had another important assessment: "No units of the A.E.F. are in proper condition to be employed in the line for other than training purposes."¹⁴ Unless France, England, and Italy were actually in a state of collapse, the A.E.F. could not be used for active operations until the coming spring.¹⁵

Slow American Buildup

Since the US declaration of war it was generally understood that building an army almost from the start would

take time. The House of Representatives sponsor of the Selective Service Act, believed that "it would be folly to think of sending our boys to the front until they have had a year of training."¹⁶ The General Staff recommended two full years of preparation in America before even leaving for France in large numbers.¹⁷ However, shipping availability, to be discussed below, drove the decision to send partially trained soldiers to complete their training in France.

By December of 1917, there were four A.E.F. divisions in France. However, in analyzing the amalgamation issue one must remember that even though many of the individuals in these first divisions were trained regular army or National Guard soldiers, their organization was brand new. There were also few soldiers with combat experience--chasing Pancho Villa on the Mexican Border was hardly the Western Front. Much training would be required before the Americans could be pitted against the experienced German army.

The slow American buildup was frustrating to the Allies. In mid-December, seven months after America's declaration of war, not a single American unit was ready for combat. In fact, the 1st Division did not take over a sector of the front for active operations until 5 February 1918.¹⁸ General Robertson, the British Chief of the Imperial Staff perhaps best expressed the Allies'

frustration in a memorandum to the War Cabinet, 12 January 1918.

The raising of new armies is a tremendous task for any country, and although one might expect that America, with her two previous experiences, and her supposed great business and hustling qualities, would do better than other countries, the fact is she is doing very badly . . . The Americans are proceeding as if they had years in which to prepare. They have laid out containment areas for 10 divisions and are building the most luxurious huts to supplement billets; each man has a bed and 3 blankets; there are no fewer than 300 officers and 750 typists at their G.H.Q. . . . My general impression is that America's power to help us win the war--that is, to help us defeat the Germans in battle is a very weak reed to lean upon at present, and will continue to be so for a very long time to come unless she follows up her words with actions much more practical and energetic than she has yet taken.¹⁹

The Allies' Need for Manpower

The degree of frustration with the slow American buildup was the result of the greatest problem facing the French and British--lack of manpower to meet the imminent German offensive. This lack of manpower was itself the result of casualties suffered, some would say men thrown away, in the three years of fighting which characterized World War I.

The legacy of World War I military leaders as unimaginative, callous, and inept is justified. They entered the war with an offensive doctrine which emphasized infantry charges to breach the frontlines for horse cavalry exploitation. Yet an impressive body of historic evidence had been building since at least the American Civil War that the increasing lethality of rifles, machine guns, and long

range, large caliber, accurate artillery would dominate the battlefield.

The initial encounter battles of 1914 deadlocked the Western Front into near permanent field fortification trenches with incredible numbers of casualties. Both sides then settled into a pattern of set piece battles emphasizing infantry assault. Artillery on an increasing scale was used as preparation for such attacks. The massive firepower believed necessary to prepare for the infantry breach often required months to concentrate and build up munitions.

Not content to conserve forces during the buildup period, the French saw day to day duty in the trenches as "neither a relaxation nor guard duty; it is a phase of the battle. It is necessary that the adversary feel in front of him a vigilant hatred and know that we wish no rest before his defeat. It is necessary that each hostile company go back from the trenches with a loss of at least twenty men."²⁰ Trench warfare thus included constant sniping, patrolling, and small scale raids supplemented by near constant artillery and smaller caliber mortar and grenade exchanges. The French referred to this pressure and exposure as "maintaining moral ascendancy." The practice cost them 1500 casualties a day not counting the large scale offensives.²¹ The British Commander-in-Chief Douglas Haig indelicately referred to such losses as "normal

wastage" which cost the British as much as 7000 casualties weekly.²²

But as unnecessary as such losses were, it was the familiar set piece offenses which threatened to bankrupt the Allied manpower. Two such offensives in 1917 were the final straws for each army. In April, Robert Nivelle launched an offensive against the Chemin des Dames. Pre-strike security was terrible and the Germans had the entire plan. In addition, they had recently withdrawn from the original area destined for the offensive to a much stronger position "scorching the earth" as they went. Nivelle had given French political leaders and his army assurances of success, but promised to immediately call off the attack if checked. But after virtually no advance on the first day the attacks were continued for the next several weeks. The French army mutinied.

Petain replaced Nivelle and restored a kind of order through personal visits to virtually every French division, improved behind the lines living conditions, and revised leave policy.²³ However, it was a simple promise that rallied the mutinous army. Attacks in the future would be only for limited objectives and "be conducted economically as far as infantry is concerned and with the maximum of artillery."²⁴ Having suffered "2,600,000 men, killed, died of wounds, permanently incapacitated, and

prisoners"²⁵ by the end of November 1917 French policy was necessarily simple: wait for the Americans.²⁶

Similarly, the British tried yet another futile offensive in Flanders. After assurances to his army and political leadership of immediate success or termination, Haig launched two armies against the Germans. The artillery preparation was unprecedented with 4 million shells brought to the front in 320 train-loads fired by guns placed every six yards along the front.²⁷ The massive artillery barrage only served to chew up the mud and limit British mobility. The British attacked over and over from August to November with the only result another "370,000 British dead and wounded and sick and frozen to death."²⁸ The British had reached the same position as the French. As their official historian James Edmonds expressed their policy by January 1918, "It was put clearly before the War Cabinet, both by the C.I.G.S. (Chief of the Imperial General Staff) and the Commander-in-Chief, that all depended on holding out until the U.S. Army became effective."²⁹ The Allied manpower situation, largely due to the failure of the leadership to adapt to the realities of modern war, had reached the point where British and French "having exhausted their own armies stood ready to fight to the last American."³⁰

In summary, the Russian collapse, the threat to the Italian front, and the French and British manpower situation

because of a doctrine which viewed manpower as expendable, had reduced the Allies to a policy of hold and wait for the Americans. And the Americans were not yet there.

CHAPTER IV

TRUCE: THE SIX-DIVISION PROGRAM

Amalgamation Resurfaces

The desperate situation the French and British now found themselves in with an imminent attack by numerically superior German forces forced the amalgamation issue to the forefront of Allied affairs. And the French and British used every available political and military avenue to try to get American soldiers in their front lines. Pershing's Chief of Staff, James G. Harbord, writes of the amalgamation controversy in his war memoirs:

If given in terms of the demands it made on the time of General Pershing and the number of various and devious angles from which approach was made, a reader fifty years hence might well conclude that this struggle between Allies was more important than much of the fighting that went on in quiet sectors on the Western Front.¹

In initial discussions with his fellow commanders Pershing was able to hold his ground noting the lack of readiness of his troops for Western Front combat. He described his men as "groups of civilians whom it is necessary to militarize."² In a meeting with Petain and Haig on 23 December 1917 both Allied commanders voiced what would become a familiar refrain about the advantages and necessity of amalgamation. With the German attack imminent, even partially trained Americans would fight well if side by side with experienced soldiers. In addition, the training

the Americans would get in such fighting would pay off for later independent American action.³ Pershing's refusal, given the preparedness of his troops, was predictable. Also, it is logical that his peer status could be expected to have a significant influence with his fellow commanders. So the Allies tried political pressure.

Visits by the French and British ambassadors, and others, to the President and Secretary of War, resulted in a reaffirmation of the American position on independence and placed the ultimate responsibility on the A.E.F. Commander. Secretary of War Baker telegraphed Pershing on 25 December 1917,

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 impending heavy drive by Germans somewhere along the lines of the Western Front. 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 President, however, desires you to have full authority to use the forces at your command as you deem wise in consultation with the French and British Commanders-in-Chief. . . The President's sole purpose being to acquaint you with the representations made here and to authorize you to act with entire freedom to accomplish the main purposes in mind.⁴

It is interesting to note that the decision which had significant political implications was left solely to the military commander. This was typical of the authority Wilson and Baker granted to Pershing throughout the war.

Both Allies were aware of the text of Baker's message, but all parties read into it what they wanted.

Pershing saw only the desire not to lose national identity. The British and French read that independence was secondary to the needs of the situation. The French interpretation was typical: "President Wilson agrees to American troops being employed as isolated units with French units if necessary."⁵ Pershing was quick to clarify "what the Secretary really meant . . ." in a meeting with the commanders-in-chief on 24 January 1918 when he curtly "declared that he is opposed to amalgamation of American troops with Allied troops, except for training . . . Amalgamation of American and Allied troops for battle could not take place except in case of absolute necessity."⁶ A temporary truce was reached as a result of a British proposal to accelerate American fighting men to the front in exchange for British shipping.

The Six-Division Program

The four fighting divisions and a depot (replacement) division, in France by the end of December 1917, had been shipped primarily by American shipping at an increasing rate which would peak at approximately 48,000 men per month.⁷ There simply were no more ships available. The British proposed to provide shipping, but only to transport 150,000 infantrymen (150 battalions) which would be trained by the British and could be fed into British formations in an emergency. Pershing was quick to recognize amalgamation in yet another guise and pointed out that the proposal would

ultimately delay the formation of an American army. Besides, if shipping could be found for battalions, then it could be found for divisions. Here the British correctly pointed out that their shipping was totally committed to the war effort; there would have to be tradeoffs. They were willing to accept shortages in war materiel and even food for 150 infantry battalions which would be available within three to four months, but not for three divisions which would take six months or more to be ready to fight.⁸

As negotiations shifted to emphasize that these forces were subject to American recall at any time, the Americans expressed suspicion. Colonel Paul Malone, Chief of Training within G-3, flatly counseled against it, "It is recommended that no scheme of instruction or distribution of troops be accepted which destroys the independence of function of American units."⁹

The issue was debated throughout the month of January and was finally resolved in a conference among Pershing, Bliss (who had come to France as permanent representative to the Supreme War Council), Haig, and British Prime Minister David Lloyd George. Lloyd George provides an excellent summary of the negotiations from the British standpoint in his Memoirs.

If it became a life and death issue, where extra American troops thrown in would turn the scale between victory and defeat we came to the conclusion that it would be worth while to take the risk of even letting our own and Allied stocks of food and raw materials run down while we diverted tonnage to bring those extra

troops to France . . . If it was merely going to carry across numbers of divisional H.Q. details and non-combatant personnel and equipment in order to minister to the pride and enhance the consequence of a single General, we could find a far more urgent use for it.¹⁰

But, the issue at this point boiled down to one of personality. Pershing had been granted the authority by his government to decide--and he had decided! Except in the case of a war losing emergency he was not going to concede independence. The British reluctantly agreed to provide shipping for six complete divisions by June 1918 which they would also train.¹¹ Two additional divisions per month would continue by American shipping as before.¹² One can almost hear the resignation in Lloyd George's words.

We thus concluded the issue on which Pershing had taken his stand, as to the maintenance of the American divisional formations and the refusal to amalgamate for fighting purposes the American infantry, except temporarily, while training, with our forces. The decision went some way toward improving matters. In the event of a grave emergency it would ensure the presence on French soil of a considerable number of American troops who had received a certain amount of training by officers with a war experience.¹³

The British had thus gotten manpower, although with considerable strings attached in exchange for their shipping.

