

463

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THE PROCUREMENT OF MEN DURING
MOBILIZATION BY RECRUITING

by

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464

THE PROCUREMENT OF MEN DURING MOBILIZATION BY RECRUITING.

Major Hershey and I, representing General Gasser, Assistant Chief of Staff for Personnel, are here this morning to discuss with you the problem of personnel procurement in war. Committed as we are to a national policy of maintaining in time of peace only relatively small professional forces, any mobilization will have as its first task the recruiting of the necessary manpower. The Protective Mobilization Plan contemplates mobilizing during the first four months only the Regular Army and the National Guard and establishing the necessary installations to administer, supply, and maintain the war effort. Yet this plan will require the procurement of a minimum of three quarters of a million new men in the first three months. Such additional numbers will have to be procured thereafter as the emergency will require and for which supplies and equipment can be procured.

These men will be raw, untrained recruits. Before they will be of value to a commander in the field they must be processed, equipped, and trained. To have a complete, balanced force of reasonable size ready for the theater of operations six to eight months after M-day procurement objectives during the first thirty days and each month thereafter must be promptly met. Procurement must start at once and begin producing results immediately.

From the time Paul Revere made his famous recruiting campaign in his midnight ride between Cambridge and Lexington, up to the World War, our success in raising armies had been far from reassuring. In the Civil War the efforts of both North and South were well nigh wrecked by inept recruiting policies. In the early days of the World War, Congress passed a conscription law which for the first time provided us with an orderly, adequate system of raising our wartime armies. When the War was over, however, that law was wiped off the statute books. Since 1925 the War Department and the Navy Department have, through the Joint Army and Navy Selective Service Committee, worked up plans for the reenactment, in time of war, of a similar law, and the Committee has developed plans for the institution of Selective Service after such a law is enacted. Major Hershey will deal with these plans in detail.

I am going to talk about the procurement of men prior to the functioning of Selective Service. We believe that two months will probably elapse after M-day before any men are procured by Selective Service, assuming that Congress will enact the law. During that period 500,000 recruits will be needed for the Army--300,000 the first month and 200,000 the second. They must be gotten by the recruiting of volunteers. Viewed in the light of our experience in the first months of the World War, this appears to be a considerable task. We recruited 86,000 men in April, 1917, 119,000 in May; and 95,000 in June. It took us almost eight months to get the number of volunteers we now propose to recruit in two,

The practicability of recruiting this number of volunteers has been given a great deal of thought by the Personnel Division of the General Staff for the last four or five years. We believe that we now have a plan which will accomplish the task. Unfortunately, we can not say definitely that any plan will get a certain number of recruits because we are dealing with too many unknown factors such as the temper of the people at the time, the location of the war, and the specific enemy. When Paul Revere was recruiting, all he had to say was "The Red Coats are coming" and the volunteers tumbled out of beds. When we go forth to recruit for the next war, will our slogan be as effective? We do not know.

The present mobilization recruiting plan is to expand the peacetime recruiting system and to amplify it with a country-wide organization of civilian committees to secure applicants. Briefly described, we expect the wartime system to look as follows:

The Adjutant General will be responsible for general supervision of recruiting. He will allot funds, furnish forms and recruiting supplies, print and distribute advertising matter, and allot to corps area commanders quotas of men to be enlisted in addition to those required for units mobilized in the corps area.

Each corps area commander will be responsible for the operation of the recruiting system in his corps area. He will have the job of procuring all recruits needed for the units he mobilizes, including exempted stations in his area plus such numbers of additional men as he will be called upon to furnish by War Department directives

Each corps area will be subdivided into recruiting districts, one for each State, in charge of an officer of suitable rank as district recruiting officer. Each of these recruiting districts will be subdivided into subdistricts with a recruiting station strategically located in each. These recruiting stations will be manned by one or more line officers as recruiting officers, one or more doctors to physically examine applicants, and as many clerks as necessary. These clerks to be either soldiers or civilians, but preferably the latter. Each of these stations will be prepared to give applicants a physical and mental examination, fill out enlistment records, take fingerprints and start a service record. The number of these established will depend upon the size and population of the State. The Commanding General, 5th Corps Area, plans 2 in West Virginia, whereas the Commanding General, 3rd Corps Area, plans 24 in Pennsylvania.

