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American Military Service and Identity: From the Militia to the All-Volunteer Force

Andrew C. Sparks
University of South Florida

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American Military Service and Identity:
From the Militia to the All-Volunteer Force

by

Andrew C. Sparks

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, Politics and International Relations
School of Interdisciplinary Global Studies
College of Arts and Sciences
University of South Florida

Major Professor: Nicolas Thompson, Ph.D.
Steven Tauber, Ph.D.
M. Scott Solomon, Ph.D.
Julia Irwin, Ph.D.

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Abstract

The purpose of this project is to examine the growth of the American military service regimes along with how the American State used those regimes to construct American identity. To accomplish this, this project looks at the length of American war as a dependent variable from the types of war fought and the military service regimes. Over the course of this study, we examine four distinct eras: the militia regime, the coercive regime, the Peacetime Draft, and the All-Volunteer Force. Each of these correspond to various types of identity development, which include individual state, regional/national, international, and retrospective identity, respectively. This project takes a mixed-methods approach to examining these variables, using history, general observations, and quantitative data to provide a thorough analysis of how military service helps to shape American identity over time. The results of the analysis show that, over time, the development of American identity in its numerous forms corresponded to the type of military service regime, where individual states created militias and state-identity, conscription regimes created regional and national identities, the Peacetime Draft created an international identity, the lack of conscription created a retrospective identity. By the end, this project shows that the use of the All-Volunteer Force is both lengthening American war, as seen in Iraq and Afghanistan, and leaving open a space where American identity is no longer being constructed by the State.

Chapter One

Service and Identity: An Introduction

“Whoever said the pen is mightier than the sword obviously never encountered automatic weapons.”

--General Douglas MacArthur

In 2014, Chief Warrant Officer Ralph Rigby retired from the U.S. Army. Rigby had a long military career, working his way up through the enlisted ranks and then transitioning to move up through the Warrant Officer ranks. He served as a “power generator equipment repairman, platoon sergeant, engineer equipment maintenance supervisor, maintenance technician and ground support maintenance technician,” among other jobs he had over the course of his career. His last duty station was in Korea where he served as a “senior ordnance logistics officer in the 2nd Infantry Division.” Rigby’s retirement ceremony took place on his 62nd birthday, the usual age in the military when retirement is imposed on a servicemember rather than requested by a servicemember. His ceremony was not out of the ordinary, replete with the usual fanfare of cake, gifts, stories, and the celebration of a long career. This event would have not otherwise been a remarkable moment for the military, except for one small fact: Rigby was the last Vietnam-era draftee to leave military service. In 1972, at the tail end of the Vietnam

War, Rigby was drafted into the Army. He was not expecting to make a life career out of the military, but after the end of his required time, he reenlisted and remained in the service.¹

The significance of Rigby's retirement was much more than just about one person who had made a career out of something he was forced to do. Rigby was the last of a generation of servicemembers compelled to serve in the military. The long length of his career was his own choosing, but the initial induction was not. Rigby was drafted at a time when the expectation of military service from the public existed and was accepted both in legal and social terms. If someone were to be chosen for military service, they were expected to serve. Yet, just one year after Rigby received his draft notice, the U.S. military transitioned to the All-Volunteer Force, or AVF, meaning that all new servicemembers from 1973 onward were to be volunteers, not draftees or anyone forced against their own will to serve. Rigby simply made the most out of his draft experience, turning it into a career, and his retirement marked the end of the effect that the Vietnam-era draft had on any one specific individual. He was not the first draftee in, but he was the last one out.

Rigby was just one example of the tens of millions of men and women in U.S. history who have served the country, whether as volunteers or as draftees, and who have borne the burden of the nation's wars. They have also seen the military change, the public's perception of the military change, and the evolution of American warfare upfront, from Bunker Hill to the streets of Fallujah. If anything, one glance through American history shows that there is one constant, American war. For the 240-plus years of American existence as a nation, only 17 of

¹ Regina Sherlock, "Last Continuously Serving Draftee Retires after 42 Years of Service," U.S. Army, October 29, 2014, https://www.army.mil/article/137112/last_continuously_serving_draftee_retires_after_42_years_of_service.

those years have seen the United States fully at peace.² American war dominates and colors discussions of politics, both in the past and now, and in spite of any assertions to the contrary, war is central to the American being and how Americans view their place in the world. One look at any component of American patriotic tradition, like the July 4th celebrations or the Star-Spangled Banner, are simply images of American war recreated in the mind of the Americans.

Yet, it is highly unlikely that Americans understand how closely linked their identity is to war, specifically the war and conflicts that the United States has fought. Most Americans today live their existence without any concerns about open warfare in the streets, at least not to the extent seen in other less-developed countries. The American public would not likely paint themselves as a violent people, and individually, they would be correct. Yet, the American State conducts war overseas on a massive scale and on a permanent basis, making the public at least complicit in supporting war operations, even if they are not personally involved or know anyone involved.

This question of personal connection is a particularly poignant part of the American experience. For most of American history, the public was directly involved in American warfare. They have had to serve in militias, as draftees, and as volunteers when the American State required and needed. Yet, in the past five decades, that relationship to American war has changed. The creation of the AVF has halted all expectations of compulsory service from the American public, a tradition which had lasted for almost two centuries prior. The establishment of the AVF ended an American institution which personally connected the public to the wars

² Christian Oord, "Believe It or Not: Since Its Birth the USA Has Only Had 17 Years of Peace," *War History Online* (blog), March 19, 2019, <https://www.warhistoryonline.com/instant-articles/usa-only-17-years-of-peace.html>.

fought by the State, and with it the political connection as well. It is this connection that we will explore in this project.

The goal of this project is to explore the interconnection of the American State, the public, and its military, particularly through the prisms of mandated military service and the shaping of American identity. Both the military and American identity have a strong connection and affect one another, and it is fair to say that neither simply came into being. Each is a construction of both legal and social expectations, created and molded over time by the American State and the public. By examining all of these elements, we can further understand some of the differences of our current political epoch when compared to prior eras.

To explain the thrust of this project more succinctly, there are two major questions that this project seeks to explore and attempt to answer. The first of these is the question about why American wars are longer now than they have been in the past. The growing trend in recent decades seems to show that American war is more protracted, lasting into the decades rather than achieving quick, decisive victory and ending the conflict. Possible explanations for protracted conflict may include the political goals of particular wars or privatized monied interests associated with the military-industrial complex. However, there is likely something beyond political or economic interests, and it involves American identity. This leads us to the second major question which concerns how the evolution of military regimes, from the state-based militias to the All-Volunteer Force, shaped American identity. This focuses on the induction of individual American citizens into the military as a possible explanation for this lengthening of American war. By examining the military service regime structure over time and how it developed, this could offer insight into how American identity grew over time and what connection that has to the wars of today.

Before moving forward, since we have already used the term, we must address the usage of the term “state” in this project. Since the focus of this project is on the United States as the only case, the term state can have many different meanings in the American context, to include different levels of government. To help differentiate, the term State with the first letter capitalized will be used as a traditional political science term to imply the independent, sovereign entity of the United States. This will be used practically interchangeably with the Federal Government and its international domain of responsibilities. When discussing states as in the 50 territorial subdivisions of the United States, the term state will be lower case and often paired with other qualifiers to clarify meaning.

A Justification for This Study

When we consider where the military fits into the grand scheme of a society, often the connection to the State is the strongest. The State provides the guidance for how the military is to be structured, provides legal backing for the military, and uses its power to procure resources for the military. At the same time, the public plays a role as well, supporting the government, and much of the time, providing personnel for the military. This is a trilateral relationship that can be viewed similar to the Clausewitz Trinity, proposed by Prussian officer Carl von Clausewitz in his early 19th Century work *On War*. Clausewitz used this triangular relationship to explore the purposes and dynamics of war in Napoleonic era society, but his proposal remains well-studied to this day in military studies.³

³ Christopher Bassford, “Tip-Toe Through the Trinity,” Clausewitz Studies, September 15, 2020, <https://clausewitzstudies.org/mobile/trinity8.htm>.

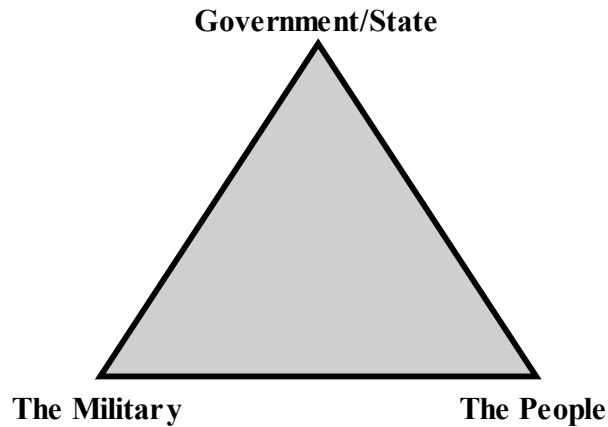


Figure 1-1. The Clausewitz Trinity

Looking first at Clausewitz's Trinity can give us perspectives on war that we may not have otherwise considered. Often, the military is the one organization considered when looking to war since it usually is the element that is in combat and has to bear the brunt of the war. However, it is the State that creates the military, and it is the people that give the military justification for existing. Each of the other elements in the triangle are just as important to the success or failure of war as the military. More often than not in military studies, this triangular relationship is used to target certain elements of an enemy's disposition as a means of crushing military support and rendering enemy military operations ineffective.

However, this project is going to examine a particular relationship exhibited here, and we will do so from the American perspective, not so much in the sense of targeting an enemy but rather of examining what is occurring with American society and political culture. That relationship is going to be the one between the military and the people. On face value, we can probably figure out what this relationship is. The military protects the people, and from the people, the military gains servicemembers. Yet, in the American case, this relationship is much more complex. The American public treats the military heroically, putting their service on a

pedestal of respect. Elements of patriotism and respect for symbols of the country play into this. How veterans are treated by the State and what response the public has to this also falls into this relationship. In short, it is much more than simply a mutually-beneficial relationship between the two.

Also, when looking to history, the relationship between the military and the public changes. Early in American history, the public usually participated in state militias, which were less effective after the Revolutionary War. As the American State developed, so too did its military capabilities and its ability to force citizens into military service. During major conflicts, the Federal Government has been able to draft individuals, just as they did Chief Warrant Officer Rigby referenced earlier. The current era has no mandatory public service elements, so the relationship between the public and military is two-fold: one is of those who volunteer, thus furnishing the military with manpower, and the other is that of a passive public who supports the military. What is implied here though is that there is much less of a personal connection between the public and the military now than there has been in eras past because of the changing nature of this relationship.

Military service and national identity are by-products of the relationship between the military and the people. By looking to those two elements, we may be able to gain a better understanding of the kinds of interactions that are occurring within this relationship in the current era and in eras past. We may also be able to see what has molded and shaped American warfare as it is today. Intersecting both military service and American national identity can lead us to a greater understanding the American psyche today and what relationship war plays within it.

The Implications and Outline of This Study

The need for a study like this is especially pertinent at a time like this. American war has become a persistent component of the actions of the American State on a daily basis. At any given time, the United States is engaged in conflicts around the world, most of them small-scale with only minor American footprints on the ground or nearby. Yet there are also major conflicts, like Afghanistan and Iraq, which have consumed resources and left many dead in their wake. These conflicts have more or less lasted for two decades, longer than most other wars. If we use wars of the past as any indication, these conflicts should have been over by now. Full U.S. involvement in Vietnam lasted only nine years, and the social backlash against the war forced the political class to reassess the American State's role and objectives in Vietnam and the region.