Shipping

Shipping capability was perhaps the greatest problem the US had to overcome to fight a successful European war. Total shipping available to America in the war was just over 9,000,000 dead weight tons, only 37% of British merchant

capacity. As a comparison Britain had almost 7,500,000 tons sunk by German submarines. American efforts to increase shipping in the war were remarkable. In addition to requisitioning American merchant ships (the preferred method) new ship construction, foreign purchase, neutral country charter, and even seized German ships amounted to over 50% of US capability by the end of the war.¹⁴

Still it was Allied shipping, primarily provided by Britain in hopes of getting American manpower for its use, that transported the A.E.F. to France. By the Armistice just over 2,000,000 men of the A.E.F. were transported to France, only 43.7% by US shipping including contract and commandeered enemy ships mentioned above. British ships alone had carried over 1,000,000 men, more than 50%, with Italy and France providing the rest.¹⁵

The Americans were extremely lucky in one respect. German unrestricted submarine warfare was the direct cause of America's declaration of war and posed a serious threat to shipping as illustrated by British losses. However, although 200,000 tons of troop transports were sunk during the lift, none were lost on the eastbound leg!¹⁶

With the six-division program, the Americans and the British had reached an uneasy truce on the amalgamation issue. Pershing's intransigence decided the issue on the American side. But his position stemming from his original tasking in May and the reaffirmation in December was based

on other than personality. In fact, there were excellent political and military arguments against amalgamation.

CHAPTER V

PERSHING'S SIX-POINT OBJECTION

In the critical discussions leading to the Six-Division Program, Pershing presented a six point objection to amalgamation which he elaborated before the first American attended a meeting of the Supreme War Council at Versailles, 30-31 January 1918. These objections essentially summarize the American argument on the issue and by defining the points, expanding them with other private and public comments made at various times during the war, and evaluating them, this chapter provides a focus to assess the amalgamation controversy.

National Sentiment

The most obvious and most often mentioned objection to amalgamation was "the national sentiment in the United States against service under a foreign flag."¹ There were two aspects to the national sentiment argument. First, it was a pure matter of national pride, and definitely an affront to the competence of America, if it couldn't field an army led by its own officers. As Pershing writes, "There was nothing vainglorious in our attitude but no people with a grain of national pride would consent to furnish men to build up the army of another nation."² A very powerful argument along this line was that in proposing amalgamation Britain appeared to be singling out America when "during the

entire course of the war the British have never found it advisable to incorporate in the same divisions Canadians, Australians, New Zealanders, Indians, Portuguese or even Scotch with English."³

Second, as discussed in Chapter II above, President Wilson desired that American war aims be kept separate from those of the Entente Powers. America's status as an Associate instead of an Ally was more than a technicality. As late as the end of July 1917 in relation to a conference between the other allies, Pershing was told, "The President decided that this Government at the present time prefers not to take part in any War Conference at which the Allies are represented."⁴ While this position was modified during the war, particularly after unification of Allied command under Ferdinand Foch in response to the German 1918 offensive, possible resentment of service under a foreign remained a valid argument throughout the war. Indeed, it may be the starting point for questioning where amalgamation of multi-national forces is a valid military organizational concept today.

Dissipate Direction and Effort of American Army

Pershing believed that amalgamation would "dissipate the direction and effort of the American army."⁵ This was an argument of strategy. The first consideration was where to fight. The British distinction between "Easterners" and "Westerners" is well chronicled elsewhere.

The argument presented by Churchill and Lloyd George among others was, that since the Western Front had stalemated, the way to defeat the enemy, even with Russia out of the war, was by an indirect approach as at Gallipoli, or in Mesopotamia or Palestine.⁶ Pershing was clearly a Westerner:

It was my belief that our task clearly lay on the Western Front . . . The fact is that the tendency persisted on the part of the Allied Government to send expeditions here and there in pursuit of political aims. They were prone to lose sight of the fundamental fact that the real objective was the German army.⁷

He was not going to allow American troops to be used to let British and French units be deployed elsewhere, and certainly wouldn't let American troops under foreign commanders be sent "here and there."

If the Western Front was the where, the how was to build up a powerful American army for a single knockout blow of the main German army.⁸ Colonel Fox Conner, A.E.F. G-3, is most consistent and eloquent in presenting this argument. In separate memos he argues that "all indications point to the probability that our troops must eventually be used in powerful offensives if the war is to be decided to our thorough satisfaction . . . All considerations are against frittering our power away by incorporating smaller units with other armies."⁹ Further, with France and Britain bled white by three years of heavy casualties "the only hope of really winning this war lies in an American army."¹⁰ A similar thought perhaps reveals the

seriousness and confidence of the American intent. Colonel H.B. Fiske, the A.E.F. G-5, wrote on 4 July 1918, "Berlin can not be taken by the French or the British Armies or by both of them. It can only be taken by a thoroughly trained, entirely homogeneous American Army."¹¹ Berlin? Some knockout blow!

Additional Manpower by Other Means

Closely tied to the argument just presented was a third objection. "Additional manpower on the western front could be provided as quickly by some plan not involving amalgamation."¹² In early discussions with Chief of the Imperial General Staff William Robertson, Pershing had a bit sarcastically asked "if the British were so short of men, why did they keep so many in Palestine."¹³ Easterner and Westerner arguments aside if the situation were really so critical it was a good question.

After the Caporetto disaster, the British army, to include Empire forces, was "dissipated" as follows: 62 divisions in France, 4 in Macedonia, 7 in Mesopotamia, 5 in Italy, and 10 in Palestine. An additional nine divisions were retained in Egypt and Britain for home defense.¹⁴ Almost one-third of its potential strength was deployed other than where Pershing believed the fight was. There is little wonder he was non-supportive! In fact, after the German attack in March 1918, Britain did bring back "two complete divisions, twenty-four other battalions and five

heavy batteries, and five home defense divisions were disbanded to supply replacements."¹⁵

The "manpower by other means" argument also included shipping considerations discussed in the previous chapter. This was a question of tooth versus tail. The British argued that battalions could be brought over at about five times the rate of divisions.¹⁶ Analysis of the Table of Organization and Equipment, 8 August 1917, shows this to be a bit pessimistic. Pure infantry strength of a standard division was 12,228 men in 48 companies, 12 battalions, of a total 27,123, or about 45% pure infantry "teeth."¹⁷ The Americans could also point to the other combat arms--machine gun battalions, artillery brigade--which would swell the tooth value of the division.

Differences in National Character and Military Training

The next objection is seemingly two unrelated thoughts but will be tied together during the analysis. "Differences in national characteristics and military training of troops and consequent failure of complete cooperation would undoubtedly lead to friction and eventual misunderstanding between the two countries."¹⁸

One important characteristic of the French and British in early 1918 was a decided war weariness. The Americans on the other hand were eager to fight. As a German intelligence officer noted during an early American action, "The spirit of the troops is fresh and one of

careless confidence."¹⁹ Pershing did not want to see this spirit dampened by Allied attitudes. He writes in his memoirs,

Another serious objection to our men serving in the Allied armies was the danger that the low morale and the pessimism in the Allied ranks would react adversely on our officers and men; in fact, this had already been the case to some extent, especially among our men with the British, where the contacts had been close.²⁰

Another British characteristic was a lack of sensitivity to the American desire for independence. Part of this insensitivity was due to Britain's long experience with amalgamation stretching at least back to the Napoleonic Wars with Wellington's polyglot army at Waterloo an obvious example. Additionally, all through the colonial wars of the 1800s British officers had led amalgamated forces with native soldiers leavened with British regulars to great success.²¹ Though they had not chosen to do the same with the Commonwealth nations, it certainly remained an option in British minds.

There was also a degree of condescension in the Allies view of their naive associate which was obviously resented by the Americans. Fox Conner writes; "The British and the French . . . are convinced that we are incapable of handling large forces. If we are incapable, then the war is lost, for neither our people nor our soldiers will consent to the indefinite virtual drafting of our men under foreign colors."²²

A practical objection was accountability of troops commanded by another nation's officers. Marshal Joffre told Pershing he believed amalgamated soldiers "would resent orders received under such circumstances which they would accept without question under an American commander."²³ And, what would happen in the event such a force suffered a defeat? There would be recriminations both by and against the leaders, and the led, which would result in "friction and misunderstanding."²⁴

The final point on this objection was one of the most crucial of Pershing's entire argument. If America was going to win the war then its soldiers had to train for eventual "open warfare." Pershing was convinced that the British and the French had lost the ability to fight anyway but in the trenches.

We found difficulty, however in using these Allied instructors, in that the French and, to a large extent the British, had practically settled down to the conviction that developments since 1914 had changed the principles of warfare. Both held that new conditions imposed by trench fighting had rendered previous conceptions of training more or less obsolete and that preparation for open warfare was no longer necessary.²⁵

And there were distinct tactical differences in how to prepare for open warfare which translates to deep penetration and exploitation. Pershing's Combat Instructions are specific.

From a tactical point of view the method of combat in trench warfare presents a marked contrast to that employed in open warfare, and the attempt by assaulting infantry to use trench warfare methods in an open

warfare combat will be successful only at great cost. Trench warfare is marked by uniform formations, the regulation of space and time by higher commands down to smallest details . . . fixed distances and intervals between units and individuals . . . little initiative. Open warfare is marked by . . . irregularity of formations, comparatively little regulation of space and time by higher commanders, the greatest possible use of the infantry's own firepower to enable it to get forward, variable distances and intervals between units and individuals . . . brief orders and the greatest possible use of individual initiative by all troops engaged in the action.²⁶

The preceding are not isolated thoughts on open warfare. Pershing firmly believed then and instilled them in his subordinates. However, one must also keep in mind that the French, British, and Germans were looking throughout the war for the breakthrough and exploitation, but had been driven to ground by the lethality of artillery and machine guns. Pershing's criticism of the French in this regard whom he viewed as "defensive, at least in thought, during the previous half century,"²⁷ ignores the "school of the offensive" doctrine with which the French entered the war. Adherence to attack, regardless of the enemy's strength, or one's own losses, had proven an unsatisfactory approach to France, and the other combatants on the Western Front as well.²⁸ One shudders at the thought that Pershing may have tried his open warfare doctrine before the Germans had exhausted themselves and had become a shadow of their 1914-1917 forces.