In addition to these recruiting stations, each Regular Army Post, and each Regular Army and National Guard regiment while in its home corps area, will have a recruiting officer ready to enlist men, either for itself or for general assignment.

466

Men enlisted by units will generally stay with that unit. Men enlisted by recruiting stations will either be sent to units or to reception centers as directed by the corps area commander. 33 of these reception centers will be set up at existing Army posts. These centers will be prepared to clothe the men, fill out their allotment and insurance papers, and, most important, trade-test and classify them according to occupational specialty and assign them.

As a nucleus for this expanded recruiting system we have the peacetime organization consisting of approximately 40 officers and 400 enlisted men. A tremendous expansion will be necessary. Our present daily average increment of about 110 recruits will have to be stepped up almost 100 times to 10,000.

By assigning reserve officers who have been given peacetime training, by using noncommissioned officers released from civilian component duty and by hiring civilian clerical help, it should be possible to make the expansion without any undue difficulty.

What I have described so far is that part of the recruiting machine which will examine the applicants and perform the task of enlisting those acceptable. The question naturally arises: How do we propose getting the necessary number of applicants? Up to last year our recruiting plans contemplated using Army canvassers. It is a task for which they are poorly equipped. First of all, it would be impossible to detail sufficient canvassers to cover adequately all of the country. Second, every canvasser detailed would mean one less trained soldier. The number of men slated for this duty under the old plans were the equivalent of about 3 regiments of infantry. Third, the soldier canvasser would not be a good salesman. He would be working in unknown territory with strange people.

The Personnel Division has long recognized this weakness in the recruiting plan and for several years has been working on a scheme which it believes will solve the problem of procuring the necessary number of applicants. This idea is to turn the job of getting applicants over to the local community. If, in each neighborhood, there could be set up at the beginning of mobilization a voluntary committee of the leading citizens to actively solicit applicants for enlistments, give them a preliminary physical inspection, and transport them to the nearest recruiting station, we believe it possible to procure the men we need. This is simply an extension of a good old American custom. Every year millions of dollars are raised for the community chest that way. In the last war we sold our Liberty Bonds and put on the Red Cross Drives in that manner. Even now we recruit our Citizens' Military Training Camp trainees by a similar system.

On May 17th of this year the War Department in a letter to all corps area commanders gave its approval to this idea of using civilian agencies to aid recruiting, and directed the corps area commanders to get State plans prepared. If this scheme is to work, it must be well planned. Some six or seven thousand patriotic civilian committees are not going to spring up out of thin air on M-day. Fortunately, an excellent medium for doing the necessary planning exists in the office of the State Adjutant General. This official has the necessary military background, he knows his state, he is closely associated with the Governor, and he has in his state staff a body of men qualified to do the work. The corps area commander therefore has been directed to contact their State Adjutants General and procure from each of them a plan for his State. These plans to provide for the establishment of a state organization, headed by the Governor, to come into being on or before M-day on request from the President. This organization to have the objective of cooperating with the corps area commander by securing such members of volunteer applicants for enlistment in the Army of the United States as Corps Area Mobilization Plans may require. The plans to contain data for establishing necessary state headquarters, for division of state into local areas, for appointment of civilian committees for each area, for contacting civic and patriotic organizations, for organization of state publicity agencies.

Plans in accordance with this directive are now being prepared. The War Department has to date received copies of 9 completed ones. Mobilization Regulations on the procurement and reception of volunteers are being revised to contain full details on the new recruiting scheme and should be issued shortly. As we visualize it, wartime recruiting under this system will proceed along these lines. Prior to M-day each corps area commander will set up the additional recruiting stations required and will procure and distribute the necessary supplies. When the emergency breaks, the President will call on each Governor to assist the Federal Government by setting up in his State an organization of local people to procure the State's quota of volunteers. Using the plan in the possession of his Adjutant General, the Governor will appoint a State director and local committee chairman. Each of these committee chairmen and the committee members he selects will canvass their community for volunteers. If each community does its part the quota for each should be extremely small, probably 3 or 4 men per day. These men will be transported to the nearest recruiting station, which, at least in the populous States, should not be more than 50 or 60 miles away. At these stations they will be given a final physical examination, and those acceptable to the recruiting officer enlisted. In addition, every organization will be recruiting men in its immediate neighborhood while it is at its home station.