Yet, that kind of backlash has not occurred against these current wars. The question is why has this not occurred. Part of it could be the emotional trauma that occurred in the wake of the end of Vietnam. The treatment of Vietnam servicemembers is an example of this, who upon their return were disrespected, and the American public does not want to repeat that episode of disrespect. However, this cannot be the only explanation. How is it possible for the American State to conduct war on a permanent basis with all the resources it needs without the public objecting? By exploring the evolution of military service and identity, we may be able to clue into what is occurring now that is different from wars past.

To examine this, we will need to establish a literature collection which have attempted to look at these elements from some perspective. Chapter Two will focus on this academic literature examining these areas, particularly from the perspective of civil-military relations, the State's growth associated with military development, and nationalism and anti-statist studies. This will provide the basis for further analysis of these elements. Chapters Three through Six

will explore the relationships between war, military service, and the formation of national identity by tracing the evolution of American military manpower regimes. By looking at the construction of both over time, we may be able to ascertain what is occurring today by seeing the evolution play out.

If we recall, one of the guiding questions of this project is the question of why American war last so long today. Recent academic works have pointed to the financial interests that are in play in American war, that the State no longer burdens the public with war both in terms of service or in monetary cost through taxation.⁴ Therefore, the public is much less aware of the war, as they would have been in wars past. Additionally, there has also been a massive growth in the social benefits that the State accords to servicemembers over the past few decades, and these sorts of programs are largely popular.⁵ The field of American Political Development has long looked to the military as a means of growing State power both domestically and internationally, all while narratives on American identity remain rather strongly anti-statist in nature.⁶ This project builds upon these works by examining the relationship between the American public and the U.S. military through the prisms of war, military service, and American identity. It will show that war is a central component to American political culture and identity, whether the public wishes to admit it or not.

⁴ Sarah Kreps, *Taxing Wars: The American Way of War Finance and the Decline of Democracy* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2018), 8-11.

⁵ Jennifer Mittlestadt, *The Rise of the Military Welfare State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015).

⁶ For examples, see Aaron L. Friedberg, “Why Didn’t the United States Become a Garrison State?,” *International Security* 16, no. 4 (Spring 1992): 109–42, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539189>; Paul Frymer, *Building an American Empire: The Era of Territorial and Political Expansion* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017); Samuel P. Huntington, “American Ideals versus American Institutions,” *Political Science Quarterly* 97, no. 1 (1982): 1–37, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2149312>; Suzanne Mettler, *Soldiers to Citizens: The G.I. Bill and the Making of the Greatest Generation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

By the end of this study, we will show some of the varied aspects of the growth of the U.S. military since its inception, how the changing nature of inducting citizens into the military affected the development of American identity over time, and how the length of war may correlate to the changes in both American identity and the U.S. military, particularly the development of the AVF. Additionally, we will show how military power gradually shifted from the individual state level to the Federal level, which also helped to grow the Federal Government's ability to shape and mold American identity through the military service regime. In short, the results of this analysis will seek to answer the questions posited earlier by correlating the protracted length of American war today with the lack of a mandatory military service regime in recent decades.

Chapter Two

A Theory of Military Service and Identity

"America without her Soldiers would be like God without His Angels."

--Claudia Pemberton

The connection between military service and identity is socially-constructed one, reinforced over time both by the evolution of State institutions and social norms. At its most basic level, serving in the military is considered a selfless act in defense of people who the servicemember will likely never meet or know, which typifies a kind of honor amongst those who are part of the defended nation or group. Garnering that honor with service equates to a strong connection the nation's identity, but how this relationship between service and identity manifests varies based on the time period, events, and social norms among a multitude of other factors. In the United States, this honorable view on military service is commonplace, with almost universal acceptance and confidence in the military as a cornerstone institution of national pride.⁷ Generally, there is a connection and a relationship between the U.S. military and the American public, manifesting itself both individually, collectively, and through an array of different means. Out of the American public arises those who serve, and once service is complete, servicemembers return to the public.

⁷ Pew Research Center, "Americans' Trust in Government, Each Other, Leaders," July 22, 2019, <https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2019/07/22/trust-and-distrust-in-america/>.

Yet, the manifestation of this public-military relationship as well as how it has developed, evolved, or been maintained leaves a lot of room for interpretation. Associated theoretical concepts and themes, like the civil-military divide or the citizen-soldier, are hard to quantify in any reliable scientific manner, unless one focuses in on a single-scope aspect within these concepts. Even with this, given that the interactions between the public, the military, and the political leaders of both groups can be affected by a plethora of different, constantly-changing variables at play, these concepts are malleable depending on the interpretation of the individual researcher, the method of analysis, or object of study. What is clear though is that a relationship exists, and that civilian leaders, the public, and the military have a trilateral relationship with interactions varying between each actor. One does not need to go far to see Americans and their connection to the military. Public displays of military affection can be strong at times, especially during periods of patriotic sentiments, such as national holidays or during crises.

The goal of this project is to posit that American identity is linked to the development of particular military regimes over the course of time, and that our current regime, that of the All-Volunteer Force, has allowed Americans to take pride in the military while not having to answer for the consequences of the wars of the 21st Century. An ensuing result of this is that American war has gotten longer. With fewer personal connections to the military, Americans choose to revere the military instead of holding it accountable, allowing the entire military industrial complex to do as it pleases with few to no political consequences. Also, since American identity is strongly linked to the military, fighting a war or at least feeling that the nation is at war is required to maintaining some sense that the nation remains a force for good, hence why wars have gotten longer. We will explore this in more detail later in the chapter, but for the time being, our main variables of study are American identity as an independent variable and the

military regime and war length as dependent variables. Since some of these variables cannot be reliably measured on the whole in a fully scientific or data-driven method, we will look to theory to provide a grounding basis to see all of these variables at work.

Most of this chapter will focus on the theories and governing literature connecting the American public, the U.S. military, and identity. These will include literature about civil-military control, American State-led development, and nationalism. By examining the theoretical debates within these particular areas of study, we will be able to see how academics have generally viewed the growth in American military power through State and social institutions and how that military power interacts both on those institutions and on the public's minds to shape and mold American identity. This will establish the theoretical framework for our examination of the military regimes in the following chapters. We will also establish the gaps within the academic literature that this project seeks to fill, mainly that the connection between the American public and its military is understudied, that anti-statism does not explain certain parts of American identity especially vis-à-vis Americans and their relationship to war, and finally, that the post-2001 era has presented its own challenges to American war and identity, shifting both beyond the paradigms of decades and centuries past. This project will bridge a number of different fields of study, so we will be taking a holistic approach and focusing directly on the military-identity connection and war length, taking from each field as necessary to clearly understand the argument.

The Public and Its Military

The first and perhaps most appropriate place to start is to directly examine the relationship between the military and the public. Academics have studied the relationship in a field commonly known as civil-military relations or other variations on that term. The field

examines how those relations exist now and historically as well as what the philosophical and optimal relationship should be. At its core, the field coalesces around the reciprocal relations of the military and the public, that a military without a public to defend is simply a violent force for its own benefit, and that a public without a military has left itself open to domination and violence from other groups. If a public arises or is created, questions on defense arise as well, giving need to a defensive posture and thus a military as an organizing force of that posture. History is replete with examples of groups and nations arising and organizing their militaries in forms that their individual publics would accept, but as with most theoretical and philosophical debates, no one answer within civil-military relations provides a complete understanding of all aspects of this relationship. In view of this, the debate around civil-military relations and its evolving nature are at the very least uncertain since so many variables may be at play in solidifying and influencing a public and its military. However, much of the academic literature has coalesced around two particular areas of study: those of political civilian control over the military and the citizen-soldier.

Civilian Control and Connection

The cornerstone debate on civil-military relations dates to the late 1950s and early 1960s between political scientist Samuel Huntington and sociologist Morris Janowitz concerning the professionalization of the U.S. military. At the time, the monumental growth in U.S. military power post-World War II and the maintenance of the Peacetime Draft raised fears that civil-military relations, particularly civilian control of the military, could potentially deteriorate if the military was professionalized using only volunteers, creating a higher threat of the military intervening in domestic affairs. Both Huntington and Janowitz argued that professionalization

would not affect civil-military relations, but for starkly different reasons. Huntington saw professionalization as a way of achieving objective military control, where if civilian interference in military affairs decreases, allowing the officer corps to take more control of the military and remain politically neutral, then the military will be a more effective organization.⁸ Janowitz argued that so long as the civilian portion of government remained well-connected to the military and exercised proper oversight, professionalization would not create major issues for civilian control.⁹ Since the 1960s, debates over civil-military relations have largely focused on what these two academics argued, parsing their words, and for good measure since a major concern for most governments is how to prevent the military, an entity with such immense destructive power, from either destroying its own society or from taking control of society.¹⁰ While the Huntington-Janowitz debate is appropriate to have, the focus on these two has largely steered the debate over the past few decades, putting much of the attention on the relationship between civilian leaders and society rather than on other aspects of the relationship, such as on the connective tissue between the public and the military. Additionally, both of their works were written at a time where the U.S. military was vastly different from our current military. They were dealing with a military that had draftees and was much less technologically advanced than the current military. It is likely that their framework, while still quite astute for our time, leaves much to be desired.

⁸ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1985), 260-261, 465-466.

⁹ Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1960), 438-440.

¹⁰ Peter D. Feaver, "The Civil-Military Problematique: Huntington, Janowitz, and the Question of Civilian Control," *Armed Forces & Society* 23, no. 2 (1996): 151-152.

More recent studies have attempted refocus civil-military relations along the partisan political divide. A 2001 study by Peter Feaver and Richard Kohn concentrated on clarifying whether a political gap exists between military officers and their civilian counterparts, with military officers identifying as more conservative than enlisted personnel or the public. However, Feaver and Kohn also say that there is no real major issue with this divide so long as efforts were made to keep that political gap from growing too wide.¹¹ This is similar to what Janowitz argued, indicating a thread of historical thinking on this issue. A later study by Jason Dempsey in 2010 refocused the study of the partisan divide between military and civilian populations to see which identifies more with the Democratic or Republican political parties. The study focuses on data collected from a 2004 survey to analyze military personnel and their political identification, concluding that, much like Feaver and Kohn argued, the officer corps identified more as conservative or Republican than enlisted personnel or the public.¹²

The preference towards examining civil-military relations from the perspective of civilian leadership or from partisan political identity is more common in civil-military relations because the relationship is easier to study. Such investigations allow better variable scoping, thus making data easier to quantify and therefore easier to support particular arguments. The other side of this is that such analyses can scope questions and data too much. For instance, civilian control and political affiliations are not the only issues at play in civil-military relations. Also, much of the discussion is anchored within the particular time periods defined by their studies. The Huntington-Janowitz debate is an example of this, fixed to the height of Cold War politics and

¹¹ Peter D. Feaver and Richard H. Kohn, eds., *Soldiers and Civilians: The Civil-Military Gap and American National Security* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 462-473.

¹² Jason K. Dempsey, *Our Army: Soldiers, Politics, and American Civil-Military Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 184-186.

driven through the backdrop of preserving liberal democracy in the face of totalitarianism, and also in the pre-All Volunteer Force era of the American military. Feaver and Kohn's study analyzed data from the 1990s about the political divide between the military and civilians, but it provides no insight to the effects of the post-September 11th military buildup and subsequent wars. While Dempsey's study confirmed Feaver and Kohn's political divide, it does so with, once again, rather-dated data fixed to a specific time and not giving us a greater understanding of the processes in play. This is not to say that these studies are faulty. They do provide a glimpse into a line of thinking at a particular time, but concurrently, they niche their work within a certain scope, making it difficult to explain greater civil-military trends at play beyond that scope.