Stir Up Public Opinion Against the War

The certainty of alliance leanings were not so clear as in the Cold War era. American reluctance to enter the war was a reflection of long standing isolation from European affairs, but not of disinterest. As 1917 approached, it was not clear on which side American sentiment rested. First, there was a large pro-German element of the population. In fact, many Americans were native born Germans. Second, while Americans generally had good feelings toward France, most were decidedly anti-British, both attitudes stemming all the way from the Revolutionary War.²⁹ One aspect of the latter was the large number of American Irish immigrants who could hardly be expected to serve in British formations during the Irish national rebellion begun in 1916.³⁰ It is therefore logical that Pershing was concerned about "the certainty of its being used by German propagandists to stir up public opinion against the war."³¹

Excite Political Opposition Against the War

Finally, and closely tied to the immediately preceding objection was "the probability that such action by the United States would excite serious political opposition to the administration in the conduct of the war."³² Pershing argued in the Supreme War Council "that all sorts of questions would be raised . . . as to whether we were in the war to fight for Great Britain."³³ And, as discussed in

Chapter II above, American war aims were different from the Allies. If America was to have a say in the peace settlement, then it must play a major role in the victory. As Fox Conner wrote, "America must have a voice in the peace councils, if a peace satisfactory to her is to be formulated. She will have no such voice if her forces are used up by putting her battalions in French and British units."³⁴ Pershing expressed similar thoughts in a 17 January 1918 letter to Baker,

We must look forward to bearing a very heavy part in this conflict before it ends, and our forces should not be dissipated except for a temporary emergency. Moreover, it is unnecessary to say, when the war ends our position will be stronger if our army acting as such shall have played a distinct and definite part.³⁵

Public opinion would have been most directly affected because of the draft. As one historian writes, "Amalgamating an army of volunteers would have been one thing, but doing it with a conscript army was another."³⁶ Originally, amalgamation had been proposed as recruiting volunteers in excess to American needs into Allied units. There was also the example of American volunteers in French and British Air Forces. However, despite the visibility these flyers received, their numbers were very small. Only 224 American volunteers actually flew as part of the French Air Force and 228 with the British.³⁷ It was the glamour of flight which appealed to these volunteers not the glamour of trench warfare.

When America resorted to the draft to fill its ranks it is logical to assume that the men would fight under

American leadership for reasons of accountability, if nothing else. The British were particularly insensitive to this aspect of the issue. Having bitterly resolved their own draft question, soldiers had become soldiers in British eyes which blinded them to this and many of the other arguments.

In summary, Pershing had been granted by the President and Secretary of War the ultimate authority to decide the amalgamation issue. His objections, summarized in this chapter, encompass the political considerations of national sentiment, political opposition, and anti-war propaganda influencing public opinion. The strength of his opposition was based on the military considerations. He was firmly convinced the war could be won only on the Western Front and only by a large American army trained to breakthrough and exploit on a strategic scale. The decision was his call, but would the Allies accept it?

CHAPTER VI

THE ALLIED CASE

Pershing had an outstanding argument against amalgamation. What case could the Allies possibly make? Was the real issue the condescension sensed by Colonel Conner, among others, that America was incapable of organizing and handling large forces in combat? While there may have been an element of this, the more likely belief was the logical one that America was unprepared for the realities of the Western Front. Drawing on the experience of three years, the British and French must have believed they knew how to fight and a newcomer, especially one who was building an army from scratch, could hardly be expected to be successful.

The real basis of the Allied case, though, was in the vast amount of assistance they provided to the A.E.F. in terms of shipping, materiel support, services of supply, and training. Far from being the "arsenal of democracy" America would become by World War II, the lack of readiness in 1917 made us almost totally dependent on the Allies for support. In reality it was only American manpower, the object of the amalgamation/independence controversy, which we ever got into battle. In view of the support they provided, the French and British could make a strong argument that some payback in terms of combat power was demanded, particularly

with the German offensive imminent.¹ Shipping was discussed under the Six Division Program above. To repeat, Allied shipping, principally British, transported almost 57% of the 2,000,000 men the A.E.F. got to France by the end of the war. The other aspects of Allied support will now be analyzed.

Materiel Support

The A.E.F. was especially deficient in direct war-fighting equipment--artillery, small arms, munitions, and aircraft. Prior to the war each of these was supplied by relatively small plants geared to the training needs of a small army. Further, these plants had virtually no expansion capability. Greatly increased production demanded by modern war would require months, and expansion efforts would not really begin to bear fruit until very near the end of the war.²

Without resorting to a long "laundry list" detailing American dependence on the French and British for supply, the following paragraphs are illustrative. Of the 4,300+ artillery pieces possessed by the A.E.F. at the end of the war, 3,800 (88%) were provided by the Allies. Almost half of these totals were the famous French 75mm gun. Many of the American weapons arrived too late to get into action and the highest estimate is that only 130 weapons of American manufacture actually fired in combat. Virtually all the

10,000,000 rounds of ammunition fired by the A.E.F. were produced by the French.³

It must be said that this critical assistance was not much of a strain to the Allies. In a 4 December 1917 letter from Bliss to the Adjutant General, reviewing American requirements, he documented:

The representatives of Great Britain and France state that their production of artillery (field, medium and heavy) is now established on so large a scale that they are able to equip completely all American divisions as they arrive in France during the year 1918 with the best make of British and French guns and howitzers. The British and French ammunition supply and reserves are sufficient to provide the requirements of the American army thus equipped at least up to June 1918 provided that the existing 6-inch shell plants in the United States and Dominion of Canada are maintained in full activity . . . The French can and are willing to supply the American army as it arrives in Europe with its full quota of 75-millimeter field guns and with adequate supplies of shells for this size provided that the United States furnish raw materials, propellants, and explosives in advance.⁴

America was also forced to adopt the British Enfield rifle over the preferred Springfield because "it was then being manufactured for the British in large quantities at private factories in our own country and a slight modification of the chamber only was necessary to make it fit our ammunition."⁵ Additionally, the Allies supplied 253 of the 289 tanks (88%) and 5151 of the 6364 aircraft (81%) used by the A.E.F. One third of the A.E.F. machine guns were supplied by the French.⁶

One must also keep in mind the vast amount of services and various categories of supplies provided by the

Allies. For example, 70% of the 225,000 horses required for transportation came from the French. In all, ten million tons of supplies and equipment were purchased or provided free to the A.E.F. in Europe compared with seven million tons shipped from the US.⁷

The War Department clearly saw the ability, or inability, to supply American forces as an independence issue.

Dependence upon another nation for our arms and ammunition is contrary to the independent spirit of our people. It is thought that the abandonment of our arms for inferior arms of another nation would be resented by the public at large, and satisfactory explanation by the War Department would be difficult.⁸

Nevertheless, if America was to fight, it would fight with French and British equipment. Seen from the perspective of the Allies, could they not expect to get some payback from their assistance?

Training

The shipping, materiel support, and services of supply such as transportation provided by the Allies was essential to the American war effort but would have no impact if Pershing's "groups of civilians" were not properly "militarized." Training was thus the biggest limitation in getting Americans into the fight.

There were generally three phases of training for the average American soldier--six months of basic training in the United States with emphasis on general military skills, two months of further training in France emphasizing western

Front combat, and one month in trench warfare training in a quiet sector of the front.⁹ This training concept was driven by a number of factors. The most important consideration was the availability of shipping. The stateside training was determined strictly by shipping, not by any standards of proficiency. The troops arriving in France were therefore a mixed bag of soldiers and near-civilians who had to be finished by experienced trainers willingly provided by the British and French.

Perhaps the biggest single issue involving training centered on the training requirements of American higher level commanders and their staffs. As Colonel Conner wrote in a 16 December 1917 memo, "Notwithstanding our enormous military expansion, our weakness is not in our junior officers, soldiers, and small units, but in the higher command and staff. Only by actual work in divisional units can we remedy this weakness."¹⁰ This thought was repeated often throughout the amalgamation debate and is certainly a valid consideration especially in view of Pershing's large unit, open warfare emphasis. One other factor bearing on the need for higher command and staff training was the relative size of the American divisions compared to the Allies which were only about 12,000-14,000 at various stages of the war against 27,000-28,000 in an American division. Such a formation would indeed be unwieldy without adequate training.

Training with the British

American training with the British was the result of the Six-Division Program although ten divisions would ultimately be trained under the agreement. The program was well thought out and was based on the British experience of its own soldiers needs learned after three years of war. American troops would arrive as complete divisions and be attached with British reserve units in rear areas (See Figure 1). The commanders and staffs were likewise attached to their counterparts. Only the artillery units were detached. These completed their training with the French who were also providing the guns and ammunitions as discussed under "Materiel Support" above.

The training program was estimated to require three to three and one half months. The aim was for the Americans to build from small to larger and larger units as training proficiency increased. For the first two or three weeks battalions would train out of the line with a British brigade. They would then complete a tour in the line with that same brigade. After rest and refit, battalions would be concentrated into regiments and attached to divisions. After a tour in the line, the regiments could be formed into brigades and concentrated in a divisional area where training would be finished as a division under its own commander and his staff. The division would then join the American army in its designated sector.¹¹

