

# Washington Digest

## Draft Touchy Issue For Nation's Politicoes

Fear Strong Reaction Against Military Service Even as Occupation Needs Point Up Requirement for Large Army.

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One of the administration's hottest political potatoes is a matter that nobody likes to talk about—even the opposition. It is military service. Not universal military service next month or next year but any old kind of military service today and tomorrow, right up to election day, 1948.

The problem has many facets but it has one, awesome nub—the veteran vote. There are several danger signals which the Democratic administration is watching with some trepidation: the criticism over continuation of the draft which the President has given his complete and unqualified support; recurring complaints of discontented soldiers and their families appearing in radio, congressional, national committee and other Washington fan mail, which add up to a resounding demand for more and quicker discharges, and finally, a growing fear that the feeling which used to be called isolationism is cropping up in a new form—"anti-militarism."

The administration doesn't dare make any move to permit a drastic reduction in the armed forces now. Military experts think it will be the middle of October before any such move can be contemplated. By that time they think the danger of any serious outbreak in Japan will be over, or there will be evidence that one is coming.

### Await Jap Reaction To Occupation

The full impact of the occupation of Japan will not be felt until American soldiers are deep in the heart of the country. Before that, the reaction of the Japanese people and the influence of the military leaders as opposed to the influence of the emperor, cannot be gauged. Suffice it to say that the surrender terms as well as the surrender itself came as a shock to the Japanese people.

Many Americans fail to realize that a relatively small American army landed in Japan in an area in which there were no Japanese except those permitted to be there by the authorities who arranged the surrender. There was no contact with the general population or the military. Scattered over the rest of the country is a powerful Japanese army, as yet fully armed, in defense positions, strengthened when the Japs completely reorganized their home defense against invasion after the capture of Okinawa. Disregarding the thousands of Japanese sailors now on shore, the air force, the supply troops and others, it is known that on Hokkaido there were two full divisions. (A Jap division is between 15,000 and 20,000 men.) On Honshu there were 44 divisions and 7 brigades (a brigade is roughly half a division). On Kyushu 14 divisions and 7 brigades.

It is estimated that we would have 500,000 men in the islands by the middle of September. That is against a Japanese army (not counting the sailors, airmen and others) of well over a million. That is why there can be no sharp reduction in American troops until we know what, if anything, is cooking under the cherry trees.

And then when that question is answered we have the question of occupation. It has been estimated that to police Germany, Japan and Korea and perhaps parts of China it will take 1,200,000 men.

Where will they come from? Where will 300,000 come from for that matter? Already a sharp reversion against military service has begun and if it follows the curve after the last war recruitment on a basis of voluntary enlistment is hopeless. At its low point the army after World War I numbered 130,000 men. I well recall the story of one of my officer friends whose regiment, stationed in the middle west, dropped so low that men themselves voted to spend their post exchange funds for a recruiting campaign. With a band and a company he paraded the countryside for a week. He got just three recruits and two of those were rejected as physically unfit.

As one officer remarked bitterly to me: "How are you going to get a man to join the army for \$21 a month (the basic peacetime pay)

when Uncle Sam will pay him \$25 a week for not working at all?" (He referred to the unemployment compensation called for in pending legislation.)

That's the position the administration is in when the cry to end the draft arises.

### Vets' Attitude Bears Watching

The complaints from the veterans is another matter. They are not so much concerned over who gets into the army as who gets out. A lot of them are marking time right now, later a lot will be sent overseas in the boring jobs of policemen.

Why shouldn't I get out now and get a start in business?

Why shouldn't my husband come back and support me in the manner to which I have been unaccustomed since he joined up?

Why shouldn't my boy get back to school where he belongs?

Why shouldn't my sweetheart be allowed to come home and marry me like he said he would?

And some day sonny and daddy and lover will come back. And they'll join a veteran's organization and they will vote at the polls; ah, there's the rub!

Now we come to the third point which is really the most insidious, the one which has to be handled the most delicately. We may have learned in this country that an ocean is no longer a barrier against the enemy. But we know there is another barrier which separates our maritime states from the heartland of the nation bordering the Mississippi flood plain. That part of the country forgot its so-called isolationism and threw its whole heart into the war. But the war is over—on paper anyhow. It is time to put the hand back to the plough again. There is need of stout arms and strong backs in the fields, and though Japs and the Germans may require watching, why not let George do it?