With that though, there has been an attempt in the past decade to go beyond the leadership and partisan divide focus to reconceptualize civil-military relations in terms of public-military connections, although they have yet to create any major substantial changes to the field. An often-cited 2012 study argued that a civil-military gap should not be conceptualized as a monolithic entity of one singular divide, but rather as a concept with four different and independently-shifting dimensions in continual flux: cultural, demographic, policy preference, and institutional.¹³ While this is helpfully in changing the perception of what a civil-military divide is, seeing it rather as a number of civil-military divides, it does little else to elaborate on the state of civil-military relations. The study provides little historical data or otherwise to support an interpretation beyond the intellectual prism that it offers. Along the lines of that 2012 study, this project's author has complete work within the cultural civil-military divide, examining the how the sub-genre of military comedies in film has disappeared in recent decades,

¹³ Jon Rahbek-Clemmensen et al., "Conceptualizing the Civil-Military Gap: A Research Note," *Armed Forces & Society* 38, no. 4 (2012): 673.

indicative of a shifting military-public relationship.¹⁴ Once again, though, these dimensions of the civil-military divide and their subsequent studies are apt to being scoped to the point where they only explain a small part of civil-military relations.

The Citizen-Soldier

Another framework that is directly connected to our later examination of the military draft is the concept of the citizen-soldier. At its core, the citizen-soldier is an idealized individual who serves the nation for a specific time period or in the nation's time of war and returns to being a citizen at the service period or war's end. This concept can, in most cases, link the general public to war as citizens are expected to serve the State when asked. The citizen-soldier is a philosophically republican ideal in nature as it combines service with a duty and obligation to the State and the nation as a whole. A citizen-soldier can have a higher claim to a national identity, given one's willingness to put one's life on the line for the preservation of said nation. As with other discussions of civil-military relations, the citizen-soldier concept remains nebulous, creating an array of interpretations in how to apply the concept both scientifically and to real life. What is beneficial though about the citizen-soldier concept is that it attempts to directly connect the public and the military and examine what that relationship entails.

The American citizen-soldier, when cited, often has a historical connotation associated with it, mainly due to most 21st Century Americans having not served in the military in any capacity, and most have fewer personal connections to the military as the number of veterans declines.¹⁵ Also, to be an American citizen does not necessitate serving or fighting for the

¹⁴ Andrew C. Sparks, "Poking Fun at Heroes: American War and the Death of the Military Comedy," *Media, War & Conflict*, May 26, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1750635220922278>, 13-16.

country, but rather is a status imparted by the State and requires a general acceptance of American customs and norms. As such, the current form of the citizen-soldier holds a more niche position in American society, mainly those who volunteer to serve either in the active-duty military or in the Reserve or National Guard. These latter two are probably more appropriately linked to the citizen-soldier since most service members in the Reserve and National Guard have civilian jobs most of the time and their military service acts as a second job. They are individuals who serve when needed and are regular citizens when not needed. This distinction is likely lost on the public at large as they probably see little difference between these nuances.

There is a reason why the citizen-soldier concept is more historical; much of the literature about American citizen-soldiers comes from studies of history and the past use of U.S. military drafts, something that is just not as applicable currently. The peak application of the citizen-soldier to American society was during the World War II-era when millions of Americans served. Acclaimed historian Stephen Ambrose used the concept of the citizen-soldier in a book of under that same name to highlight how regular everyday Americans came together in some of the most decisive engagements during World War II.¹⁶ In another work, historian Shaul Mitelpunkt argues that the United States relied on the idea of a citizen-soldier, especially during and after World War II where it was seen as vital to the survival of a free nation, and that the United States idealized other nations, particularly Israel and its military conscription regime, as the epitome of a citizen-soldier State.¹⁷ These works clue us in to an era where the social and

¹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, "Census Bureau Releases New Report on Veterans," June 2, 2020, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2020/veterans-report.html>.

¹⁶ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Citizen Soldiers: The U. S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1998).

¹⁷ Shaul Mitelpunkt, *Israel in the American Mind: The Cultural Politics of US-Israeli Relations, 1958-1988* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 3-4.

political expectations were for citizens to serve when called, and they fix the citizen-soldier principle as applied in the American case to this specific historical time period.

The literature also points to the concept's demise, at least in terms of its application to the greater American public. The strength of the World War II's effect on connecting Americans to the military, particularly through the Peacetime Draft, had abated by the Vietnam War era. Beth Bailey argued that at the height of Vietnam, as the draft became controversial, political leaders pushed for military service less based on "fairness and shared sacrifice," as the draft supposedly was, and more based on monetary incentives for those who joined.¹⁸ By ending the Peacetime Draft, the personal cost of war shifted from a burden on the public-at-large to strictly those who volunteer. This was done to achieve a political end, saving political figures from public wrath about the controversial war that Vietnam had become, but it effectively delimited the application of the citizen-soldier concept to a select few. Service in wartime thus became more of a personal choice with related monetary incentives to entice enlistment rather than forcing service on individuals in the pursuit of a greater national purpose. In the years after Vietnam, political figures changed the role of the public in American conflicts to a more passive one. As Andrew Bacevich points out, a major political shift occurred during the Reagan administration's military build-up where "support for 'the troops'—as opposed to actual service *with* them—[became] the new standard of civic responsibility."¹⁹ The military, even with fewer individuals at its disposition, did not get smaller. It simply changed, and the role of the public became to support that change, not necessarily to participate. This builds upon the argument that the citizen-soldier

¹⁸ Beth Bailey, *America's Army: Making the All-Volunteer Force* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2009), 32-33.

¹⁹ Andrew J. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 107-108.

was declining or even disappeared after Vietnam. In the event of American conflict, shared sacrifice was and still is no longer necessary, but what is necessary is a vocal support for military personnel and the institution. As we will see when we examine this post-Vietnam period, this likely leads to less public objection to war. Also, in turn, the military becomes segregated from the public, leading to a cognitive dissonance between both parties, and the public becomes naïve about the military and war. In short, the citizen-soldier as a concept is not as applicable today, but its historical placement can still shed some light on the shifts in the relationship between the military and the public at our current time.

In summation, civil-military relations remains a field in flux and ever-evolving. The War on Terrorism and associated conflicts have presented their own set of challenges by changing how American war is fought, and unlike in major wars past, the American public is more protected and less connected from the consequences of current wars than at probably any other point in American history. The key literature which has historically defined civil-military relations has done little to expose the connection between the public and the military, instead focusing on primarily civilian and military leadership and their connection. In the one area where the public's military connection is perhaps the strongest, within the citizen-soldier concept, the general view is that the traditional form of a citizen-soldier is historical and thus not a cornerstone of American civic tradition today. Instead, public support for the military is to be felt and expressed vocally, not necessarily to be acted upon by one's own service, unless one decides to willingly enter into such an agreement. As such, the field of civil-military relations provides only a glimpse in certain tranches of the greater military-public relationship, with many areas left unstudied.

State Development and Military Growth

We will now shift to focusing on a field rooted in APD, that of American State development. This particular area focuses on how the various levels of U.S. government developed over time along with their evolving norms and policies. In the current epoch, the institution of the U.S. military remains one of the most powerful institutions within the Federal Government, but this dominance was not envisioned as such by the Founders. The original Federal Government was rather weak, but as the American State developed over time and took more power for itself, this increased its ability to sustain a military. By looking to APD to see how the State built itself and its military, we can see why the military became the powerful institution that it has. Additionally, the APD literature on American State development takes into account other societal and governmental aspects that civil-military relations literature leaves asides. Some APD themes that are germane to our examination of the State and the military include territorial expansion, the strengthening of Federal power and influence, and the development of social welfare programs, all of which we will examine below.

Territorial Expansion and Limited Federal Government

The development of the American State is inextricably linked to the growth of the country geographically across North America. The Federal Government of the 1790s was quite small and weak, but as the country grew westward, so too did Federal powers grow to accommodate that expansion. Historical analysis of the first century or so of independent American governance paint a complex narrative of how the American State and geographic expansion occurred conjointly. Paul Frymer contends that the American State and settlers had aspirations that went beyond the present-day territorial bounds of the United States and that those

aspirations had a strong white supremacist component to them. The United States aspired to spread across the hemisphere, displacing native nations and groups and replacing them with majority white populations. The problem though, Frymer argues, was the inherent weakness in the American State. Since the Federal Government did not have the organic capacity to impose its will through military-power projection in a sustained manner across the continent, let alone the hemisphere, these aspirations were largely achieved in a slow, piecemeal manner of legislative acts which incentivized westward movement to new territories.²⁰ This indicates that the early American State was relatively weak militarily, but it could at the very least pass legislation which fostered expansion. The Constitution only limited Federal power in the individual states, but in territories and on the frontier, the Federal Government maintained some dominance through legal approbation.

Another related prism through which to view westward expansion and State development is federalism, and one noted scholar to examine all three was William Riker. His concept of the federal bargain produces a perspective examining state governments and their relationship with the Federal Government as the nation moved towards the Pacific. The federal bargain, as the name implies, was an agreed distribution of power developed over time between state and Federal governments. In doing so, each side achieved a common understanding of what each is responsible for, striking a power balance, but also allowing the Federal government to maintain some level of overall control over the states. Riker suggests that without such a bargain in place, the Federal Government would have otherwise had to station troops in each state to maintain control, a capability which it did not fully possess for such an immense land area covering all

²⁰ Frymer, *Building an American Empire*, 12, 24.

states.²¹ In other words, the lack of Federal military power was, in part, linked to the creation of new states. In addition to this, the lack of Federal military power required states to develop their own power and their own defensive militias. What both Frymer and Riker point to is the feeble state of military power nested in Federal Government during the opening decades of the American experiment. With limited power and without robust military power to project, the American State had to rely on other means to achieve control, such as legislative acts or power sharing with the states. In short, American military power was a piece of westward expansion, but it was not the only piece, nor was it likely the primary piece early on.

This leads us to why the American State was designed in such a way from its onset, likely linked to concerns over internal security. By designing a weakened Federal Government with little to no military power for itself, the Founders were countering perceived domestic threats more than external. By limiting a national military to practically nothing and relying on state militias as a defensive force, the Founders were attempting to achieve security on domestic and foreign fronts. This system, termed the Philadelphian System by Daniel Deudney, defined the period from Constitutional ratification to the Civil War, where a practically non-existent national army and a massive militia system of citizen-soldiers sought to create a patchwork of security across the nation from threats posed not only by Great Britain, other foreign powers, and natives, but also from the domestic threats to stability as well. This system was based on avoiding situations which could endanger the republic, such as the Federal military seizing power or putting too much violent power in one particular institution, and thus achieving balance in

²¹ William H. Riker, *The Development of American Federalism* (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1987), 13.

security on foreign and domestic threats was key.²² This, in part, offers an explanation for why militias were heavily dominant early in American history and why they are perhaps not so dominant in other periods of American history. The early domestic threats were more present given the young age of the country. As the nation matured, domestic threats persisted, but not to the point necessitating a Revolutionary-era militia to maintain order. They could be maintained through other means and institutions as the American State's bureaucracy grew.

These interpretations indicate that the early American State was relatively limited in its capabilities, its resources, and in its ability to control. The one factor that drove State development was westward expansion, but that was more due to legislative power at the Federal level than military power. The federal bargain allowed for an agreement on Federal control as more states were admitted, but Federal military power was still reliant on state militias. Even looking to the militias themselves, we can see a balancing act of creating a military force to deter foreign aggressors while simultaneously addressing domestic threats. In short, the early era of American history is not defined by a strong Federal Government, and one of the results of this is that the U.S. military was not strong either.