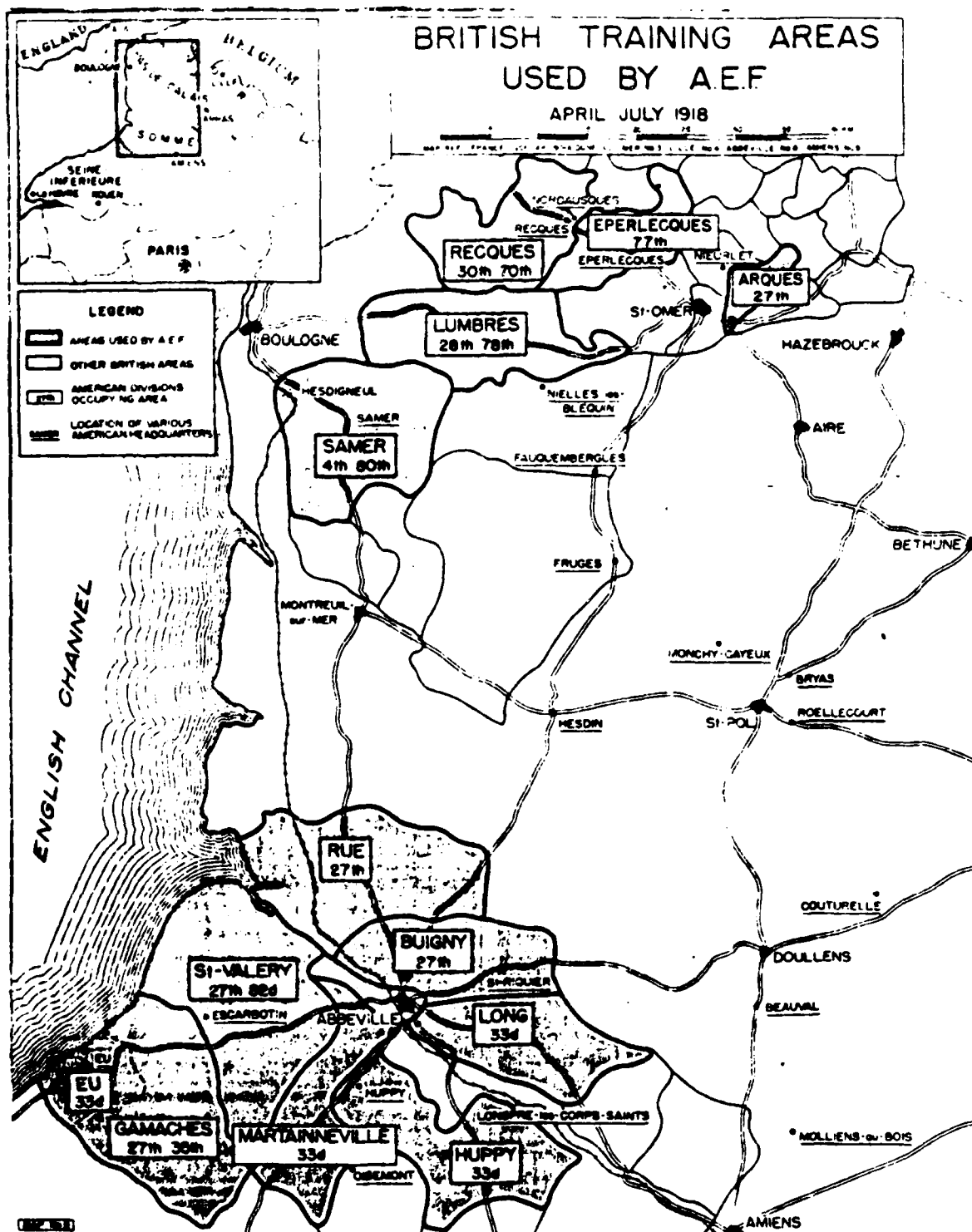


Figure 1 British Training Areas

U. S. Army in the World War, vol. III, 131.

The key feature of the program was

that the higher American commanders and staffs be attached for training to the corresponding British commanders and staffs, but that such American commanders retain full responsibility for the training and discipline of their commands, supply remaining under the control of the British."¹²

One seemingly small point that was addressed early in the plan was how to provide the different caliber ammunition for American machine guns and rifles than that used by the British. "It was preferable for the Americans to continue to use the weapons with which they would eventually be armed . . . The British will receive the ammunition in bulk, and will be responsible for the detailed supply to units."¹³ In assessing amalgamation as an organizational scheme, logistics is a critical factor. If logistics is considered an individual nation's responsibility in a coalition, and weapon systems are not interoperable, then the logistics system dictates that armies fight in national sectors. It was only the materiel support provided by the Allies and therefore a high degree of interoperability among the nations which made amalgamation even feasible.

One excellent feature of the training scheme was the establishment of an American headquarters to oversee the training and watch over American interests. Lt Col George S. Simonds was assigned as Chief of Staff, II Corps, with a small staff on 20 February 1918 and was given authority to act in Pershing's name on any aspect of training with the British. He could, and did, communicate directly with any

headquarters and American or British staff agency required to facilitate training.¹⁴ This small staff was largely responsible for the generally good relations between the British and the Americans during this critical part of the American preparation for ultimate independent operations. Both American and British communications on the agreements and progress are refreshingly free of the acrimony which characterizes much of the amalgamation debate.

The excellent agreement and continuous communications between the two sides precluded the use of Americans in combat before they were ready. Even during the German offenses the British stuck to the plan and the emergency use that was envisioned by the British never came about. Haig did include them in his plans, but only as their state of readiness allowed. For example on 23 May 1918 a field order included a tasking for American units to "be disposed as garrison of a rear system of defense--this they should improve and in the case of hostile attack will hold."¹⁵ A similar agreement was documented in an 11 June 1918 dispatch for American divisions to be used "(a) To occupy rear line of defense as reserves to front line troops, or (b) In case of necessity they may be assigned to a portion of the front line."¹⁶

In summary, training with the British was well-planned, deliberate, and thorough, making good use of British war experience. Relations were cordial, although

"differences in national characteristics" led to some interesting arrangements. For example, the supply agreement included "The British will provide all subsistence . . . The rum ration will be omitted."¹⁷ The excellent coordination of the II Corps headquarters to facilitate communication and look out for American interests combined to produce well prepared soldiers. Both sides were committed to the plan and did not resort to the use of Americans as cannon-fodder. The British got good payback for their shipping and training, what they needed, but not what they wanted--amalgamation.

Training with the French

The A.E.F. training with the French paralleled the British building block approach of battalions with brigades, regiments with divisions, and independent division training under American control. In addition, the concept of out-of-line and in-line training in quiet sectors of the front was the same. The principle difference was that the excellent relations between the nations' armies that characterized American-British relations were even better with the French. This was partially a result of the pro-French American sentiment and the fact that "we are operating on French soil and due to our long overseas communications are far more dependent upon good understanding with the French than are the British."¹⁸ But it was also a question of French attitude.

The French were simply more appreciative of American help than were the British. While American relations with the British during the training were cordial, the French never displayed the insensitivity to American sentiment that the British occasionally did. As Petain instructed his army on training the A.E.F., he stressed attitude as much as the details:

In their relations with American officers the French officers must always use the greatest tact: The Americans fully recognize the value of our military experience; for our part, we must not forget that America is a great nation, that the Americans have a national self respect developed and justified by the breadth of vision which they bring to bear upon all questions which they consider. French officers should treat the officers of their grade, or of a subordinate grade, as comrades who have arrived more recently than they upon the front, and should treat them as little as possible as a master does a scholar.¹⁹

This is not to imply that there were no problems. The difference in language was discussed occasionally. In addition, there was relatively more discussion than with British about getting Americans into the line. This was primarily because of the relatively higher state of readiness of the American divisions working with the French. The 1st Division had been in France since July 1917 and the 2nd, 26th, and 42nd since October 1917.²⁰

But the more serious problem was the differences in strategy. As Petain instructed his trainers,

Operations in Open Country: Americans dream of operating in open country, after having broken through the front. This results in too much attention being devoted to this form of operations, which the Americans consider as superior, and in which, our Allies sometimes

seem to think, we are incapable of offering them the same assistance which they expect from us in trench warfare.²¹

The French challenge was to "take discreet measures to counteract the idea that we are inexperienced in open warfare"²² yet prepare the Americans for the realities of the Western Front for which the average American's "lack of previous military training leaves him unprepared and he is unable to imagine things which he has never seen."²³

The American view of trench warfare was best expressed by Major General R.L. Bullard who recommended reduction of such training. "First: After the preliminary training on the subject, two weeks is adequate time to learn all that is necessary for a beginning of warfare in the trenches. Second: Trench warfare, if prolonged beyond a very limited period, takes the offensive spirit out of troops."²⁴

Nevertheless, the commitment to properly preparing the Americans prior to exposing them to combat was the same as the British. In addition, the willingness to provide the necessary training areas, both French (Figure 2) and American (Figure 3) and equip and supply Americans during the training period made the ultimate American contribution possible.

The French and British thus had a strong case for utilization of American manpower because of the vast amount of assistance they provided to the A.E.F. This chapter

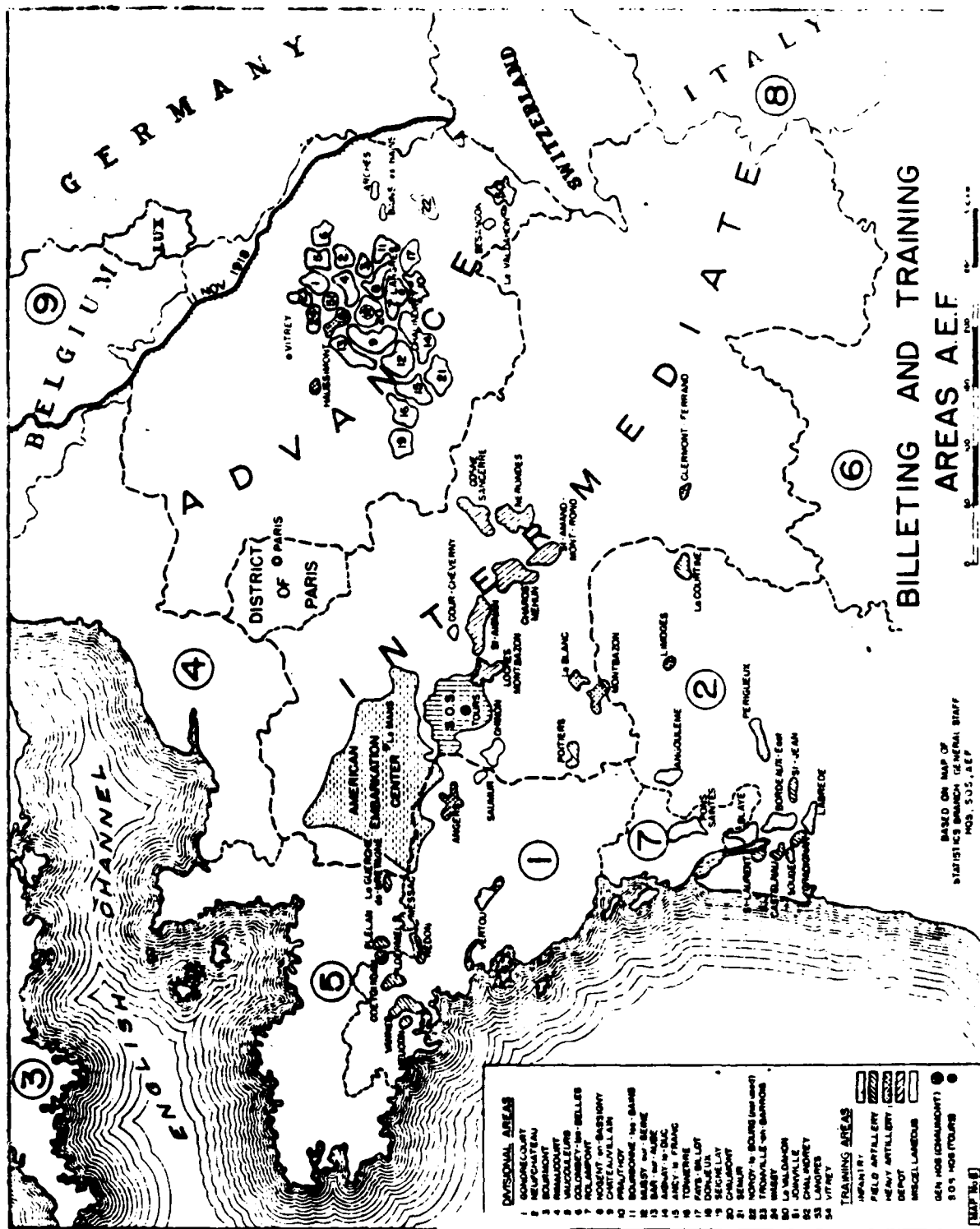


Figure 2 French Training Areas

U. S. Army in the World War, vol. III, 249.

establishes a balanced view of the amalgamation controversy by presenting the Allied case. Seen in this light, the desperate strategic situation, the slow buildup of the American army, the shipping, materiel, and training support seem to favor the French and British position on amalgamation as they braced for the imminent German attack.