That is a natural feeling and clever politicians would have little trouble in turning it to account, by raising the cry of militarism, of imperialism and all the other isms which men whose barns are their castles and whose meadows are their empires, dislike. Such a sentiment could be turned against one administration as well as another but it so happens that the middle west is naturally somewhat Republican in its leanings normally and the Democrats are now in the saddle.

One very keen political observer who has watched the way of the voter for many years said to me the other day: "If there were a Presidential election tomorrow Truman would win it." And when you consider the matter coldly there are good reasons for the statement. The Republicans have had one healthy issue after another knocked out from under them. Truman has given business its head, he has sat on the OPA, he has released one control after another, he has most solicitously deferred to congress, he is on the way to break up the war agencies and get the business of government back into the old line departments.

Such is the picture as of today—all clear except for one little cloud in the sky, not much bigger than a serviceman's hand, but there is thunder and lightning in that cloud and if the circumstances were such that its bolts of wrath were directed at the administration it would not even take, say a Stassen, to win the Presidential race in a walk.

By next February—barring unexpected developments—all soldiers in Europe except those in the army of occupation and the minimum required to dispose of the army's surplus property will have been returned to the United States, Maj. Gen. C. P. Gross, chief of transportation, said in an announcement by the war department.

Return of American forces in the Pacific will be completed next June, according to present estimates. More than 1,750,000 men are scheduled for return from the Pacific theaters, while approximately 2,000,000 remain to be returned from Europe. Some 150,000 other troops also are to be returned from other overseas theaters.

### BARBS... by Baukhage

The Mexican government has turned its German prisoners free and invited them to become citizens if they wish, with a thousand peso stake in a plot of land if they want it.

And now they pick cranberries by machine. But it still takes a deft human hand to roast the turkey to go with them.

Business Week magazine says it is rumored that Kaiser is going to turn out prefabricated moving picture theaters at \$8,000 complete. Hollywood frames?

According to YANK, the army magazine, Jap chow is worse than that served in American outfits where the cooks are recruited from the motor pool.

## Receives Honor—Expected Blame



"The general and his lady," shown in Washington, shortly after their happy reunion. General Wainwright stated that all the time he was a prisoner in Japanese camps, he thought the American public would hold him responsible for the fall of the Philippines. The honors heaped upon him by the nation came as a gratifying surprise to America's No. 1 hero.

## President's Daughter Chorister



Listeners throughout the country had the opportunity to hear Margaret Truman, center, daughter of President Truman, when she broadcast with the choir of the Trinity Episcopal church, from the Independence, Mo., "Church of the Air," on a coast-to-coast network. She has appeared in operas in several cities in recent years.

## Rattlesnakes at Ford's Funeral



The faithful of the Dolly Pond Church of God, surrounded by a pushing crowd of curious, bury Brother Lewis Ford, as he had wished, fondling over his open casket the rattlesnake which killed him. Preacher Ford died as the result of snake bites received during a service held near Daisy, Tenn., at which snake handling was a highlight.

## Millionth G.I. Home From Europe



Corp. Almon N. Conger, medic, of Tacoma, Wash., left, the millionth G.I. to be redeployed from the European theater of operations since V-E Day, is greeted by commander of the 35th infantry division, Maj. Gen. Paul W. Baade, on the arrival of the Queen Mary at New York. Conger wears the distinguished service cross along with his service bars.

## Tojo in Suicide Try



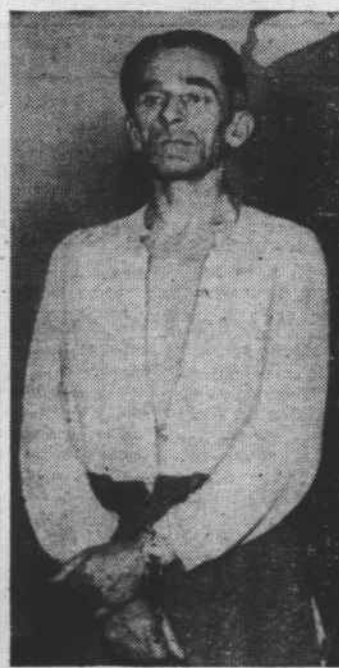
The "mighty" leader of the Japanese empire at the start of the war, Premier General Hideki Tojo is pictured here as he lies in a semi-coma condition after shooting himself. Doctors report his life will be saved so he might be hung.