The Growth of Federal Power and Programs

If early in American history, the State was weak, then there had to be some process through which it was permitted to expand and grow. This leads to another central question within APD, which is how the American State expanded its power in spite of constitutional and systemic limitations. Over time, laws, amendments, precedents, and even traditions can be

²² Daniel H. Deudney, "The Philadelphian System: Sovereignty, Arms Control, and Balance of Power in the American States-Union, Circa 1787-1861," *International Organization* 49, no. 2 (1995): 194–197.

reinterpreted to suit the current needs of the public, and so examining these sorts of trends can indicate ways in which the American State has grown its own power, including at the expense of the individual states or the people. One trend to consider in APD literature is how American war grew the demand for military power, which in turn grew State power both over war and other domains.

The literature on war driving State development is not novel to the American case; political scientists have linked war to State development for decades. Charles Tilly noted the connection between European State development to the wars conducted in Europe through the Middle Ages as primarily a coercive means of controlling violence within society.²³ By growing the power to conduct war, European States grew their own power to control domestic affairs as well. Along the same lines, Bruce Porter examined the American State's connection to war, arguing that, initially, American government was weak, partly due to geographic isolation and lack of national identity. However, war served as the natural driver for the development of the State, to include the expansion of rights to different groups in the wake of war. Nationalism is a component of this, forging a singular identity in the wake of conflict.²⁴ Both Tilly and Porter point to war as an organizing principle of State power. Since European States have longer histories of conflict, this may indicate why they are perceived to have stronger, centralized States when compared to the American State.

Other works in APD examine how war fostered social program development. In a number of historical cases, the end of war propelled social programs to take care of veterans after their service. A general theme in historical studies and political science was that in the late 19th

²³ Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, A.D. 990-1990* (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 70.

²⁴ Bruce Porter, *War and the Rise of the State* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 244-247.

and early 20th Centuries, the United States did not have a strong social welfare state like European nations of the early 20th Century, but Theda Skocpol contested this. She points to the post-Civil War period when the Federal Government constructed a massive pension system for the war's veterans as a means of meeting the social demand that many of these veterans placed on the government. At one point, the payouts for these pensions reached forty percent of the total Federal budget.²⁵ This put the United States as one of the forefront nations in terms of social welfare at the time, at least for veterans. Civil War pensions were certainly not the last time that the Federal Government accorded large social programs to veterans. After World War II, the GI Bill became a mainstay of social progression for military servicemembers, providing funds for servicemembers to attend college after the completion of their service. Suzanne Mettler argued that the implementation of the GI Bill had a profound effect on American political and social culture, giving military personnel access to college and vocational programs that they likely could not access prior to the war, creating a higher-education boom as veterans sought to access these programs. According to Mettler, the program's success assisted in created a "more inclusive and egalitarian [political system] during the middle decades of the 20th Century" when American citizens became more engaged politically.²⁶ At the same time, the Federal Government also accorded Veterans Administration-backed home mortgages to returning veterans, which were government-backed mortgages to buy or build homes which, much like the GI Bill leading to a boon in higher education, led to a housing boom across the

²⁵ Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: The Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1992), 107-115.

²⁶ Mettler, *Soldiers to Citizens*, 11, 134-135.

country.²⁷ These programs grew the Federal Government because they set a norm that, when the United States goes to war, the nation as a whole should take care of its returning servicemembers. Individual states or local groups should bear the cost of that care because if war is a national obligation, so too is the care of those who serve. The social demands for veterans' care justified growing the Federal bureaucracy to meet those needs. At least in the cases listed here, war becomes an impetus for the social change, which in turn leads to State development.

We would be remiss to not mention race here as it plays a factor in the growth of Federal programs related to war. Race itself stands as a major engrained theme within the varied shades of APD, given the long American history of racism associated with slavery, segregation, discrimination, and a multitude of other issues. Underprivileged groups have historically used U.S. wars as a means of improving their status in society, both in terms of improving their socioeconomic status and in using their service as a means of receiving equal treatment vis-à-vis civic equality and inclusion. As Philip Klinkner and Rogers Smith point out though, racial progress is not necessarily benevolently bestowed by Americans, but rather it is the outgrowth of major war and the political perception that rights should expand for a given group.²⁸ As such, if war grows the State, then war also grows the political demand to include underprivileged groups into full civic life, necessitating State intervention to ensure this inclusion. Such was the case for American blacks during and after World War II. With new social programs for veterans after the war, one would assume that these programs to apply to all veterans, whether they are

²⁷ Glenn C. Altschuler and Stuart M. Blumin, *The GI Bill: A New Deal for Veterans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 182-183.

²⁸ Philip A. Klinkner and Rogers M. Smith, *The Unsteady March: The Rise and Decline of Racial Equality in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 3-4.

underprivileged or not. Ira Katznelson demonstrated that this was not the case, discussing the inequalities in how blacks and whites were treated both in service and after the war. The U.S. military early in the 20th Century maintained racist policies which segregated blacks from whites, even though both groups were fighting the same wars. Blacks were often passed up for promotions or given menial jobs, and yet, many blacks still enlisted, emboldened to serve their country because in spite of the mistreatment, they still identified with the country.²⁹ Despite this, similar patterns of segregation were baked into the GI Bill after the war, disenfranchising black veterans from program benefits in spite of their willingness to fight for the country.³⁰ With social pushback, these programs were eventually opened to blacks and other races, particularly after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which helped to bar similar forms of discrimination and exclusion in these kinds of social programs. War can thus be a conduit for affecting domestic perceptions and change, particularly for underprivileged groups.

Overall, APD provides us with a number of different perspectives on the military and the state, with one of the most prevalent being that war has been a driving force for developing American State institutions, particularly at the Federal level. This was not originally intended as such in the early decades after the ratification of the Constitution. The relative weakness of the Federal Government was based in part on the Founders' vision of limited government, but also due to geography and practicality. As the nation grew, limited Federal power meant that the Federal Government had to develop ways of controlling territory that were both military (militias) and non-military (legislative actions and the federal bargain), thus growing State power incrementally. However, war became an enabler for growing the State both in terms of military

²⁹ Ira Katznelson, *When Affirmative Action Was White: The Untold History of Racial Inequality in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2005), 89-92, 105.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 141.

power and also domestically, creating new social programs at the Federal level. There is also an identity element in play here in terms of who is included and who is excluded. Race has been one of those barring factors from full inclusion, but as we see, war and subsequent State development can be an impetus for changing the status quo in terms of civic inclusion.

American Identity

This leads us to perhaps one of the more central aspects of this project, an examination of American identity and what that entails. At its core, this is a discussion of the prevailing notions of what it means to be an American, and this identity is open to interpretation and is not static. Identity can have legal interpretations, as in an American someone who possesses U.S. citizenship, or it can embody something more, embodying a spirit, loving the land, or respecting American symbols. For our purposes, there are two major fields which deal with analysis of American identity: the study of nationalism and APD. Nationalism is a subfield within Comparative Politics that deals with manifestations of love of country or love of one's own State. It is not a field that is U.S. centric as it lends itself more to comparing versions of nationalism across countries and regions, but there are sections of study, like banal nationalism, which deal with the American experience. APD deals with American identity from a number of perspectives, with some of the most notable being race and anti-statism. The previous section already alluded to race with Katznelson, Klinkner, and Smith all pointing to how racial groups were excluded from programs, and thus systematically excluded from full American identity. Since race has already been discussed, this section will focus more on anti-statism, with the acknowledgement that race and anti-statism have a common connection. To clarify what anti-statism is, it is essentially the belief in one's country without believing necessarily in one's State.

One could equate it to a generalized distrust of the government while still retaining an idealized dedication to one's country.

For this section, we will be examining American identity from both the nationalism and APD perspective. We will first examine some cornerstone literature around how nationalism is constructed and what of it applies to the American case. After that, we will examine how anti-statism is viewed along with how that intersects with banal nationalism. This will set the stage for further discussions of the construction of American identity in later chapters.

The Imagined Community and Elite Control

The often-cited work on nationalism is Benedict Anderson's 1983 book *Imagined Communities*. Just as the title suggests, Anderson argues that nationalism derives from an imagined community of people see themselves as part of a greater group, even though they may never meet all of the individual members of that community. These communities are self-reinforcing through narratives created in institutions, such as censuses, maps, and museums, all of which are designed to exclude outsiders, position the imagined community in the world within a particular geographic construct, and write the group's historical narrative.³¹ Anderson's contribution provides the general framework for many nationalism studies, to include those studying the American example. Daniel Immerwahr used Anderson's imagined community framework to show the development of American identity through many of the processes that Anderson identified. As an example, Immerwahr points to the Insular Cases, a series of court decisions which limited American citizenship for those in conquered American territories at the

³¹ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2016), 163-164.

turn of the 20th Century.³² These decisions shaped the legal definition of American citizenship, but more precisely, they excluded certain ethnic groups in overseas territories controlled by the United States from becoming citizens, thus preventing them from becoming members of the American imagined community. This is the essence of the imagining of a community, which is a social decision as to who are included and who are excluded.

In terms of this question of community inclusion and exclusion, we can look to types of nationalism to shed some light on how these decisions are made. Anthony Smith pointed out two major types of nationalism, the first being ethnocentric nationalism and the second being polycentric nationalism. Ethnocentric nationalism develops around a specific self-identifying ethnic group, either with or without a State. Examples could include the Kurds in the Middle East or the Tamils in Sri Lanka and India. The ethnic group serves the focal point for the nation, and thus, the nationalism derives from the existence of the group.³³ This would be a form of nationalism based more on what Smith terms as “primordial ties” and tribalism, dating back to before the development of nation-states.³⁴ Not all nations are based on ethnic groups though, which leads us to polycentric nationalism which focuses more on groups working together or competing for power with a nationalist framework.³⁵ In this case, ethnic groups still exist, but they compete with other groups. The United States constitutes a mix of both of these types of nationalism. Frymer and Immerwahr, to name a select few, both point to cases of white identity

³² Daniel Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire: A History of the Greater United States* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019), 85-87.

³³ Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, 1983), 158-159.

³⁴ Anthony D. Smith, *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1995), 30.

³⁵ Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, 158-159.

dominating over other ethnic groups, so clearly there is an indication that ethnocentric nationalism is at play in the U.S. case.³⁶ At the same time, some scholars might argue that competition among groups is a core American principle, thus advocating for a polycentric form of nationalism. Robert Dahl, for example, argued that ethnic groups achieve some semblance of assimilation within American politics over time, allowing them to compete with other ethnic groups for political power.³⁷ In this case, it is not necessarily a negative since an ethnic group can create a reliable bloc of support within a democracy. The U.S. case is simultaneously both of these nationalisms at the same time, much along the lines of Rogers Smith's multiple traditions argument. The United States has a largely liberal tradition of freedom and competition within political pursuits while also having an ascriptive and discriminatory tradition against non-white groups.³⁸ Both of these versions shade American identity in different ways.

One final aspect in this section to consider is the role of elite control. Power dynamics within a society can play a crucial role as elites can invoke nationalism to achieve political ends. Nationalism can serve as an elitist, manipulatable, and cross-domain tool to create societal change, for better or worse. Ernest Gellner argued that elites use nationalism to sculpt nations during industrialization. He contends that nationalism was an outgrowth of transitioning from an agrarian to an industrial society, where elites used it as an impetus for rural citizens to accept greater national culture and feed urban industrialization with resources.³⁹ During

³⁶ Frymer, *Building an American Empire*, 12, 24; Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire*, 85-87.