CHAPTER VII

THE GERMAN OFFENSIVE

On 20 March 1918 the 180 French and British divisions on the Western Front faced 192 German divisions. The A.E.F. was still not ready. Only the 1st Division was combat ready and was holding its own sector of the front near Toul. Three other divisions--2nd, 42nd, and 26th were serving or had served their training period in the line with their French partner divisions. A total of 287,500 American troops were in France.¹

The next day the long anticipated German offensive began with the principal attack against the British on the Somme (Figure 4). From then until mid-July 1918 four other major German attacks from Flanders to the Marne would threaten to achieve victory. The German offensive impacted the amalgamation controversy in two ways. First, the British provided even more shipping to bring vast numbers of American soldiers to France. But because the soldiers were specified to be principally infantry and machine gunners without the division support troops, the arrivals continued to fuel Allied amalgamation demands. Second, in response to the emergency, Pershing yielded to temporary amalgamation of American units. Yet he stuck to the training needs of his senior commanders and their staffs which would ultimately

SKETCH MAP OF THE WESTERN FRONT

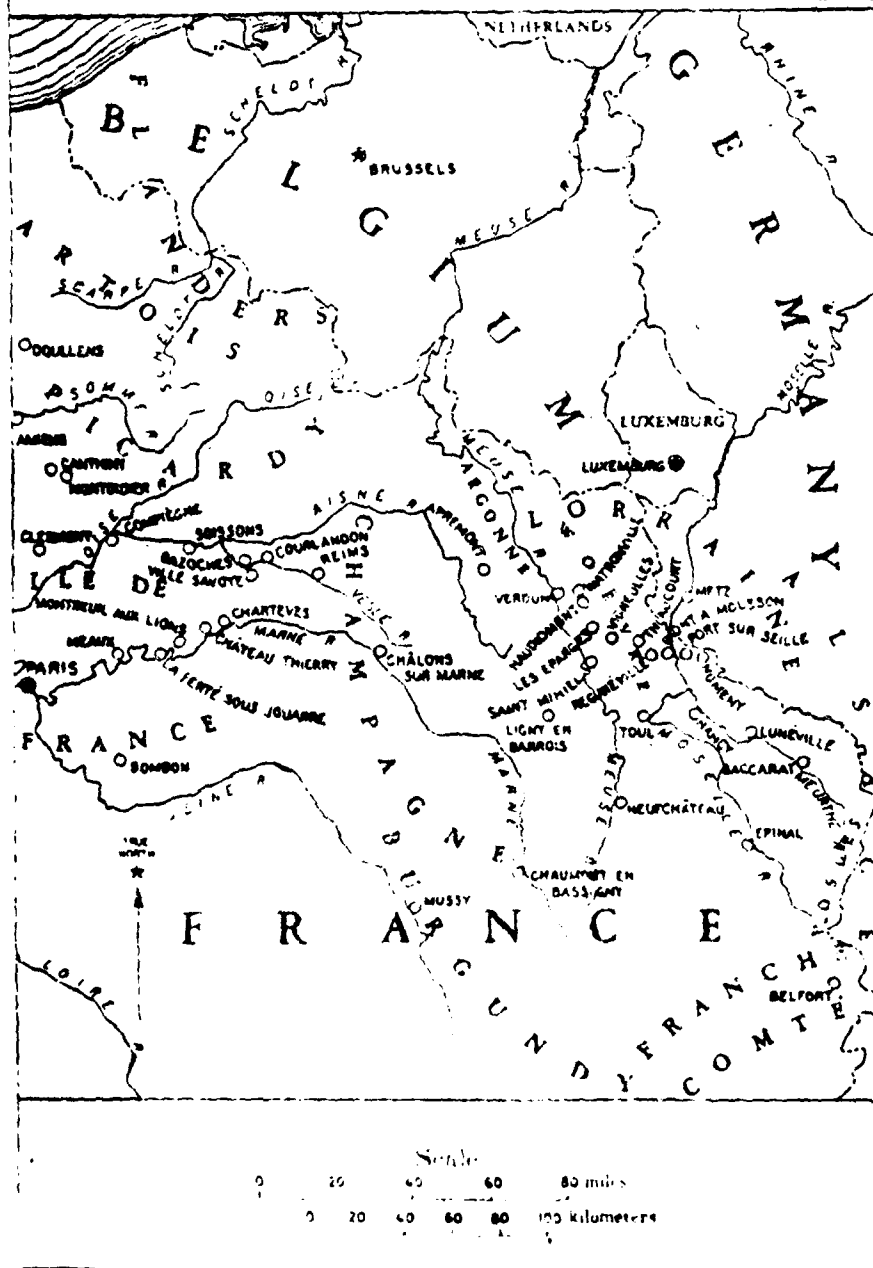


Figure 4 Western Front

U. S. Army War College, Historical Section. The Genesis of the American First Army (Washington, D. C., 1938), 4.

allow the formation of an independent American army by not permitting amalgamation of less than division-size formations.

Joint Note 18

The initial German attack on the Somme penetrated the British line over 50 kilometers in some areas before it was checked by British reserves reinforced by the French. In response to the desperate situation the military representatives of the Supreme War Council met to discuss how America could best aid the Allies who it now appeared could not hold out against repeated German attacks. The result was a modification to the Six-Division Program discussed in Chapter IV above. In Joint Note 18 the military representatives including General Bliss recommended that only American infantry and machine gun units be shipped to France and temporarily amalgamated with Allied divisions until the emergency situation was stabilized.²

The relationships among the highest levels of American political and military leadership were outstanding throughout the war. However, in this case General Bliss had acted against Pershing's view. Pershing appealed his position directly to Secretary of War Baker who fortuitously was on a visit to France. As a result Secretary Baker recommended to the President on March 28 that Joint Note 18 with priority shipment of only infantry and machine gunners

be approved, but with an important caveat.

Such units, when transported, will be under the direction of the Commander-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Forces, and will be assigned for training and use by him in his discretion. He will use these and all other military forces of the United States under his command in such manner as to render the greatest military assistance keeping in mind always the determination of this Government to have its various military forces collected, as speedily as their training and the military situation permits, into an independent American army.³

President Wilson approved the caveat and thus again affirmed America's commitment to fight as an independent army.

The next few weeks the Americans and the British debated the amount of manpower that could be shipped and its composition. The British assumed that given the seriousness of the German offensives the priority shipment of infantry and machine gunners would be continuous. Pershing, of course, took a different view. He reverted back to the original agreements of the Six-Division Program and acceded only to the combat elements of these divisions preceding the remaining divisional troops and then only slightly. The priority shipment of American combat arms would only be for the month of May after which a further decision would be made as to the American shipping priorities.⁴ The British reluctantly agreed to this program and magnanimously came up with additional shipping which when added to American capability would transport 750,000 troops to France between April and the end of July.⁵

The priority shipment of the combat elements of the divisions shipped and trained by the British complicated the formation of an independent American army and continued to fuel amalgamation demands. One division's experience is illustrative and in addition shows the typical training pace of the A.E.F. during this period.

The 82nd Division sailed from Boston, Brooklyn and New York City to Liverpool with the advance detachment embarking on 16 April 1918 and the last unit not arriving until 10 July. After a brief rest the troops sailed from Southampton to Le Havre. The infantry and artillery trained with the British 66th Division until 15 June at St. Valery. The artillery brigade did not arrive in France until 4 June where it was trained at the American artillery school at La Courtine. The engineers and other combat and combat support elements arrived at Le Havre on 3-4 June and completed brief training at their branch schools prior to rejoining the combat arms near Toul in mid-June. From 25 June to 17 July the division, less artillery, trained in the line with the French 154th Division. It was not until just prior to the St. Mihiel offensive that the full division was re-joined.⁶ As long as the divisional elements remained scattered, amalgamation seemed to the Allies to be feasible. Amalgamation was not, however, feasible to John J. Pershing.

The Abbeville Agreement

As the argument continued the second major German attack occurred on 9 April in Flanders. Again only a maximum effort by the British reinforced by French divisions prevented the Germans from breaking through to the sea. A dramatic confrontation on 25 April between Pershing and Foch, who was just appointed Allied Commander-in-Chief on 14 April, effectively summarizes the status of the amalgamation battle at this point.

When questioned about giving shipping priority to combat arms, Pershing stated that he thought the proposition would delay the formation of an American army before the spring of 1919.

General Foch stated that 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, 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.⁷

Pershing gave his assurance that he understood the seriousness of the situation but did not give in on the issue of independence. In fact, he appears to have considered the necessity of America fighting the war alone as Foch suggested when he revised the American requirement to 80 divisions by April 1919 and 100 divisions by July 1919.⁸ Pershing did agree to continual priority for infantry and machine gunners in June and July.

Pershing's obstinacy was beginning to wear down the Allies. After much of the same type of discussion which characterized the debate to this point, the Supreme War Council finally acceded to Pershing's argument and granted Joint Note 19 at a meeting in Abbeville on 2 May 1918:⁹ "It is the opinion of the Supreme War Council 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."¹⁰

The Abbeville Agreement effectively ended the philosophical debate, but did not totally resolve it. Much fighting, both on the battlefield and in the conference rooms would be necessary until the amalgamation/independence issue was resolved. After all America had yet to appear in force on the battlefield.

Temporary Amalgamation

American participation in the first two offensives was very limited. On the Somme only three engineer regiments and four air squadrons saw action.¹¹ In Flanders only two engineer regiments and one air squadron actually fought.¹² However, the 26th Division took over the 1st Division sector and the 42nd Division relieved two French divisions in the Vosges to allow the French to get into the heavy fighting.¹³

But with the third major attack, this time against the French along the Aisne River centered on Soissons, the

real American contribution began. The German attack of 27 May broke through the French lines and by 1 June had penetrated nearly to the Marne. To counter the advance the American 2nd Division was placed in a gap in the line on the heights above the Marne just northwest of Chateau Thierry where it was instrumental in stopping the German advance. Additionally, the 3rd Division having just arrived in France and only partially trained, helped hold the river crossings at Chateau Thierry.¹⁴ It was also during this period that the 1st Division captured Cantigny in a pre-planned action involving primarily French artillery.¹⁵

The division size application of A.E.F. units during the Aisne-Marne defensive began the pattern of employment which continued until the ultimate assembly of the independent American army. It is a critical point and one glossed over by many accounts of the amalgamation controversy. Pershing was insistent upon keeping the largest possible American units together during the A.E.F.'s training period. Only by doing so could he assure the training needs not only of the soldiers but of his senior level commanders and their staffs. It was only at the division level where a combined arms force with infantry, machine gunners, artillery, cavalry, and a combat support and combat service support train came together to provide the command, control, and logistics challenges to adequately provide the senior commanders and staffs the needed

experience for even larger operations.¹⁶ Plus in communications with both the French and British he insisted on division level operations as his bottom line.

