

# "War Is Great," Speaker Tells Boys of CCC Camp

Nashville, Nov. 11.—Colonel C. L. McGhee, World War officer, told an Armistice Day crowd at a CCC dedicatory exercise today that "it is a great thing to get into war" and that it "is a glorious thing" for America's youth to "lay down their lives, if necessary, in a foreign land in defense of this country."

The Franklinton officer, who served as a Lieutenant-Colonel with the 120th Infantry, 30th Division, in the war 21 years ago, was the principal speaker at exercises dedicating Camp Cooley, new CCC camp near here.

Exactly the opposite view was expressed by Congressman Harold D. Cooley, for whom the camp was named. He asserted again that "I shall never vote to send your sons to war until I am ready to shoulder a gun, and go with them." He added he saw no reason for America entering the present European conflict.

Colonel McGhee, who was a classmate at Virginia Military Institute of General George Marshall, Chief of Staff of the U. S. Army, asserted he saw no reason why CCC enrollees who so wished should not be allowed to join the allied forces in the present war.

War, he declared, "broadens you." Besides, from a national standpoint, it banishes unemployment, he declared. The United States was raised from a second-rate power to a world leader by the World War, he said, and in addition gained a "corner" on the world's gold supply.

Colonel McGhee advocates compulsory military training and a large standing army in the United States. Without military might, he said, this country will never be able to command respect from the totalitarian states. We have depended too long on Great Britain to look out for our interests, he added. Only through military superiority will we gain and keep our rightful share of commerce, the speaker said.

A. H. Veazy and William H. Jenkins, soil conservationists, also addressed the throng.

The following day the News-Observer had the following to say editorially concerning the above news story:

### Paths of Glory

Two very interesting and very different points of view were expressed at Nashville on Armistice Day, when a new CCC Camp was dedicated by Representative Harold Cooley and former Colonel C. L. McGhee, veteran of the World War.

Colonel McGhee told the CCC boys that "it is a great thing to get into a war" and that it "is a glorious thing" for America's youth to "lay down their lives, if necessary, in a foreign land in defense of this country." War, he declared, "broadens you." Besides, he continued, from a national standpoint, it banishes unemployment. The United States was raised from a second-rate power to a world leader by the World War, he said, and in addition gained a "corner" on the world's gold supply. Without military might, he said, this country will never be able to command respect from the totalitarian states. We have depended on Great Britain, the Colonel told the boys, to look out for interests. Only through military superiority will we gain and keep our rightful share of commerce, he declared.

Sensible men will be glad to have this open expression of the glorification of war. There are other military men and ex-military men who share it though few are quite so ruthlessly frank about the expression of it. And a good many military men, who have seen at least as much war as Col. McGhee, from Serman down have expressed an entirely different feeling. Nevertheless the Colonel is entitled to his love of war and free to participate in it whenever he wants to.

The country itself, however, is safer in the hands of men who, far from glorifying war to CCC boys, take the position Congressman Cooley took when he made a flatfooted declaration of his feeling following the Colonel's statement. Mr. Cooley said, "I shall never vote to send your sons to war until I am ready to shoulder a gun and go with them." Such a promise is worth more to the boys who would have to do the dying in any war than all the glorification of all the Colonels and the former Colonels. Such



COL. CLAUDE L. MCGHEE

paths of glory, as the Colonel described, lead where they have always led—and nowhere else.

### COL. MCGHEE'S EXPLANATION

The following is Col. McGhee's answer to the above articles and explanation of his remarks:

The News & Observer, Raleigh, North Carolina.

Dear Sir:

In view of your news story of the 12th, your editorial of the 13th, other editorials, and my fan mail, may I make my "Oratorical Declaration" at Nashville, North Carolina on the 11th clear to my many friends in North Carolina. With only about twenty minutes notice and without preparation or any notes but with an opinion that certain speeches in the Senate on the Neutrality Act which I heard over the radio were almost a reflection on those who served in the A. E. F. and certainly harmful to the morale and patriotism of our youth, I used the following thoughts and so far as I can remember the following phraseology:

Some days ago I was requested to talk to you today about the American Legion. In the Preamble to the Constitution of the American Legion it is asserted that we associate ourselves together "To preserve the memories and incidents of our association in the great war."

"This is Armistice Day, the 11th anniversary of the conclusion of the World War. It is very fitting that our first thought should be a tribute to our dead. Long ago a Roman, Horace, wrote 'Dulce et Decorum est pro Patria Mori.' "It is sweet and glorious to die for one's country." Nathan Hale, and American hero, before his execution as a spy said, "My only regret is that I have but one life to lay down for my country."

It is a glorious thing for an American young man to lay down his life, if necessary, in a foreign land in defense of his country. It is a great privilege to get into a war and serve when our country calls, whether in our native land or at any spot on earth the United States send you.

No man can take from the American Legion the knowledge that we served our country unselfishly in her time of need. Those who returned from the World War felt that the war had been a great experience; that their self denials; their associations; had given them a finer appreciation of humanity and better qualified them to take up the duties of civil life again.