³⁷ Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 32-36.

³⁸ Rogers M. Smith, "Beyond Tocqueville, Myrdal, and Hartz: The Multiple Traditions in America," *American Political Science Review* 87, no. 3 (September 1993): 549.

³⁹ Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 38-39.

industrialization, as elite power and wealth moved towards the cities, nationalism became a means of controlling agrarian populations outside of the cities, creating a symbiotic relationship between the cities and the countryside. The former took resources from the latter and made products to sell on the market. In this case, industrialization begets nationalism because elites need to control people. This could explain some of why American identity was rather stunted in the first century after the adoption of the Constitution. Westward expansion across the country prevented elite control from taking root within settler populations and kept the economy mostly agrarian. Richard Benseel argues that American industrialization was lacking through 1870, and even when the United States started to industrialize, this growth was uneven geographically.⁴⁰ American national identity at the time was not grounded in any common experience, so naturally a common nationalism could not take root, nor could elites manipulate the masses in the same way without it. This point is key because as we will see in the next few chapters, common American national identity coincides with national industrialization and the growth of a common national market, and with that, political and economic elites gained a new tool to achieve political ends.

Anti-Statism and Banal Nationalism

While these nationalism themes can offer some shades of understanding on how American identity originated or grew historically, there is also a need to understand how American identity and nationalism exists today. The most pertinent frames through which to see modern American identity is through anti-statism and banal nationalism. Both of these can provide a unique perspective on how American identity is constructed, in part because they are

⁴⁰ Richard Franklin Benseel, *The Political Economy of American Industrialization, 1877–1900* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 4–5.

based in separate fields of study. Anti-statism is largely an APD topic because of its uniqueness to the American case while banal nationalism provides a perspective on control of the masses, whether political, elite, or otherwise. Combining these perspectives can create a fuller picture of the essence of American identity.

Perhaps one clear way of looking at anti-statism is simply through common parlance. Americans in general do not use the nationalism to describe their love of country, instead preferring the term patriotism. Academics tend to use these terms interchangeably, especially within nationalism studies, but there seems to be a perceptible difference between these terms. A dictionary explanation notes the difference as nationalism as the love and dedication to a particular State versus patriotism as love and dedication to one's country, and yet even this explanation is open to interpretation.⁴¹ One could also make an argument about American exceptionalism, that using patriotism instead of nationalism sets the United States apart from other nations, and there would be some credit to that since in even in the academic world, American studies are often separate from other world studies. No matter our interpretation, the use of the term patriotism instead of nationalism in the common vernacular is likely indicative of a distrust of the American State while retaining a love of country.

APD literature tends to confirm this distrust in the American State. Huntington addressed this to some extent in his examination of ideals versus institutions. He claims that Americans are essentially bound by their ideals, but the issue is that American institutions rarely if ever live up to those ideals. This is in part because the American State is not a traditional State in the sense of other European or more centralized States.⁴² This gap between American ideals and their

⁴¹ Merriam-Webster, "The Difference Between 'Patriotism' and 'Nationalism,'" accessed July 13, 2020, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/patriotism-vs-nationalism>.

⁴² Huntington, "American Ideals versus American Institutions," 1-2, 35-37.

manifestation in institutions is partially responsible for antagonism and discontentment towards the American State. This anti-statism remained a constant, even in times of massive American State growth due to conflict. Aaron Friedberg argues that competing pressures on the American domestic front during the Cold War forced the demand for defensive institutions from the State to be nested with private industry and practices. For example, instead of becoming similar to the Soviet Union where all armaments and military equipment are produced by the State, the U.S. Government contracted out a lot of its munitions and equipment construction to private contractors.⁴³ Even in war, the American tendency was not to trust the State completely for the war, but to create a State-private industry nexus to temper growth in State power, and military contracting remains lucrative for private industry. This anti-statist tendency still remains part of American identity to this day and continues to color political debates.

On the flip side of this distrust of the State is an enthusiastic patriotism, best described within the confines of banal nationalism. Banal nationalism is a term coined by Michael Billig in his 1995 book of the same name, a case study on the U.S. form of nationalism. The essence of banal nationalism is a less overt nationalism with patriotic representations considered natural and unoffending. Billig uses the terms flag to describe objects, symbols, or other things that are meant to recall a nationalist sentiment to individual citizens. These flags can be obvious symbols, such as monuments or road names, or subconscious actions, such as specific terms or phrases used. On any normal day, American citizens simply accept these flags as a regular part of life. However, Billig argues, the purpose of these flags is to train citizens to accept certain policies. Political leaders can use these flags to influence the citizenry to agree or disagree with specific policies or courses of action.⁴⁴

⁴³ Friedberg, "Why Didn't the United States Become a Garrison State?," 141-142.

The United States is a strongly patriotic nation, and patriotic flags in Billig's sense dot the American landscape. What is curious though is how these flags can be dangerous when used for political ends like war, which is something that has become commonplace in the past few decades.⁴⁵ In cases where the American State may be pushing towards war, political leaders can draw on the psychological conditioning of these flags to get individuals to rally the public around the State and its objectives. In this sense, banal nationalism provides a way of circumventing anti-statism by creating a means for the State to rally citizens to war, which the American State has become rather successful at doing in recent conflicts. Since wars are fought externally, anti-statist arguments on war tend to fall by the wayside, while those same arguments seem to remain rather strong domestically. If anti-statism has a strong rooting in American identity, then that root is more oriented towards the domestic front, leaving State growth in the military and other foreign realms unobjectionable to the American public as a whole. This may be a practical calculation on the part of American citizens and their identity. In Realist thought, States tend to balance against external threats, so the compromise in letting the American State gain power against those external threats may be acceptable since it allows anti-statist thought to remain strong on the domestic front.⁴⁶ No matter our interpretation, it seems both anti-statism and banal nationalism can work together to form a kind of American identity where State growth at home is derided while State power in war is cheered, all while being reinforced with integrated symbols of American identity throughout daily life.

⁴⁴ Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: SAGE Publications, 2014), 39-43.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

⁴⁶ Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, "State Building for Future Wars: Neoclassical Realism and the Resource-Extractive State," *Security Studies* 15, no. 3 (September 2006): 487.

In summation, American identity is multi-faceted, and we can look to studies in nationalism and APD to flesh out our understanding of American identity, its history, and its origins. American identity is an imagined community, like all other nationalities, born out of ethnocentric and polycentric views simultaneously. It can serve as a point of pride in common national symbols or it can be a tool of the elites and political classes, as banal nationalism demonstrates. It has a strong anti-statist component, which is strong in political discourse, but at the same time, the State has grown power in the international realm. Overall, American identity is not static. It has changed and continues to change, and this project will attempt to demonstrate some of those changes, especially related the military.

Literature Gaps, Proposed Solutions, and Methodology

Before going further, we should recall that the purpose of this project is to examine a specific relationship that has evolved over time, that of particular military regimes and how they shape American identity. In general, times of hardship can unite groups, and war is perhaps the ultimate hardship. Out of wars, military are made, but identities are also forged. Military structures can provide a conduit through which identity is maintained. Each of the above fields address the U.S. military and American identity in a variety of ways. Yet, they lack in some specific ways that we will seek to fill.

One aspect that is not answered in the above works is how American identity is constructed, especially its association to State development. It is easy to point anti-statism as a way of explaining this construction, but there is more to examine, particularly how this identity has been constructed over time and what role the military has played in that. In the United States today, individuals serving in the military are serving the State, but at the same time, they can

hold anti-statist views and espouse those views. This may seem paradoxical, but it exists and is quite common. One possible solution to this is to construct a new paradigm of identity that may shed some light on the multi-faceted version of the American form today, where seemingly contradictory views can exist simultaneously.

At the same time, there is a strong identification with the military that emanates from the American civilian population. The American public respects and identifies with the U.S. military today, so much such that it is the most respected American institution.⁴⁷ Even with the military being a point of pride, most American citizens today do not serve. How and why that relationship exists as it does is based in historical developments along with State and social reinforcements, but also in the wars and crises that the American public finds themselves in. The military has become this institution of pride to look to for a sense of goodness and what is right in the United States, and this seems far from what the Founders likely intended. In a way, the military transcends the ideals versus institutions argument that Huntington pointed to, with the military being both a real institution, but also representing the virtue of the nation. One way to examine this relationship would be to look at its construction both historically and currently. The citizen-soldier is one sort of connection between the public and the military, but as stated before, that is often seen as historical and not as applicable today. This is where an examination of military regimes comes into play. If we examine how the U.S. military was constituted throughout U.S. history, with at different times militias, volunteers, and military drafts, we may be able to see how and why this strong reverence for the military exists today.

One final aspect to consider is that of time. Any political institution will change over time as societies face new crises and challenges, and both American identity and the U.S.

⁴⁷ Pew Research Center, “Public Esteem for Military Still High,” July 11, 2013, <https://www.pewforum.org/2013/07/11/public-esteem-for-military-still-high/>.

military are not immune from this. Many of the studies listed above are major works framing particular views within their given fields, but were written before 2001, a pivotal year of change in American war. The wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and elsewhere are just absent from these works, but this, at the very least, creates additional opportunities for analysis. The post-2001 era also created perceived shifts in American identity, with boosts of patriotic sentiment in the run-ups to these conflicts. This post-2001 era is a critical era for this project because it serves as the endpoint of analysis. The U.S. military and American identity in the current era are based in past constructions of both. Yet, we can still see elements of that lineage passed down today, so by analyzing both the military and identity from the onset of the nation until now, we may be able to grasp at new temporal-related insights from that analysis.

What this ultimately study proposes is twofold: first, that American military regimes have shaped American identity, and second, those regimes have affected the length of American war. To further analyze these claims, we will examine four distinct military regimes and their corresponding forms of American identity, all of which will be examined individually in subsequent chapters to demonstrate the evolution of each over time. The term military regime, as we will be using it, is a classification of particular time periods and the predominant way in which the public served in the military. These periods will be simplified for our understanding, but it is important to note that no period discussed is isolated in time, nor are these periods strictly uniform during the entirety of years prescribed to them. As we will see, some of these periods are very uneven in terms of development, but we will explain those issues as we go along. The overall goal to show how each military regime builds on one another, and thus also builds American identity.