In regard to using the 27th and 30th Divisions, Pershing wrote to Haig,

I have, however, informed General Read. (II Corps Commander) that these divisions must remain under their own division commanders. We have so often discussed the question of bringing American forces together in large units that I am sure that it is unnecessary for me to insist upon the reasons why my division commanders should exercise tactical as well as administrative control over their own troops.¹⁷

Similar correspondence between Pershing and Petain adhered to employment by division as the guiding principal.¹⁸

During the Montdidier-Noyon offensive in June and the final Champagne-Marne offensive in July increasing numbers of American divisions participated in the Allied defense. In all nine divisions were engaged in active fighting. In addition, parts of five other divisions entered the line for training, partially freeing up Allied units for combat.¹⁹ The principle of keeping the American divisions together aided the Allies, while providing valuable training leading to the ultimate formation of an independent American army. Temporary amalgamation below the division level, as the French and British pressed for during the American buildup, was a rare exception.

The Black Regiments

The most notable exception was the service of four black regiments with the French. Immediately upon their arrival in France, the 369th, 370th, 371st, and 372nd Infantry Regiments of the 93rd Division were attached to French divisions in precisely the way the Allies had envisioned amalgamation.²⁰ Two aspects of this exception demanded assessment--the regiments performance under amalgamation and why the exception was made.

The French were extremely well satisfied with the black soldiers. The 369th spent 191 days in line, longer than any other American unit. During the Meuse-Argonne campaign the French division commander commended the 371st and 372nd, "The bravery and dash of your regiments are the admiration of the Moroccan division and they are good judges."²¹ Three of the four regiments were awarded the Croix de Guerre unit citation, France's highest honor.²² So the performance seems to validate at least the potential of the Allies' amalgamation concept.

The why is a bit more complicated. Certainly racial prejudice was a part of it. There was concern in the South over training and arming large numbers of blacks. There were several instances of rioting in protest to stationing of blacks in training camps and almost unbelievable instances of discrimination.²³ Pershing had much direct experience having served with the 10th Cavalry. His

nickname "Black Jack" was an originally derisive reference to this service.²⁴ And his attitude about black soldiers is best reflected in his comments on the poor performance of the A.E.F.'s 368th Regiment, of the 92nd Division in the Meuse-Argonne.²⁵ He wrote of the "lower capacity" of colored soldiers and of the "colored officers (being) relatively below white officers in general ability." He concluded that "it would have been much wiser to have followed the long experience of our Regular Army and provided these colored units with selected white officers."²⁶

Despite this aspect of racial prejudice the principal reason behind the decision to amalgamate the black units was that the regiments had come to France without the other divisional troops. They were thus unable to be formed into, and trained and employed as, a complete division as Pershing would have done, if at all possible.²⁷ Because of the total segregation policy of the World War I American Army, without a divisional structure there was simply no other alternative.

Except for the four black regiments the American response to the amalgamation demands in the face of the German 1918 offensives was by those divisions who could benefit from the large unit training such response provided in preparation for an independent American army.

CHAPTER VIII

A PIECE OF THE FRONT

After the final thrusts of the German offensive were checked, the Allies began a counteroffensive in the Marne valley. Between 18 July and 28 July the French, bolstered by eight American divisions albeit scattered all along the front, had regained all the territory lost in the German Champagne-Marne offensive and had begun the series of offensives which would ultimately win the war. The emergency which fueled the Allied amalgamation demands had passed. In Pershing's view "the people of the United States have been given to understand that there is an army of a million American men in France. The American public will therefore soon begin to ask why there is not an American army fighting as such, or whether our soldiers are not good enough to hold a front of their own."¹

Lorraine

The question of a separate sector of the front for an American army was obviously critical to the amalgamation controversy.

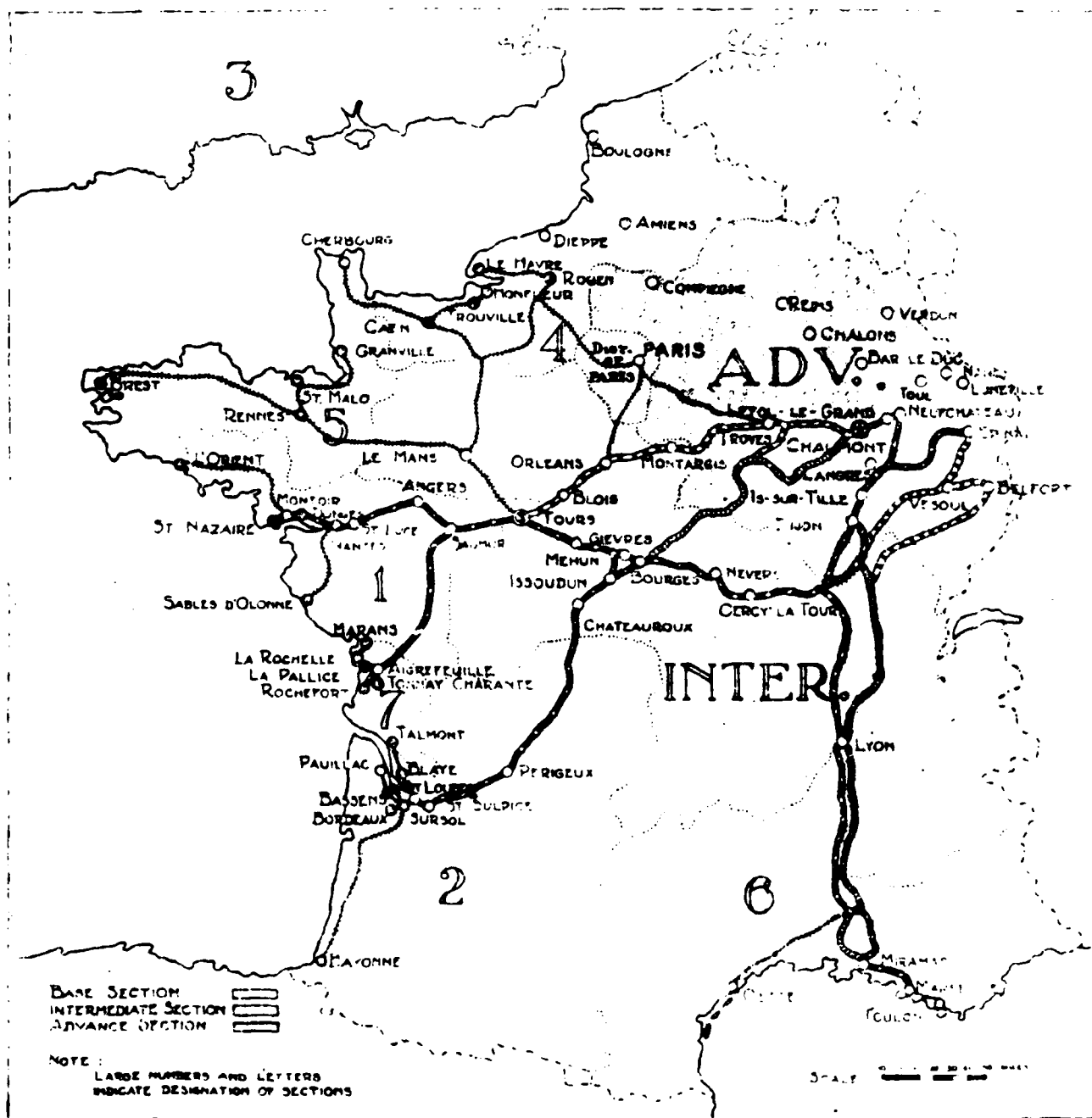
Shortly after arriving in France, Pershing began to consider the Lorraine region for the eventual employment of the A.E.F. The first consideration was the practical one of finding an area large enough, and quiet enough, to train a

new army, but one that would not conflict with the French and British. The availability of ports of debarkation and rail systems alone seemed to point to Lorraine. The British in Flanders and Picardy were supplied through the Channel ports with extensive road and rail systems built up for their supply requirements. The French army was in the area covering the approaches to Paris, which was critical to its supply. However, the ports of St. Nazaire, La Pallice, and Bassens were relatively uncongested. In addition, the railroads from these ports permitted movement into Lorraine without interference with the British or French supply lines.² (Figure 5)

Lorraine was also a relatively quiet sector of the front. However, it offered what Pershing was looking for most--the potential for a decisive offensive. As Pershing wrote in his Final Report,

The great fortified district east of Verdun and around menaced central France, protected the most exposed portion of the German line of communications, that between Metz and Sedan, and covered the Briey iron region, from which the enemy obtained the greater part of the iron required for munitions and material. The coal fields east of Metz were also covered by these same defenses. A deep advance east of Metz, or the capture of the Briey region, by threatening the invasion of rich German territory in the Moselle Valley and the Saar Basin, thus curtailing her supply of coal or iron, would have a decisive effect in forcing a withdrawal of German troops from France.³

Within Lorraine, the area around St. Mihiel seemed to be the best choice for the first American army's offensive. It was lightly defended and the terrain was slightly better



PRINCIPAL FRENCH PORTS AND RAILROADS USED BY AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCES

● GENERAL HEADQUARTERS ● HQ SERVICES OF SUPPLY ● MAJOR PORTS ● STATIONARY PORTS ● MINOR PORTS
— MAIN LINES — BRANCH LINES — RAILROADS

Figure 5 Lorraine

Pershing, Final Report, Plate 8.

than the rugged Vosges to the south or the heights above the Meuse around Verdun to the north. One disadvantage noted in an early assessment by the A.E.F.'s G-2 was that "It would not, however, pave the way for a further attack in the same locality, although its occupation would be equally favorable for supporting an advance northward from Verdun. . . ."4 This, of course, would be realized in the Meuse-Argonne offensive.

The selection of Lorraine as a separate and distinct American sector was the final piece of Pershing's concept of an independent American army. The concept may now be seen as a total program, not an either independent/or amalgamation situation. With clear initial direction from the President and Secretary of War, Pershing set in motion a training plan based on divisions as building blocks, with an open warfare doctrine, all aimed at the concentration of an independent army in Lorraine for a final decisive offensive against the Germans. The final problem was how to achieve the concentration

Concentration of the American Army

The Americans had always seen a potential problem with even temporary amalgamation. As Pershing wrote to the Chief of Staff on 1 January 1918, "They probably could not be relieved for service with us without disrupting the Allied divisions to which assigned especially if engaged in active service."⁵ But with the temporary halt on 28

July to consolidate the gains made in the first Allied counteroffensive, the time had come. Foch agreed. Earlier on 14 July he had declared:

Today when there are a million Americans in France, America must have her place in the war. America has the right to have her army organized as such; the American army must be an accomplished fact. Moreover the cause of the Allies will be better served by an American army under its own chief than by an American army with its units dispersed.⁶

In early June there was an attempt to form a corps uniting the American divisions in the Chateau-Thierry area. This had not succeeded due to the German offensives and only one American division had come under its command. However, on 24 July the concept was expanded to form the 1st American Army of two corps of three divisions each. The remaining A.E.F. divisions were concentrated near Toul which would be the ultimate American sector. On 9 August, Foch allowed all American forces, less three divisions left on the Vesle, to be concentrated for an offensive near St. Mihiel.⁷ Eight of the ten divisions shipped and trained by the British were transferred in two groups, five divisions in June and three in August, leaving only the 27th and 30th Divisions behind the British lines.⁸

One final drama was to be played out before action by an independent American army became reality. By 30 August the concentration of the forces needed for the St. Mihiel operation was nearly complete when Foch proposed a major change to the plan. Instead of a major effort against St.

