

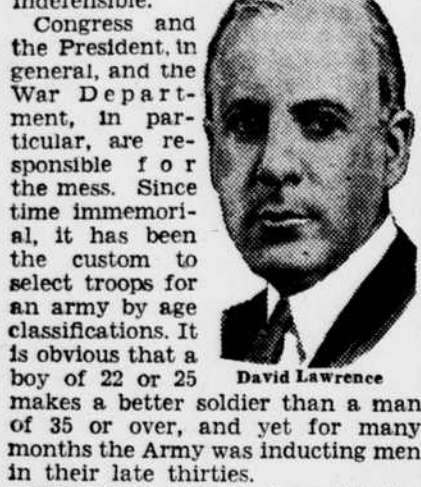
Manpower Muddle

Bungling in the Operation of the Draft Is Most Discouraging Aspect of War

By DAVID LAWRENCE.

The most discouraging aspect of the war is the manpower muddle in the United States. It is discouraging because it is so unnecessary.

With all the experience gained in the World War, and with all the knowledge to be derived from the operation of conscription in other countries for the last several decades, the American bungling is inexcusable and indefensible.



Congress and the President, in general, and the War Department, in particular, are responsible for the mess. Since time immemorial, it has been the custom to select troops for an army by age classification. It is obvious that a boy of 22 or 25 makes a better soldier than a man of 35 or over, and yet for many months the Army was inducting men in their late thirties.

The waste presented by this indifference to age classifications has repeatedly been called to the attention of the War Department, and finally Gen. Marshall himself publicly said the older men were not standing the physical strain.

But this is only one of several blunders. The first major mistake was the misleading claim made on behalf of "selective service" that citizens would be selected on the basis of their usefulness and that this was better than a volunteer system. It was assumed that key men would not be allowed to volunteer from industry but would be selected.

The Navy and War Departments, however, for a long time failed to keep this promise—the volunteer system was permitted to operate along with the selective service method. Executives of aircraft companies told the Government repeatedly, but in vain, that they were more troubled by the tendency of their valuable workers for volunteer and thus disrupt industrial organizations than the denial of requests for occupational deferments.

Another mistake, of course, was the blanket deferment of agricultural workers, and for this the Congress and political pressure are responsible. It is impossible to raise an Army if whole groups are deferred for any reason disconnected from the war. Thus the question as between fathers and nonfathers has a sentimental argument back of it, but not a military justification.

Selection by Strength. As a matter of fact, in many respects married men make better officers and soldiers than unmarried men—they are more settled and better poised and take their responsibilities and duties more seriously than do the unmarried. Pressure from Congress brought up the father and nonfather distinction. It never would have been raised by the War Department itself because there is only one way to select troops and that's on the basis of their physical strength and temperament.

Unfortunately, this was not the basis used. Indeed, boys 18 were permitted occupational deferments in the early months of the war, when employers should have been forced to employ older persons. Only now, after the war is two years and three months under way and the draft law is more than three years old, the instructions are going forth to local draft boards to restrict deferments of boys from 18 to 26 years of age.

Gen. Hershey has said he didn't have the authority to make age classifications. But he is doing it now. He has really "had" all the authority he needed, but somebody's faulty theory as to how to select an army influenced Gen. Hershey. Indeed, it is a mysterious fact that no congressional committee has ever delved deeply enough into the whole selective service problem to find out who actually made the haphazard rules and policies under which manpower has been selected.

Buck Passed Around. The buck has been passed all around. For a time the alibi was that the War Manpower Commission and the Selective Service system had divided authority; the President transferred Selective Service to WMC; then Congress stepped in and gave Gen. Hershey the full power. To what extent was he hamstrung by others? To what extent did he or his staff ignore past experience?

The subject presents an interesting basis for careful examination. Even if it revealed situations now

Haskin's Answers to Questions

A reader can get the answer to any question of fact by writing The Evening Star Information Bureau, Fredric J. Haskin, director, Washington, D. C. Please include stamp for return postage.

BY FREDERIC J. HASKIN.
Q. How many tax bills have there been during the present administration?—M. E. B.
A. Since March 4, 1933, there have been 17.