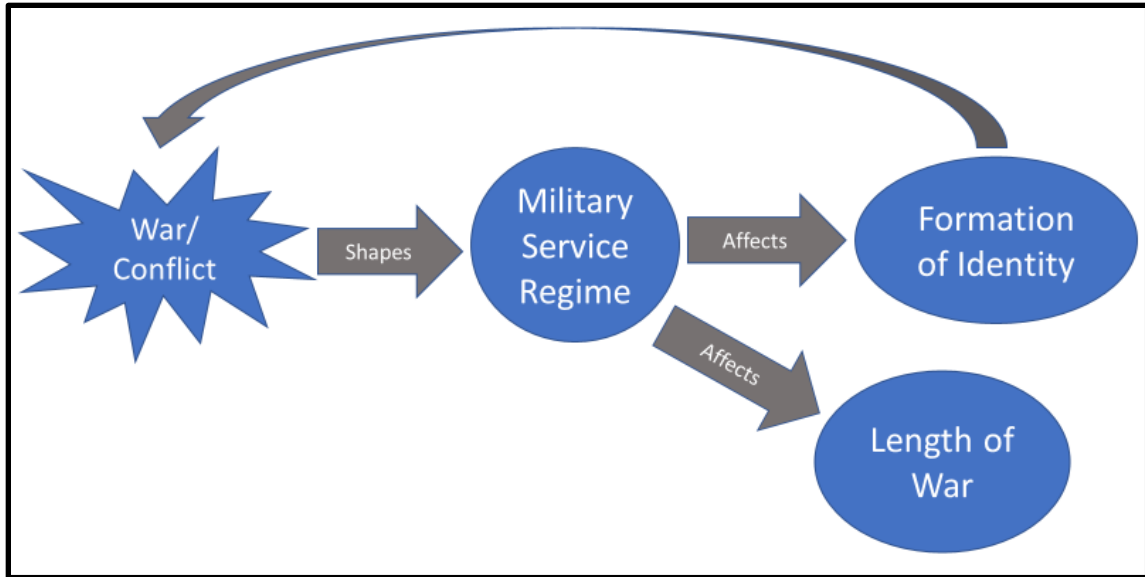


Figure 2-1. Variables of Study and Their Interactions

Figure 2-1 explains the variables that are at play as well as how they interact with one another. Our independent variable for this research is going to be the war or conflict in which the United States was involved. Our dependent variables are going to be the formation of American identity, in whatever form that takes, as well as the length of each conflict. The intervening variable in this relationship will be the military service regime. War shapes the military regime, mainly out of necessity for manpower and resources. That service regime as a result has two major outcomes for our study. First, it forms or evolves American identity, and second, it either shortens or lengthens the war. There are other variables which may be at play within any of these connections, but as this project will argue, the military regime is the central hub for understanding this relationship in American history. One final note, the form of American identity can also have an effect on shaping the kinds of conflicts that the United States is involved in, which what the upper arrow in the figure is demonstrating.

A brief explanation of methodology is necessary before moving forward. The analysis of this project will be primarily a mixed-methods approach based on using quantitative analysis for numerical data sets that are available and using process-tracing to explain the development of particular institutions over time. In terms of the quantitative analysis, examples of numbers analyzed will include the number draftees, militia members, or volunteers in a given conflict, the length of particular conflicts, and other data. As for process-tracing, much of this will be focused on the development of two main institutions in question, the military and American identity. Process-tracing for the U.S. military will focus on how that institution developed along with the various service regimes listed in the next section. This will be cross-referenced with the development of American identity in order to find correlations and seek explanations for what is occurring in both institutions at a given moment.

Finally, this will not be a purely political science endeavor, but will heavily rely on the field of history as well. Since much of the data comes from by-gone periods in American history, the vast majority of the analysis will be rooted in the work of historians, particularly those periods prior to the 21st Century. However, the analysis will mostly be based in political science, using history as the backbone for the process-tracing needed to show the institutional development at the core of the questions that this project seeks to clarify. As such, we should view the methodology of this project as a means of illuminating a discussion between historians and political scientists on the development and fluctuations of American identity and the U.S. military as institutions over time.

Hypotheses and Testing

As a means of testing this project's premise and its variables, each of the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Military regimes with diffused costs and compulsory service required from the public reduces the length of American wars.

H2: Military regimes with conscription components shape American identity through shared sacrifice.

H3: American identity over time has been a State-led development, both by individual U.S. states and the Federal Government, associated with the development of specific military regimes.

H4: The disestablishment of conscripted military service has created a more unstable American identity, reinforced by high levels of patriotism.

Each hypothesis will be tested by military regime to see how each regime contributed to the development of American warfare and identity. Each chapter will include a historical examination of military service and the wars during that particular period, how those wars and military service connect to or developed American identity, and end with an examination of the hypotheses and how they apply to a particular military regime. Figure 2-2 offers a preview for the structure of this project. The regimes examined will be defined as follows: 1) the militia regime (1775-1860), the coercive regime (1861-1939), the Peacetime Draft regime (1940-1973), and the All-Volunteer Force, or AVF, regime (1973-present). In terms of identity, each regime has corresponding forms of American identity to be examined. The militia regime is closely associated with an individual state-centric or local identity. The coercive regime is closely aligned with the development of regional identity in terms of Northern and Southern states during the Civil War, and then a national identity during World War I. The Peacetime Draft regime then streamlines an international American identity based on perceived liberal values that

the United States and regular Americans defended. The final period, the AVF, is marked with a more ambiguous and uncertain form of American identity, which we will term as retrospective identity, and we will explore what that entails later.

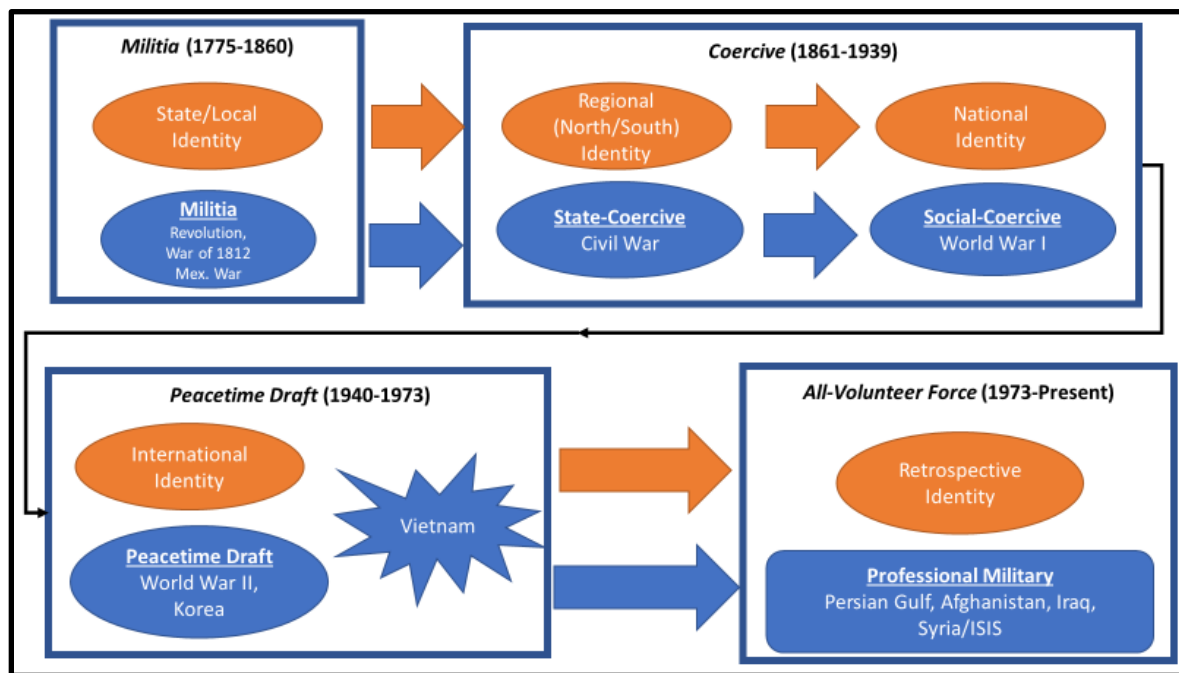


Figure 2-2. Synopsis of Project Format

Before we delve into each of these regimes, we need to which wars or conflicts this project will focus on. American war can include small battles among disparate groups or major worldwide conflicts. One Congressional Research Service study lists 47 pages worth of U.S. military interventions abroad from 1798 until 2020, which is simply impractical for a project of this sort.⁴⁸ Since this is a study on American identity and military service, it serves no purpose to examine small interventions abroad or skirmishes because those likely had little to no major

⁴⁸ Barbara Salazar Torreon and Sofia Plagakis, “Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2020,” *Congressional Research Service*, July 20, 2020, 1-47.

effect on shaping American identity. For example, we can clearly say that the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, and World War II each had a greater effect on American identity than the Barbary Wars or the 1914 or 1994 interventions in Haiti, so most minor U.S. interventions are not necessary for our analysis.⁴⁹ With that, the wars that we will focus on are the ones traditionally considered the major U.S. conflicts from the Revolution onward. Official declarations of war are not a good parameter because Congress has not declared war, especially since World War II, and the United States has still conducted war in the intervening decades. We will instead use the Congressional Research Service's definition of major American conflicts will be used to denote the wars considered.⁵⁰ These wars will be listed and discussed in the appropriate following chapters.

By the end of this study, we should have a better understanding about how American identity plays into the wars of today. Americans identify with the military, but most never serve, and wars now last into the decades. By identifying how American identity and war interlink through military service regimes, we may be able to understand also why American wars last much longer than in eras past. This may also show us something about the American political psyche and why war is necessary to maintain it in its current form.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 2, 8, 15.

⁵⁰ David A. Blum and Nese F. DeBruyne, "American War and Military Operations Casualties: Lists and Statistics" (Congressional Research Service, July 29, 2020); Stephen Daggett, "Cost of Major U.S. Wars," *Congressional Research Service*, June 29, 2010.

Chapter Three

The Militia Regime and the Youth of American Identity

“The militia is our ultimate safety. We can have no security without it.
The great object is that every man be armed.”

--Patrick Henry

War was particularly crucial to driving State development in terms of institutions, norms, and territorial gain in the first eight decades of U.S. self-governance. The Revolution debuted this era with a fight for the nation’s existence, and once the nation was established, U.S. expansionist goals created conflict across the continent, particularly along the frontiers, as Americans moved westward. In terms of military power, the nation had a rather small national army focused on fighting both foreign and domestic enemies, with supporting militia units whose primary purpose was local defense but also served as supplementary forces to the national army as needed. In terms of identity, these militias served as a means of regrouping locals into paramilitary units, which created a strong locally-connected identity amongst those in the militias.

This chapter will explore the nature of the militia regime from 1775 until the onset of the Civil War and its connection to the initial identity development. The militias of the Revolutionary era stand as perhaps the first example of patriotic and civic duty to the country, and they are a cornerstone of certain lines of patriotic thought today. This period will allow us to analyze what the reality of the militia was, how militias were seen during this period, what

elements of American identity grow out of this particular regime, and how those elements shape American identity today.

Table 3-1. Major Conflicts During the Militia Regime⁵¹

Conflict	War Type	Outcome	Length in Days	Total Served	Militia Served	Total U.S. Deaths
Revolution (1775-1783)	Existential/ Defensive	Win	3059	~217,000 -231,000	~145,000	4,435
War of 1812 (1812-1815)	Dispute/ Defensive	Draw	974	286,730 (official)	~251,730- 423,000	2,260
Mexican-American War (1846-1848)	Expansionist/ Offensive	Win	649	78,718 (official)	~60,000 (volunteers)	13,283

These first eight decades of American existence were defined by three major conflicts, which were the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and the Mexican-American War. Table 3-1 shows these conflicts as well as associated information and totals. Each conflict had a combination of regular army and militia forces, but the degree to which they served varied based on need and what was available. The type of war likely determined the demand for soldiers as well as their source in terms of militia or volunteers. The Revolutionary War was an existential and defensive conflict in which the United States fought to establish sovereign integrity. The War of 1812 began as a dispute with Great Britain and was largely defensive in nature, while the

⁵¹ Accurate numbers are difficult to come by and sources vary, especially in the early periods so the numbers listed here are from an amalgamation of the following references on hand, with gaps filled in and adjustments made by the author based on the numbers available: American Battlefield Trust, “American Revolution Facts,” March 30, 2017, <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/american-revolution-facts>; American Battlefield Trust, “War of 1812 Facts,” March 30, 2017, <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/war-of-1812-facts>; David A. Blum and Nese F. DeBruyne, “American War and Military Operations Casualties: Lists and Statistics” (Congressional Research Service, July 29, 2020), 1-2; Matthew Waxman, “The Mexican-American War and Constitutional War Powers,” *Lawfare* (blog), February 2, 2020, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/mexican-american-war-and-constitutional-war-powers>.