Dr. Sankey L. Blanton, noted Baptist Minister, in an Armistice Day address entitled "What I learned from the War" told the following incident: "In my outfit there was a red headed, freckle faced teamster, the most profane, vulgar person I had ever known. I often thought he was good for nothing but cannon fodder. One morning my outfit was ordered to advance and as we came into a clearing we were shelled rather heavily and a number wounded. One young man had his face partially blown away. I called the teamster and told him to take the young man to the first aid station. As he started the warning "Gas" was called. I saw that profane, vulgar, vile man whom I thought was good only for cannon fodder lay the young man tenderly on the ground and place upon the mutilated face his own gas mask while he breathed in the gas and died." Never again, said Dr. Blanton, will I despise a human being. War broadens a man. There is no place for the selfish man, the snob, the egotist in your country's service. The "buddy" spirit is the spirit of the true soldier.

I went into the war a good Southerner, with much of the animosity and bitterness taught me when a boy in the 90s by a mother who was a girl in the Civil War. During the days following the Armistice when I saw in the villages and cities of France the Star Spangled Banner displayed with the Union Jack of Great Britain and the Tri-Color of France there came a price in the flag of my country I had never experienced... I came home a good American.

Before the World War the United States was a fine place to invest British and European capital. They had about fifteen billions of dollars invested here. When our crops were harvested they paid us a reasonable price for any surplus on account. London dominated world commerce; the pound sterling was the medium of exchange for all nations. As the war progressed their investments in this country were liquidated and exchanged for supplies. When this was exhausted they sent us their gold. In 1917 we went into the war and we opened for our allies a charge account, we sold them supplies on time to the amount of ten more billions. There was not a person in the United States who did not profit materially by this tremendous business. Before the World War the United States was a second rate power, not to be considered in an armed conflict. Germany insulted us with impunity for they said it was impossible for the United States to send more than one division to France. On Armistice Day 1918 we had demonstrated to the world our ability to mobilize an army of five millions in eighteen months. We had sent two million three thousand miles from home and maintained them in a foreign land under combat conditions; the greatest military achievement in the history of mankind. It is true they were untrained and but for the exhausted condition of the German army our losses would have been very great, but they were the deciding factor in the conflict. The American Soldier did his part.

It was not the fault of those who served that the United States get nothing from the World War but unpaid debts. It was the fault of those who refused to follow President Wilson into the League of Nations and the World Court and do our part in maintaining peace in the world. It was the fault of those who failed to recognize that we had changed from a debtor to a creditor nation to the extent of twenty-five billions of dollars and that we were holding practically all of the world's supply of gold; that New York dominated world commerce and the American dollar was the medium of exchange. We came out of the World War potentially the greatest nation on earth with a duty not only to ourselves but to all mankind. The situation called for a new economic adjustment throughout the world. The nation holding the gold of the world has a fearful responsibility. In 1920 the foes of Woodrow Wilson assumed control of our government. We disbanded our army, sunk our navy, gave our merchant marine to Henry Ford, and hoarded our gold. The world vision faded and the exploitation of agriculture, the South and West was resumed. We refused to trade with other nations even in payment of debts and built our tariff walls higher and higher. Our policy of isolation brought us in ten years to economic collapse the greatest depression in our history. Our banks closed, fifteen millions of people out of employment, surplus farm commodities piled up, almost valueless. In addition it contributed to the growth of the aggressor nations who sought desperately to remedy their economic condition. If I am wrong then many of our greatest statesmen from Woodrow Wilson to this day have been wrong.

In 1931 President Hoover called upon the Red Cross to receive contributions and feed the unemployed. If at that time we had adopted a policy of compulsory military service and had maintained an adequate reserve corps we would now be able to mobilize a force of around ten million with all branches of the service thoroughly trained and equipped for an emergency. Such training and the teaching of a vocation would have been of invaluable service to our young men who have gone out of high schools and colleges unable to find work. Many might have been saved from crime. The

accumulation of materials and equipment for an army of ten million would probably have solved our unemployment problem. Some day the war in Europe will end and there will be a peace conference. The victor will determine his sphere of influence with little thought for the vanquished. If the United States is strong we can ask to sit at the peace table for the protection of our economic interests, the happiness of generations to come. An army of ten million will be a force any nation on earth will have to respect and about the only thing some nations do respect."

Several of my friends who were present at Nashville tell me that, like myself, they were amazed at the construction put upon my remarks by the reporter for the News & Observer. I certainly had no intention of glorifying war. At the age of sixty, one is somewhat indisposed to glorify anything. If paying tribute to the American Legion and asking for preparedness is glorifying war then I am guilty. If, however, we should be forced into any of the wars now going on in Europe and Asia I hope that we will do so with trained soldiers who know how to safeguard their lives; under the command of officers who likewise have been trained in the handling of large units; with a service of supply that will function efficiently and with the very sincere hope that the entire conflict will be fought in a foreign land.

Very truly,  
CLAUDE L. MCGHEE.

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