Q. Please explain the Signal Corps emblem.—A. E. B.
A. The crossed flags in the insignia of the Signal Corps of the Army represent signaling in daytime. The torch represents signaling at night.

Q. Who originated the famous question of how many angels could dance upon the point of a needle?—A. R. G.
A. It has been attributed to various theologians of the Middle Ages, including St. Thomas Aquinas. Isaac Disraeli discusses it in his "Curiosities of Literature."

Q. What is the best way to send money to a soldier overseas?—R. N. Y.
A. The War Department suggests a postal money order sent by air-mail. It can be cashed at any APO.

Q. Are members of the Commando units subject to the same regulations as other Army personnel?—R. D. J.
A. The men of the Commando Corps are not housed or fed by the Army and not subject to the same rules as Regular Army men.

Q. How long was the old Madison Square Garden in existence?—T. W. A.
A. It opened June 16, 1890, with a concert and ballet and closed on May 4, 1925, after the Terris-Dundee fight.

Q. Where was the first-born son of Catherine of Aragon buried and how much did the burial cost?—E. L. H.
A. The infant was buried in Westminster Abbey, and the cost of the services approximated 10,000 pounds.

Q. How many stars are commonly used in navigation?—W. E. R.
A. There are 55 navigation stars listed in the Nautical Almanac and the Air Almanac.

Q. Is King Peter II of Yugoslavia taking an active part in the war?—C. E. M.
A. The young King has taken flying instructions and received his RAF wings early this year.

Q. Do many persons visit the Washington Monument?—E. R. Y.
A. In 1943 visitors numbered 472,004, less than half the total of 1941.

Q. Who was America's first Negro artist?—S. McD.
A. Edward M. Bannister of Providence, R. I., was the first to achieve distinction as a painter. He specialized in marines and landscapes. Edmonia Lewis, of mixed Negro and Italian parentage, was the first sculptor of note. She was born in Boston in 1845 and attracted attention by her bust of Robert Gould Shaw, colonel of the first Negro Civil War regiment.

Robert H. McNeill Elected New President of SAR

Robert H. McNeill has been elected president of the Sons of the American Revolution at a meeting in the Mayflower Hotel.

Other officers are Benjamin D. Hill, Jr., senior vice president; Charles Delmar, second vice president; Robert S. Lamb, third vice president; James G. Hoyt, secretary; Frank S. Howell, Jr., assistant secretary; Robert F. Howard, treasurer; Dr. Clifford B. Clark, registrar; Clark B. Cummins, assistant registrar; Robert D. Brinker, historian; John P. Little, librarian, and the Rev. Samuel M. Croft, chaplain.

Elected to the Board of Management for the period ending April 19, 1947, were W. W. Badley, Wade H. Cooper, Selden M. Ely, John P. Hains and McDonald Miller. Francis M. Hoffheins, the retiring president, was named a trustee.

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CRISCO Vegetable Shortening 3-lb. jar 15 pts. 67c
1-lb. jar (5 pts.) 24c

PANCAKE SYRUP Golden 16-oz. 16c
BRAN FLAKES Post's 8-oz. pkg. 9c
MAYONNAISE Aunt Nellie's 16-oz. jar 26c
HI-HO CRACKERS Sunshine 1 lb. 23c
PEANUT BUTTER Peter Pan 9 1/2-oz. jar 23c
MARMALADE Golden Harvest 2-lb. Citrus jar 25c
APPLE BUTTER Musselman's 38-oz. (7 pts.) 24c

FRESH CORN OFF THE COB NIBLETS 12-oz. cans 6 pts. each 25c

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AUNT NELLIE'S FANCY TOMATO No. 2 cans 5 pts. each 23c

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SIX DELICIOUS FLAVORS JELL-O reg. pkg. 6c

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ARMOUR'S "READY-TO-EAT" TREET 12-oz. can (4 pts.) 35c

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AUNT NELLIE'S 2 1-lb. bags 45c
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HAMS Decker's "Melosweet" Whole or Shank Half lb. (3 pts.) 33c

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ctn. 16c

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