Thus far I have been talking about Army recruiting only. At the same time that we are trying to get volunteers the Navy and Marine Corps will also be after men. The need for coordination and cooperation between the services in the matter of recruiting during

mobilization has long been recognized. At the instigation of the Joint Board the Joint Army and Navy Selective Service Committee was directed several years ago to prepare a Joint Recruiting Plan. The Committee came to the conclusion that the one place where the demands of the three Services might conflict was at the source of material. Therefore, they recommended that the Civilian Effort be made the basis of a Joint Plan under which each Service would maintain its own recruiting organization to examine and accept or reject applicants received from the civilian committees. This proposal was accepted and the Committee directed to proceed with the formulation of detailed plans. Meanwhile, a short time ago the Bureau of Navigation accepted the plan of using civilian agencies to aid recruiting, already adopted by the Army, and directed their Naval District Commandants to contact State Adjutants General in order that the Navy's needs might be included in State Plans. Thus at the present time both the War Department and Navy Department are basing their recruiting plans on the idea of having a country-wide organization of civilian committees assist their recruiting services by procuring applicants for all armed services.

Having discussed the general scheme of how we propose to get our soldiers, I want to use the time remaining to deal briefly with the question of the relationship of recruiting plans to Industrial Mobilization. Any emergency demanding a large increase in our military forces will at the same time require the speeding up of industry. Skilled labor will be scarce. To what extent will the recruiting campaign tend to upset and hinder the expansion of industry? What steps can we take now in our planning to defend the labor market from the recruiting service?

From the standpoint of numbers it appears rather obvious that the number of volunteers needed will not particularly endanger any industrial program. Both Army and Navy together will require in the first two months less than three quarters of a million men. That number, when compared to available manpower, is extremely small. But if the 750,000 were only taken from the available skilled labor, serious consequences might ensue. However, a number of natural defenses will serve to protect industry. The highly skilled mechanic is not found in great numbers among the young men, this is especially true now because of the prolonged depression, which has tended to raise the minimum age of the trained man. Furthermore, the skilled workman is generally married and has a family to support. He is not the man who is in large numbers going to be affected by the recruiting banners and slogans. The volunteer has in all past wars, and will undoubtedly in the next war, be the young, unattached man, probably just starting to make his own way. Furthermore, by spreading the recruiting burden to all corners of the country as will be done under the Civilian Effort, the pressure on the industrial centers for recruits will be less.

It has been proposed in some quarters that men engaged in certain key industries not be enlisted. It is argued that since we need only a small portion of the available manpower we should definitely provide against taking any men having those skills and working in those industries essential to the war effort. Although we might agree that theoretically this might be desirable, no feasible method has ever been suggested by which this could be accomplished during the volunteer period. We must remember that the individual concerned is a free agent. If he wants to volunteer and is stopped because of his job, all he has to do is to quit his job to become eligible. Furthermore, in no past war has volunteering ever been successful enough to justify the belief that in a future war we can afford to advertise anything else but the dire need for men. Finally, the Army and Navy will have to have occupational specialists. For example, based on the statistics of 1934, even divisional infantry, probably the least mechanized part of the Army, will have to have more than 200 occupational specialists out of every 1,000 men enlisted for it. Ordnance will need over 700 occupational specialists for every 1,000 men assigned to it. All branches will need occupational specialists in great number. Inasmuch as the class from which we can secure men will be limited to those physically fit, and young, I personally believe that during the recruiting period great difficulty will be experienced in getting sufficient men with occupational skill, without doing anything to prevent their enlistment.

We propose to make the best possible use of those we do secure by attempting to classify them and assign them according to their skill. To this end, at each of the 32 reception centers there will be established a classification section to interview each recruit, trade-test him when possible, and to indicate on qualification cards the man's special qualifications so that the assignment section can make sure that cooks are sent to cook and clerks to clerk, and not vice versa.

For these reasons the War Department has so far not seen fit to put into any of its recruiting plans or directives any kind of limitation on recruiting such as a prohibition on the enlistment of particular skilled artisans or men working in war industries.

Recruiting of volunteers is at best, however, a precarious method of raising armies. It is expensive and hard to control. It fails to spread the burden evenly and equitably among the people of the country. It cannot adequately protect essential war industry in any prolonged emergency. For that reason the War Department is committed to the idea that any major emergency will need Selective Service. Major Hershey will now discuss those plans with you.