Mihiel, the Americans would make their attack west of the Argonne Forest supporting an amalgamated French-American army under a French commander in the Meuse-Argonne. Had all the previous agreements been for nothing?

Pershing asked for time to study the situation. The next day he presented his final position: "I can no longer agree to any plan which involves dispersion of our units."⁹ The A.E.F. would fight as an American army or not at all. Foch responded that Pershing could hardly call his force now an American army since it was lacking guns, tanks, aircraft, transportation, and much of the services of supply needed to make an army. In fact, this is true. As has been discussed throughout this paper, the materiel support provided by the Allies was the strongest case they had for amalgamation. In addition, the priority shipment of infantry and machine gunners in May, June, and July and the "catch up" efforts of other divisional elements had left serious shortages in corps and army troops necessary for a true all-American force. Pershing rightly pointed out that this had been a corporate decision and had in large measure been willingly corrected by incorporation of French services troops. Liddell Hart notes that "Foch wisely dropped the argument."¹⁰

At a final meeting on 2 September, the two commanders agreed on a compromise. The St. Mihiel operation would be

scaled back and would be immediately followed by a major all-American effort in the Meuse-Argonne.¹¹

St. Mihiel

The elimination of the St. Mihiel salient began on 12 September with the main attack by seven American divisions in two corps on the south face of the salient between Montsec and Pont-a-Mousson. (Figure 6) The plan called for the 26th Division and a brigade of the 4th Division to attack on the west face and pinch off the salient by closing with the main body at Vigneulles. In a bit of irony, the French II Colonial Corps of three divisions **under General Pershing's command** would make a supporting attack against the heights between St. Mihiel and Montsec. The French 15th Colonial Division was to make a supporting attack beside the Americans on the west face.¹² In addition the air forces were concentrated under an American commander, Brigadier General Billy Mitchell. The 1,481 aircraft were the largest concentration of air forces ever assembled and were tasked with observation, interdiction, and close air support for the operation.¹³

The offensive began with an intense, four-hour artillery barrage by 3000 guns (almost all French), followed by the advance of the seven division force on the south face. The German forces facing them had actually begun a retreat to counter the expected attack similar to their strategic withdrawal in early 1917 which had upset the

The map illustrates the Meuse River area, showing the Meuse River, the Moselle River, and the Plain. Key locations marked include Haudiomont, Sept. Thiaucourt, Vigneulles, Nonsard, Montsec, Loupmont, St. Mihiel, Marvoisin, Sèchepey, Lunévy, Pont-a-Mousson, Rembercourt-sur-Mad, and Fr. 26. Military units shown include VII Corps, I Corps, and IV Corps. Arrows indicate movements, and various fortifications and positions are marked with numbers and letters.

————— Jumpoff Line Sept. 12 (A.M.)
 - - - - - Army Boundary
 - - - - - Corps Boundary
 - - - - - Front Line Actually Reached
 Numbers indicate direction and distance from line to

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Nivelle Offensive. However, the short artillery preparation helped achieve surprise and the long range fire was effective in isolating the battlefield. The Americans advanced quickly and actually reached their second day's objectives north of Thiaucourt by noon of the first day. Exploitation of this rapid advance was limited by the inability to move forward the follow-on supplies ahead of schedule.

The advance on the west face was not as successful. One reason is that the terrain was much more difficult with steep wooded hills stretching east from the Meuse. More important was the fact that the forces in this sector had been reduced from three or four American divisions in the original plan to the one A.E.F. division plus one brigade with a French division supporting attack. The left wing of the pincer had simply been too weakened to exploit the success on the right.¹⁴

Additionally, the air effort was severely hampered by low ceilings and visibility which precluded much flying on the first three days of the battle. The Air Service's Final Report does credit the air effort with some success strafing and bombing the retreating Germans on the fourth day.¹⁵

The battle was terminated on 14 September with the objective of straightening the lines realized. Later critics such as Liddell Hart emphasize the missed opportunity and the escape of 40,000-50,000 Germans as a

result of the inability to rapidly close the trap.¹⁶ However, it was seen at the time as a major victory and the validation of an independent American army's potential. The results were impressive for a first effort including 15,000 prisoners and 257 guns for a loss of 7,000 casualties.¹⁷ As Conner summarized, "The First Army had developed a sense of power that was very essential to overcoming the more difficult tasks awaiting it; American staffs had shown their ability to control large masses; the enemy saw America entering the war capable of organizing and employing her millions as a distinct National Army."¹⁸

How Distinct a National Army?

The A.E.F. would never achieve complete independence. During the Meuse-Argonne campaign four divisions had no organic artillery due to the shipping priorities of the spring and early summer. The French willingly provided the support. In addition, French aircraft, tanks, and even an entire army corps fought along side the Americans and under American command. French corps and army troops were used throughout American operations and no doubt added considerable expertise in battlefield distribution of ammunition and other supplies in the difficult terrain of the Argonne Forest.¹⁹

Some American units never fought as a distinct national army. The 27th and 30th Divisions under II Corps fought under British command on the Somme. Six American

divisions served with the French in the Vosges. The 2nd and 36th Divisions fought under French command in Champagne while the 37th and 91st supported the French and Belgians in Flanders. The 332d Infantry Regiment of the 83d Division was even sent to Italy in July 1918, and the 339th Infantry Regiment of the 85th Division was part of the Murmansk Expedition.²⁰

So, Pershing's fight for independence was won but never completed. What he had achieved was nonetheless remarkable, given America's state of readiness on 6 April 1917. He had certainly averted amalgamation as envisioned by the Allies and the situation described best by Tasker Bliss which was the spirit behind his original tasking: "When the war is over it may be a literal fact that the American flag may not have appeared anywhere on the line . . . We might have a million men there and yet no American army and no American commander."²¹ America, with considerable Allied aid, had fielded an impressive army which helped end the war. The 52,000 Americans who died under their flag had won for their country a considerable influence in the peace process.

CHAPTER IX

AFTERMATH

Beyond the obvious strain between America and its coalition partners during the war, did the amalgamation controversy have an impact on post-war national security policy? A researcher's dream would be to find that, because of the bitterness of the struggle for independence, Pershing and his successors were determined and took action never again to be in the position where amalgamation would be an employment option. However, there is no evidence to support such a thesis. Instead, the anti-war, and especially anti-alliance, spirit of the 1920s and 1930s relegated the amalgamation controversy largely to the warriors' memoirs.

America and the Peace Process

American retrenchment to an isolationist posture began almost immediately after the Armistice. America's position in the peace process had clearly been bought by Pershing's successful fight for independence. But President Wilson's idealism was out of place with the other victors' aims. As one historian wrote, "The peoples of Europe seemed in any case more grateful for American help in achieving victory than they were eager for American meddling in the peace."¹ Nevertheless, Wilson was successful in tempering some of his associates' more extreme demands and

in incorporation of the League of Nations Covenant in the peace treaty.

But, the American Senate objected to the Covenant of the League as a compromise of American sovereignty. Amendments to the Covenant more in line with American interests led to other nations pressing for their own interests which resulted in a harsher treaty to the Germans than originally drafted. This final version continued to fuel American internal political battles and the Senate finally rejected the Versailles Treaty including membership in the League of Nations. It was not until 1921 that President Harding proclaimed the war over for America.²

Military demobilization paralleled the political withdrawal and the Army drew down from a peak of over 4,000,000 men on 11 November 1918 to 200,000 by 1920 and 132,000 by 1923.

Anti-alliance Sentiment

The American retrenchment was driven by two complementary public moods. The first was a decidedly anti-war sentiment. After all, hadn't America just fought the war to end all wars? This anti-war sentiment was strengthened by the revelations of the extent of the slaughter on the Western Front. The 1920s and 1930s intellectual community was dominated by the writings of anti-war popularists such as Fitzgerald and Hemingway in the US and Sassoon, Graves, and Blunden in Britain.⁴

But the complementary public mood bears more direction on this study--that is, the anti-alliance sentiment. As British Prime Minister Ramsey MacDonald expressed, "There must be no sectional alliances, no guarantees of a special kind."⁵ Alliances were seen to be a primary cause of the war. A more realistic assessment is expressed by Paul Kennedy.

The deeper cause of the war lay in the strongly competitive and nationalistic atmosphere of European politics. What the alliances did was to give military structure to those rivalries; and what they also did was to hasten the process toward war during the July 1914 crisis: first, because their existence gave a legal justification for action; and second, because the joint staff planning, especially over timetables and deployments, increased the pressure to act quickly regardless of diplomatic considerations.⁶

Nevertheless, in the public mind, peacetime alliances led ultimately and uncontrollably to war and were to be avoided.

The war planners carried this anti-alliance spirit to extreme with strategic planning that reflected an anti-coalition bias. The US color plans as late as 1935 postulated a war between the US and Britain (Red) over commercial rivalry or a Britain-Japan coalition (Red-Orange). Admittedly, the scenarios were assessed to be "highly improbable."⁷ However, the color plans do emphasize the lack of thinking about coalition warfare and its potential problems during the inter-war period.

Independence Within the World War II Coalition

But, by the time America got to the battlefield in World War II the Allied Combined Chiefs of Staff were working toward a relationship which General George Marshall described as "the most complete unification of military effort ever achieved by two allied nations."⁸ Indeed, the degree of integration between the American and the British war efforts was remarkable. This was achieved largely by organizing joint staffs in intelligence and operations and assuring subordinate command and staffs had other nations' officers in either the commander or deputy positions.⁹ But, there were important areas where national independence was necessary which bear on this study.

The first was in logistics. As General Omar Bradley writes on the integration of combined staffs, "But in the supply and administration organizations it became necessary to establish parallel British and American staffs because of the disparities that existed in equipment and procedures of both armies."¹⁰ One must keep in mind that it was the high degree of interoperability among the nations in the World War I coalition due to the materiel support provided America by its partners that made amalgamation even a consideration. While gross tonnages and distribution systems could be planned and coordinated among the World

War II combined staffs, the disparities in equipment--tanks, artillery, small arms, and even mundane supplies like food, medicine, uniforms--drove combat logistics and, therefore, combat employment into national sectors.

The other area was in adherence to the principle of maintaining the division as the smallest tactical unit which could be shifted among national command structures.

Pershing had insisted on this principle in World War I to provide training challenges to his senior commanders and staffs. But, there was also the logistics aspect. It was only at the division level where the combat support and combat service support train was organized to provide for the combat arms. The same was true in World War II. An early example was Bradley's argument to keep Manton Eddy's 9th Division as part of the American II Corps for employment in the final victory in Tunisia in 1943.¹¹ From then throughout the Mediterranean and European campaigns divisions, corps, and even armies were shifted to another nation's command in response to the operational requirement. But because of logistics, units were deliberately not amalgamated below the division level.