## Named to State Post



Donald S. Russell of South Carolina, whose nomination as assistant secretary of state was made by President Truman. Russell will fill the vacancy caused by the elevation of Dean Acheson to undersecretary of state. It is expected that other changes will be made.

## Try Lidice 'Butcher'



Karl Hermann Frank, German secretary of state for Bohemia-Moravia, who is better known as "Butcher" Frank of Lidice. He is considered responsible for the liquidation of the Lidice populace following the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich.

## Member 'Hall of Fame'



Dick Fowler, 20 years old, Philadelphia Athletics, who by pitching a no-hit no-run game against the St. Louis Browns has entered baseball's hall of fame.



### ARMY CRACKDOWN

The army is determined that returned European war veterans shall no longer appeal to congressmen or newspaper men to hasten their discharge from the army or to protest redeployment to Japan for police duty.

Severe secret orders have just been issued to this effect over the signature of Brig. Gen. A. M. Gurney, chief of staff for Lt. Gen. Lloyd R. Fredendall, commander of the 2nd army. The order, which has been secretly circulated, reads:

"Recently members of a division in the United States scheduled for redeployment to the Pacific area appealed to the press and radio protesting against transfer of the division to the Pacific theater. . . . Action of this nature, if concerted, may subject participants to disciplinary action. . . .

"Incidents such as noted in paragraph 3 above (the paragraph just quoted)," continued the secret order, "will be dealt with drastically by this headquarters and the commander concerned will be summarily relieved."

The division referred to probably was the 95th, stationed at Camp Shelby, Miss., which sent all sorts of appeals to newspaper men and radio commentators against being transferred from Europe to Japan. Apparently the protests worked, for the order to send the 95th to Japan was rescinded.

### PRESIDENTIAL POKER

Those who traveled with President Truman on his various trips to Washington state and Potsdam found him a delightful and entertaining companion. One story they tell about Truman's trip to the northwest was regarding his salmon fishing off the Washington coast.

While the motor boat was chugging back to shore, Truman and his old senatorial friends, Gov. Mon Wallgren and Sen. Warren Magnuson of Washington, played poker. The stakes were low, but the thrifty Truman was trying hard to come out ahead. It was agreed that, no matter who was ahead, the game would stop the minute the boat hit shore.

So the President kept up a line of banter to the Norwegian skipper.

"Slow her down, Christiansen," he said, "I'm behind. I need a little extra time to catch up."

Or again, it was: "Speed her up, Christiansen, I'm ahead now. Let's get to shore before the governor catches up."

Finally, the motor boat touched shore with the President of the United States a few cents ahead. Skipper Christiansen was just as pleased as Truman.

### ARMY AND RAILROADS

Even the army's friends on Capitol hill say the brass hats are killing any chance for public support they might have had by their autocratic disregard for civilian needs in such fields as coal mining, steelmaking and railroading.

One of the busiest railroads in the country today is the Southern Pacific, which has handled most of the east-west traffic to the busy port of San Francisco. The S. P. is a single-track line able to carry its huge volume only by scheduling trains at 10-minute intervals round the clock. In order to maintain this schedule, it requires a huge crew of crack trainmen, repair men and other skilled workers. It has done pretty well even in the last year, although there was a recent bottleneck near El Paso which resulted in the holding up of 75 trains.

Southern Pacific officials have been begging the army to release skilled railroad men with the 80 points required for discharge, or to furlough railroad men in this country with less points.

Finally in mid-summer the army agreed to release 4,000 railroad men, with 2,400 of them assigned to the S. P. But then the army began going back on its promise and said it could discharge only 1,300 men. A few weeks ago, the army released 230 men to the Southern Pacific and said no more were available. The joker is that 24,000 men have gone into the armed forces from the S. P. employment roster.

Finally, War Mobilizer Snyder stepped in and forced the army to release 4,000 railroad men, amidst loud squawks from brass hats that this action would destroy morale.

### CAPITAL CHAFF

Senators are looking forward to better eating, now that Derwin Darling has come back from two years in the marines to resume management of the senate restaurant.

Alleged United States opposition to the Kilgore unemployment compensation bill has cracked open Forty-seven state administrations were reported opposed, but it now develops that Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Oklahoma, Washington and California are definitely for the bill, with Connecticut and several others about ready to support it.

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