Mexican-American War were expansionist and offensive. Each of these will be explored further in their appropriate sections. One final note, the outcome and the length of each war in days is listed as well. The longest of these wars was the Revolution at well over three times the length of the other wars.

Before analyzing these wars further, it must be pointed out that the United States engaged in numerous small conflicts throughout the entirety of this period, mainly against Native Americans, as the ideas of Manifest Destiny took root and the nation expanded westward. These conflicts are too numerous to analyze individually in a project of this length, and any attempt to do so would not do justice to the crimes and transgressions that the American State carried out systematically on Native American groups. Hence, these conflicts during the militia regime period and afterwards should be seen as a constant in American warfare, providing the Federal Government with an early justification for raising and maintaining a national army while also shaping white supremacist elements of American identity. While we will not be focusing on these conflicts, their lack of centrality to this argument is not meant to be a purposeful omission of their importance. Rather, the focus of this project is on the changes within the military regime and American identity as they evolved, not necessarily the constants inherent within.

The Militia Versus the Standing Army

First and foremost, it would be beneficial to discuss what a militia is, what it has been historically, and what are the distinctions between a standing army and a militia. The primary reason for this is that as it stands in modern American society, there is no militia, at least not in any traditional sense of the term. Americans are not required to provide any sort of militia service, and any militias that do exist in the United States today are more often than not

considered illegitimate organizations with no real power invested by either individual states or the American State. Yet, any requisite examination of the American Constitution or any related Founding-era documents shows a philosophical and political paradigm in which the militia serve as a central focus of common defense against threats in general. To ignore the militia past of the United States simply because sanctioned militias do not exist today would likely create issues in historical interpretation of the country and its formation.

To see what the militia serves as, it is best to look at a standing army first. At its core, a standing army is a professional force, highly-centralized and trained usually by the State to allow it to be constantly on guard in case of attack. Standing armies are composed of individuals, either volunteers or those coerced into service, whose sole purpose is the job of soldier. Since their time is dedicated to that profession, they spend more time training and practicing their job, thus they are a higher caliber soldier compared to militias. On the plus side, standing armies provide a State with the capability to easily and quickly project power beyond their own borders and against other groups or states. However, standing armies can also be extremely expensive depending on their size. They require States to provide for their soldiers, spending money, time, and resources on developing them and their capabilities. This can be extremely taxing because it takes otherwise healthy and strong individuals out of the domestic workforce and places a drain on the greater society.

The militia on the other hand is much less structured and more decentralized. Militiamen are usually members of the greater population who serve their community for a common defense. They are only soldiers when needed, and most of the time, they are workers in the community, whether they be farmers, tradesmen, or other professions. This means that their training is much less intense, and the State may or may not provide any sort of guidance,

equipment, or resources, allowing the militias to form on their own and decide what they need to do to prepare. Weapons and training are usually defined by whatever militiamen have on hand. On the positive side, militias are much more cost-effective, often having little to no resource cost on the State. However, they are usually limited in what they can do. The lack of training and lack of State resources force many militias to operate on their own with little to no external support. Additionally, this limits their range and ability to operate beyond State borders, forcing them more often to be defensive-in-nature and geographically bound to one area or region.

The debate between militias and standing armies is in part linked to the debate of what role the individual plays in a society's preservation, and it is a question that all societies have to tackle in some form. Rome for example had standing armies which allowed it to conquer and maintain its empire for centuries. Yet, before its armies had conquered the Mediterranean, Cincinnatus, an old farmer in the 5th Century BCE, was called to lead and defend Rome in a time of imminent peril, only to resign his absolute power once the crisis was over, becoming an example of an ordinary person serving his society when needed only to return to his life afterwards.⁵² Sparta also had an army which its citizens were required to serve in, thus blending the distinction between standing army and militia and inextricably linking Spartan citizenship to military service.⁵³ These ancient societies mixed standing armies and militias as needed based on what is available, and as such, the debate between the two is certainly not something that is exclusive to the American experience.

Since the Enlightenment, discussions in general about military forces concern their ability to conduct violence not just against foreign enemies, but also on the domestic front. As States

⁵² Titus Livius, "History of Rome," 1996, <https://mcadams.posc.mu.edu/txt/ah/Livy/>, Book III, 26-29.

⁵³ Marcello Lupi, "The Spartan," *Hermes*, no. 143 (2015): 379–80.

have consolidated their own power around sovereignty established at Westphalia in 1648, the State's monopoly on violence is both oriented outward and inward. Standing armies and militias were topics of common discussion philosophical communities, with many prominent authors discussing the purpose of militias. Thomas Hobbes used the term militia a number of times in his 17th Century work *Leviathan*, invoking a sovereign's absolute control over the militia, but in his use, he was meaning the entirety of a country's military force.⁵⁴ Most English forces at the time were geographically-bound militia. Written at the height of the English Civil War, Hobbes was using the common terminology for what constituted the military, but this was about to change.⁵⁵ In 1645, Oliver Cromwell and the Parliamentarians established the New Model Army, a standing army of professional, more disciplined soldiers who became rather successful on the battlefield and eventually overthrew the king.⁵⁶ This Army also deployed beyond England into Ireland, Scotland, and even continental Europe.⁵⁷ While it was eventually abolished in 1660 with the Restoration of the English monarchy, it raised serious questions about militias and standing armies, especially with regards to internal security. England had previously relied on militias, but with the effectiveness of a standing army on full display both domestically and on a foreign front, one could not help but see that a standing army in some senses grew the State's own power in both domains.

Over a century later, the newfound United States was struggling in its battle against a standing army from the same nation that had birthed Cromwell's army, and those struggles

⁵⁴ Thomas Hobbes, "The Leviathan," 1660, Chapter XVIII.

⁵⁵ David Hume, *The History of England*, vol. V (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1983), 140.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 468.

⁵⁷ Keith Roberts, *Cromwell's War Machine: The New Model Army, 1645-1660* (Barnsley, UK: Pen and Sword Military, 2005), 233-259.

painted the Founders' views on standing armies and the oppression that they can produce. Anti-statist beliefs were replete within the Founders' perceptions and writings at the time of the nation's founding, and this included a strong preference for militia over a standing army. The fear of a standing army threatening liberty was a major concern, particularly when the individual states were considering the adoption of the Constitution and increasing Federal power. As one example, Alexander Hamilton noted in *Federalist* #29 that:

This will not only lessen the call for military establishments, but if circumstances should at any time oblige the government to form an army of any magnitude that army can never be formidable to the liberties of the people while there is a large body of citizens, little, if at all, inferior to them in discipline and the use of arms, who stand ready to defend their own rights and those of their fellow-citizens. This appears to me the only substitute that can be devised for a standing army, and the best possible security against it, if it should exist.⁵⁸

To Hamilton, standing armies stood in contrast to the militias. They were opposites in terms of goals, abilities, and moral objectives. The militias were composed of citizens who willfully took up arms to defend their liberties, while standing armies concentrated power, threatened individual liberty, and could do so with impunity if given enough power. They each stood as anathema to one another, and the Founders preferred the militia, seeking to use the militia as a safeguard for liberty and the fledgling nation.

The Founders thus designed the Constitution in a way to prevent the centralization of power within the Federal Government while also keeping the bulk of military power at the individual state and local levels. Much like the discussion of Deudney's Philadelphian System in the last chapter, this was intended to balance against external threats from abroad while also minimizing internal threats.⁵⁹ Individual state militias met national defensive needs in times of

⁵⁸ Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist Papers* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2014), 135.

⁵⁹ Deudney, "The Philadelphian System," 194–197.

crisis while keeping the Federal Government in check in times of peace. Within the Constitution, the Federal Government was given enumerated powers to raise an army and navy, but the Bill of Rights also guaranteed individual state power over military affairs in the Second and the Tenth Amendments. The Tenth Amendment guaranteed powers not explicit in the Constitution to the states or the people, thus granting states much leeway in their militias. However, the Second Amendment directly included language reference the militia, with the text of it reading that “[a] well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”⁶⁰ This is indicative of a belief that citizens should take up arms and provide for a common defense, and the use of the term militia is suggestive of individual responsibility towards that defense, as interpreted from the English tradition.⁶¹

In short, the Founders preferred a militia system over the standing army for the preponderance of American military power. Standing armies had their purpose and were effective fighting forces, but given English history and the perceived tyrannical nature of the British government, thanks in large part to its standing army, the need for a strong national defense was tempered by fears of military and State power trampling on individual liberties. Militias were a way of balancing between the need for defense and threatening liberty, and the militia regime as it was set up provided a field for experimentation to see if these anti-statist ideals vis-à-vis military power could hold true. As we will see, they did not, and they ended up failing, only to provide the first stepping stone to creating an American standing army.

⁶⁰ U.S. Const. amend. II.

⁶¹ Patrick J. Charles, *The Second Amendment: The Intent and Its Interpretation by the States and the Supreme Court* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2009), 6.

The Militia Regime

In this section, we will explore what the militia regime entailed, how it was structured, and its historical application. The demarcation for this regime is from 1775 until 1860. During this period, while militias were a constant, they were not always the most consequential military force for the duration of this regime. Their success during the Revolution brought them acclaim, and the predominant philosophies governing standing armies at the time kept state militias alive, but their influence waned over time. Their dominance in the political realm remained strong because of that philosophical tradition and because of the sheer number of troops the militias could provide, but in an evolving war environment, their limitations constrained the American State more than they helped. Of note, in this section since we are dealing with the pre-Revolutionary era of the 13 original colonies, the terms state and colony may be used interchangeably.

Perhaps the best place to start before delving into the history is to see how these militias were formed prior to and just after independence, and in truth, formation depended on individual state bureaucracy, infrastructure, and resources available. Massachusetts was the first to adopt a mandatory militia service requirement in the 1630s as the colony was facing persistent conflict with native tribes in the area. The colony also organized its militia into codified organizations and units and required all males from age 16 to 60 to maintain their own weapons for service.⁶² By the time of the Revolution, Massachusetts had had a militia tradition close to 140 years old, and that tradition passed down into volunteer-based and more highly-trained militias like the

⁶² Robert K. Wright Jr., "Massachusetts Militia Roots: A Bibliographic Study," July 19, 1986, <https://history.army.mil/Reference/mamil/Mamil.htm>.

Minutemen, who have achieved since achieved an iconic status in American history.⁶³ Other colonies over time adopted militia systems for a common defense and structured those systems based on their needs. All of them though had similarities to the system Massachusetts created, which included service from the men in the community, maintaining their weapons, and preparations for expected eventualities, like native conflict or against other European powers in on the continent. They also served as a means of maintaining domestic order. In slave-holding states, militias were used to prevent and suppress slave uprisings, as happened in South Carolina in 1739.⁶⁴ The militias were structured to meet the needs of the communities from where they came without heavily taxing said communities. This was the idealized form of the militia.

Reality, however, was much different. States were free to create whatever structure or requirements for their militias, so in essence, the term militia could simply mean a gathering of armed individuals, state-sanctioned or otherwise. This was the case for the Green Mountain Boys and the Oregon Rangers, which will be discussed later. The militia as an idealized cross-sectional merging of American society was not true either. While one can find cases of members of all different stripes within these militias, the majority of militiamen were younger men who had not settled down yet to create homesteads or families.⁶⁵ While war requires often young, able-bodied persons to fight, this skews the composition of those fighting the war towards younger and poorer individuals rather than an idealized cross-section of society. Also, this

⁶³ Richard W. Stewart, ed., *American Military History, Volume 1: The United States Army and the Forging of a Nation, 1775-1917* (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 2009), 46-47.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 30-32.