CHAPTER II

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to examine the amalgamation controversy between America and its associates France and Britain in World War I as a case study in alliance relationships. Since alliances are formed by sovereign nations primarily concerned with their individual national interests, it is natural that there will be conflict. Differences over war aims, strategy, tactics, command relationships, and even personality, present challenges which must be understood and overcome to reap the considerable benefits a coalition offers.

Summary

The amalgamation controversy highlights the range of potential differences among coalition partners. America's idealistic belief in a possible new international order with no more wars was in sharp contrast to vengeance of reparations and boundary adjustments sought by its coalition partners. President Wilson thus chose to fight the war as an associate in cooperation with those partners instead of an ally, which implies a greater degree of political integration beyond the military coalition ties. The tenacity with which Pershing adhered to his tasking to remain independent requires little elaboration. Certainly the stubbornness of his stand is an illustration of the

importance of personality in alliance relationships. A later generation of military leaders was conscious of the importance of Pershing's personality in achieving independence. George Patton remarked on the predominately British senior command assignments in 1943 in North Africa, "Shades of J.J. Pershing. We have sold our birth-right."¹

But Pershing's motivation went well beyond a desire to secure his personal command. With clear initial tasking, Pershing developed a training plan based on divisions as building blocks, with an open warfare doctrine, all aimed at concentrating an independent army for a decisive offensive. America's coalition partners attempted to alter this employment concept because of the threat of a great German offensive. Their bargaining chips were vast amounts of security assistance--shipping, war materiel, and training--which were vital to American participation, but did not alter America's employment concept.

Amalgamation as an Employment Concept

What may be said of amalgamation as an employment concept? While there are abstract potential benefits to the concept, such as flexible use of forces to a coalition commander, there are overriding practical differences.

First, soldiers fight for their country and the often repeated World War I phrase "national sentiment and

resentment of service under a foreign flag" does not require elaboration.

Second, the citizens of a country have the right to hold political and military leaders accountable. Accountability extends to the use of force through achieving national security objectives without unnecessary casualties. This accountability cannot be shared across a coalition.

Finally, there are practical difficulties largely driven by logistics which preclude amalgamation of multi-national forces. One need only look at the array of forces in NATO's Central Region to vividly see this point (Figure 7). Logistics within the coalition is an individual nation's responsibility. Despite rhetoric about standardization and interoperability, differences remain in major weapons systems and support systems which dictate separate sectors for logistics and, therefore, combat.

Insights

Beyond this summary and brief assessment of amalgamation as an employment concept, what possible insights may today's coalition warrior glean from the World War I amalgamation controversy? The clearest insights involve the relationship between the dominant alliance partner and the other coalition members.

One major difference in today's international environment compared to 1917-1918 is America's role reversal

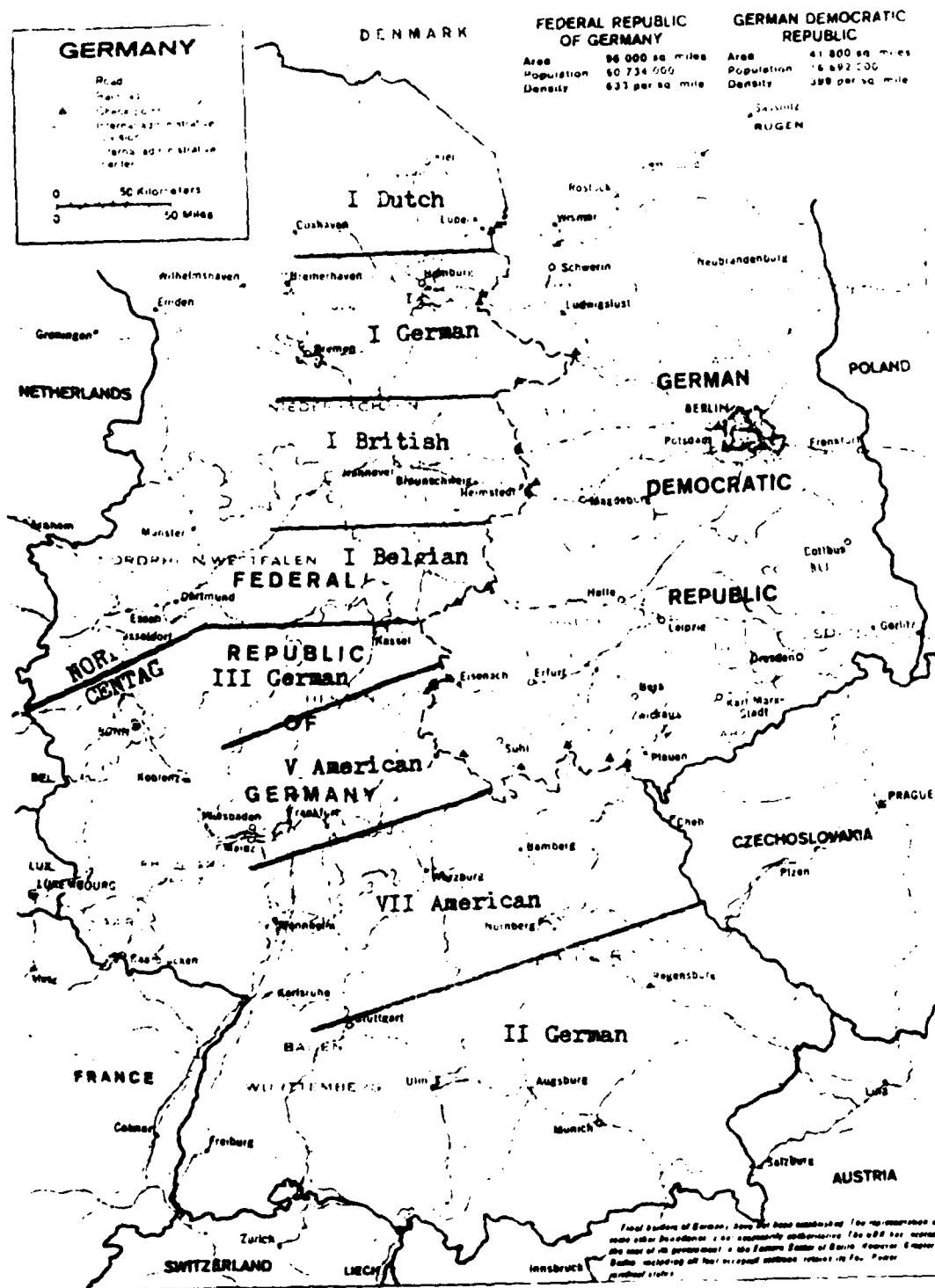


Figure 7 NATO National Corps Sectors

since world war I. As historian Correlli Barnett notes, "World War I ended by displaying the dwarfishness of even the strongest European powers compared to America."² But, this reference is to America's potential, not to its actual contribution. A major revelation of this study was America's almost total reliance on its coalition partners for materiel support. Clearly, France and Britain held the dominant position in the World War I coalition, with America as the junior partner. In this context, the amalgamation controversy may be viewed as an attempt by senior partners to coerce a junior partner to do something against the latter's national interest. America's war aims dictated that it was in its national interest to employ its forces as an independent army and America did not alter its employment concept despite the coercion of its coalition partners. Now that America is the senior partner in its worldwide coalitions, what lessons may be drawn from its World War I experience?

First, junior partners make vital contributions to an alliance. All the belligerents on the Western Front, including the Americans and the Germans, saw American manpower as potentially decisive in the war despite the fact that America's army was smaller in absolute terms than that of France or Britain. One concern prevalent in today's NATO coalition is over the share of the defense burden borne by America's junior partners. Critics point out that "a Europe

that has attained such economic strength should today take a greater share of the responsibility and cost of its own defense."³ While it is true that since 1975 the US has accounted for approximately 60% of all alliance defense spending and spend nearly double the percentage of its Gross National Product on defense as its allies,⁴ such accounting disregards both US global commitments and the true contribution of the junior partners. In a war the other allies would collectively provide 60% of NATO's ground forces and over 50% of its tactical airpower.⁵ In addition, there are hidden costs borne by the allies in virtually free base and host nation support. In view of this vital support, it seems more conducive to alliance health to emphasize these contributions rather than to bash each other in an impossible search for spending parity.

Second, the senior partner must be alert to treading on sensitive, often non-negotiable national interests of a junior partner. In World War I, Marshal Joffre among the senior military and civilian leaders of the coalition first recognized that America's independent army was such an issue. He thus reversed his government's initial amalgamation proposal based on the importance of "gratifying and safeguarding American self-respect" and his sensing that independence was the only acceptable solution to the American General Staff (see pages 10-11 above). A possible parallel today is Norway's non-nuclear policy, which serves

important national interests. A lesson may be learned that involves basing issues. Both Greece and Spain currently see US presence in their countries as counter to their national interests. One should note that these are the only nations with major US forces stationed in allied nations' capitols. In deference to the junior partner, the US should perhaps merely become less visible as in every other alliance country.

Third, and perhaps most important, there is an attitude of respect that is effective in dealing with junior partners. To illustrate, one need only contrast the British and French approaches to America during World War I. The British approach was insensitive, and even condescending. Specific instances discussed in this paper are Lloyd George's belief that Pershing was driven by personal pride (pages 29-30), and insensitivity to national sentiment for independence (page 38), Irish-American sentiment (page 41), and the problem of amalgamating draftees (page 42).

This approach stands in sharp contrast to that of the French. In addition to Joffre's strong support for American independence, Petain's guidance to his trainers serves as a model in alliance sensitivity:

The Americans fully recognize the value of our military experience; for our part, we must not forget that America is a great nation, that Americans have a national self respect developed and justified by the breadth of vision which they bring to bear on all questions which they consider (page 54 above)."

Further, Peon's adjustment to his role in 1918 apparently allowed America's St. Mihiel operation is an excellent example of compromise. In summary, support, respect, and compromise was the French approach. That remains a valid formula for coalition success.

The ascension of America to the senior partner role in its coalition is an obvious difference between 1917-1918 and today's environment. A final difference is the fundamental one between war and peace. The amalgamation controversy was fueled by the Allies' need for manpower to meet an imminent offensive during a "hot war." Today's peacetime coalitions aimed at deterring war allow the luxury of theorizing about allied solidarity and arguing about differences. Many of these differences would undoubtedly fade if an alliance were faced with a clear enemy threat. The challenge is to keep the coalition strong to deter or defeat that threat. Hopefully, this case study of a successful coalition and the insights provided may contribute to meeting that challenge.

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17. Palmer, Baker I, 175. Pershing and Baker were shocked by the permissiveness of the British and French and turned down Premier Clemenceau's offer to provide houses of prostitution for American soldiers. Pershing went so far as to make contracting venereal disease a military offense. Pershing was equally prudish about alcohol and bars selling anything stronger than beer and wine were off limits to Americans. See DeWeerd, Wilson, 213-214; James G. Harbord, The American Army in France, 1917-1919 (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1936) 143-147; Palmer, Baker II, 292-303; Pershing, Experiences I, 280-282.

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