⁶⁵ Wayne E. Lee, "Early American Ways of War: A New Reconnaissance (sic), 1600-1815," *The Historical Journal* 44, no. 1 (2001): 279.

meant those benefitting from any war that the militia fought were older persons, settled people, and elites who could avoid service.

Also, not all state militias were created equal, and some states were more advanced than others. Connecticut allowed for militia leaders to recruit their own men, which allowed their militias to be more particular about their recruitment, and thus, more of a professionalized force.⁶⁶ Virginia had extensive experience fighting with the British in the French and Indian War, and during the Revolution, it was able to muster upwards of 40,000 troops for the cause.⁶⁷ This number alone was larger than the population of Delaware and Georgia in 1770.⁶⁸ States with more developed militia structures also tended to have more experienced military leadership. George Washington is a clear example of this, having served in the Virginia militia during the French and Indian Wars, but there were others as well, to include Daniel Morgan, Francis Marion, and even Benedict Arnold, to name a select few. This military leadership translated to the political and social realm as well. The militia was thus not just a military organization, but also an organization for advancement for one's own benefit as well as one's home state. In short, not all militias were the same, and yet, they remained idealized, in spite of their realities.

For the rest of this section, we will explore the historical growth and supplanting of the militia regime. Born out of a form of philosophical idealism around the preservation of liberty, the realities of American development and threats both new and old forced a standing army to take root at the Federal level. Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of the militia regime is how

⁶⁶ Ibid., 279-280.

⁶⁷ J. T. McAllister, *Virginia Militia in the Revolutionary War* (Westminster, MD: Heritage Books, 2006), 5.

⁶⁸ World Population Review, "Thirteen Colonies Population," accessed February 19, 2021, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/states/thirteen-colonies>.

quickly it fell apart and was disregarded. Militia effectiveness fell into question not long after the Revolution, and by the Mexican-American War, militias had all but been abandoned as a reliable military fighting force. In spite of the philosophical and psychological attachment to them early on, militias did not become a defining aspect of the American military organization as much as they became the historical exception.

Militias in the Late 1700s

The Revolutionary War defined the militia in a number of ways. The war allowed militias to demonstrate their value and help win the cause, and being on the victorious side helped to garner more evidence of their effectiveness. Their composition made them an ideal force to fight the British standing army. While they would in most cases have been no match for the British, the militias did not need to decisively engage them. Instead, they only needed to survive in order to keep the British entangled and tied down with trying to defeat them. Additionally, the militia were a cheap force multiplier at a time when the American State barely existed. Congress barely had any funds to sustain the Continental Army, let alone the vast array of state militias, so using militias allowed for more American forces on the battlefield. Militias made up the bulk of American military forces during the Revolution, filling a role dictated by the time period, the resources available, and the philosophies at the time. With the Revolution's end in 1783, the immediate need for the militias disappeared and most returned home, with the militias' reputation as reliable defensive units firmly intact. The system in place had worked, at least for the war. The Continental Army dissolved, and the American State under the Articles of Confederation would revert back to relying on individual state militias for internal and external security.

The first major test for this occurred not long after and showed some cracks within the system. In 1786, farmers in Massachusetts led by Daniel Shays effectively created their own militia, revolted against the state, and almost brought down the Massachusetts government. The Federal Government attempted to respond, but it had no standing army and no ability to tax to raise a militia, thus curtailing its ability to put down rebellion. The Federal Government's relied on state militias, and states other than Massachusetts proved unwilling to assist. Massachusetts eventually put down the revolt, but the incident exposed glaring issues within the American system.⁶⁹ The use of militias was not in question, nor did the incident diminish the status or roles of militias. A state militia had, after all, put down the rebellion. Instead, the question was more about the legal frameworks and financial tools at the Federal Government's disposal which could allow it to use the militias at all. Shays' Rebellion was one of the precipitating events to the Constitutional Convention, which created a more of a streamlined Constitutional structure in which the Federal Government could raise and finance an army and both preserve and allow Federal access to the state militia system.

Yet, there was a more problematic event to come. Soon after the Constitutional Convention, the militias were put to the test against a perceived weak enemy, and the militias failed spectacularly. In 1791, the Federal Government only had a standing army of 1200 men, so militias remained the primary military organization fighting along the frontiers. Federal troops were integrated with the militia to lead, but the militias made up the bulk of the military organization.⁷⁰ In the latter half of 1791, an expedition of approximately 1,400 U.S. troops, at

⁶⁹ Robert J. Spitzer, *The Right to Bear Arms: Rights and Liberties under the Law* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2001), 15-21.

⁷⁰ Andrew J. Birtle, "The Origins of the Legion of the United States," *The Journal of Military History* 67, no. 4 (October 2003): 1255.

least 800 of which were volunteer militia, entered the Northwest Territory to fight native tribes in the area under the orders of the Federal Government. The expedition was plagued with supply issues and bad weather, and in early November, the native tribes attacked the entirety of its forces while in encampment, which became known as the Battle of the Wabash. The militia caved and promptly deserted the battlefield while the regulars attempted to hold off the assault. At battle's end, the entirety of the force was effectively annihilated, with over 900 killed and 300 wounded, effectively killing "[a]lmost half of the entire U.S. Army." The loss is often cited as one of the worst defeats in U.S. military history, displaying impracticality, inefficiency, and shortcomings of relying on poorly-regulated state militias as the bulk of the military force.⁷¹ One obvious problem that came out of this incident was the failure of the militia's defense, which one could consider its strong suit. Revolutionary-era warfare was primarily defensive, intended to weaken British forces who were on the offensive. Militias were not an offensive force, but they did not need to be. They just needed to buy time for the Continental Army. The Wabash incident was a case where the militia folded immediately, showing they could not always be relied on in a combat situation. The defeat signaled that the militia system had problems, but rather than abandon it, political leaders chose to reform the system.

Two things occurred in the wake of the Wabash incident which began shifting American military power. First, Congress created the Legion of the United States, which was a standing army of over 5,000 soldiers at the Federal Level to fight natives along the frontiers.⁷² The Legion was the predecessor to the current U.S. Army, and it gave the Federal Government a

⁷¹ Patrick Feng, "The Battle of the Wabash: The Forgotten Disaster of the Indian Wars," Army Historical Foundation, July 16, 2014, accessed October 9, 2018, <https://armyhistory.org/the-battle-of-the-wabash-the-forgotten-disaster-of-the-indian-wars/>.

⁷² Andrew J. Birtle, "The Origins of the Legion of the United States," 1249.

military force that it could use, albeit limited to fighting along the frontiers. Secondly, Congress sought more effectively integrate and fix the militia system by passing the Militia Acts of 1792, the first of which streamlined the president's power to call on the militia in times of crisis, equated the militias with Federal troops requiring them to be "subject to the same rules and articles of war."⁷³ The Second Militia Act, passed some days later, created a standardization of the militias across the country, including the types of weapons used, the formation of standard units, and a number of other things intended to increase readiness for the militias and provide a baseline for training so all militias could be relied upon in a time of need.⁷⁴ The Second Militia Act also laid out a requirement that "every free able-bodied white male citizen [between the] age of eighteen years, and under the age of forty-five years" was required to enroll in their respective state's militia as well as arm themselves appropriately according to the militia standard.⁷⁵ Punishments were established for those failing to comply with the acts, including fines and imprisonment, thus creating coercive mechanism to ensure compliance.⁷⁶

These acts were an attempt to fix a system that was already buckling. In fact, most of what they proposed above was simply a rehashing of the expectations that many state militias already had. They put Federal backing into codifying expectation of military service from the public through militias into law, and citizens were expected to upkeep themselves and their weapons as well as be prepared to serve when needed. It did not matter that this system had

⁷³ U.S. Congress, "An Act to Provide for Calling Forth the Militia to Execute the Laws of the Union, Suppress Insurrections and Repel Invasion," § Chapter 28 (1792), <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/2nd-congress/c2.pdf>.

⁷⁴ Ibid., Chapter 33.

⁷⁵ Ibid., Chapter 33, Section 1.

⁷⁶ Ibid., Chapter 28, Sections 5-8.

already shown ineffectiveness. Rather than abandoning the militia system for those shortcomings, Congress and others sought to reform the system, granting the president and the Federal Government more power to shape the militia system throughout the individual states. It did not seek to abandon the anti-statist philosophy just yet, but the growth in a Federal standing army had already begun.

Overall, the militia regime prior to 1800 was aspirational, while also being a reality based on what ought to be. Its successes during the Revolution coaxed the Founders and other leaders to make an attempt to institutionalize the entire militia system. Much in the line with historical tales of Cincinnatus or the Spartans, the Founders believed that the public's defense should draw on the strength of the public, mainly the common man. The militias endeavored to accomplish that ideal, creating citizens who could fight if need be. Given the fear of what a standing army could do, naturally, the militia also sought to create a common defense without the threat of centralized power. It was an army based on federalism, with diffused power throughout the states. The reality, though, was far from the idealized version of what could be, and thanks to the Wabash, it became clear that the militia could not always be relied on in combat. Federal attempts to standardize the system in 1792 did little to save the system because they only standardized what individual states had already implemented. Militias were idealistic, and their heyday and popularity peaked in the period before 1800. As time went on and the Founders passed away, so too would the idea of the militia as a viable military force, but not before the system was tested at least a few more times.

From Militia to Volunteers

After the turn of the 19th century, the militia-centric system remained in place, but since there was little to challenge it at the time, there was no impetus to change it beyond the Militia Acts. This would slowly start to change over time as two things occurred: first, the Founders' generation started dying off and second, the nation expanded further westward. The latter allowed the nation's war posture to shift almost permanently from the defensive to the offensive, transforming the nature of American war and thus recalibrating thinking around if state militias were a proper fighting force for the new kinds of American war. From 1800 to 1860, there were two major conflicts against external state powers, the War of 1812 and the Mexican-American War. These wars were gradual steps in shifting military power away from the states and onto the Federal Government. By the time that the United States had defeated Mexico in 1848, the state-based militia system had effectively fallen by the wayside, and in its position was a full-fledged, politically-accepted standing army, completely antithetical to the Founders' intentions, but by then enshrined in law, customs, and norms.

The War of 1812 and the Mexican-American War mark both the continuation and the end, respectively, of the Founders' militia-centric system. The nature of these wars pushed the Federal Government to take a more active role in the military. The War of 1812 was largely defensive, fought on or near American soil in an attempt to resolve trade disputes between Great Britain and the United States. Militia were suited for this kind of war, but military tactics had changed since the Revolutionary War, and the militias soon found themselves outmatched. As for the Mexican-American War three decades later, this was an expansionist war, where the United States was pushing westward. This war was fought beyond national borders and required

more offensive tactics and firepower, something the militias were not adept in. We will now look at both of these wars more in-depth to see why the militia regime began to fail.

The War of 1812 and Bladensburg

The War of 1812 was the first major State-on-State conflict with U.S. involvement since the Revolution that required militia mobilization. The war began due to increased tensions over trade disputes. Great Britain was trying to prevent American trade with Napoleonic France, which gave rise to U.S. ships being targeted by the Royal Navy, resulting in Congress subsequently declaring war on Great Britain.⁷⁷ During the war, the bulk of the American military force was made up of state militias with well over 400,000 counted troops, with a small regular army force numbering in the tens of thousands. British forces over the course of the war numbered at around 60,000 mostly regular soldiers.⁷⁸ Given that Great Britain had spent the past decade fighting Napoleon in Europe, exhausting its resources against a strong State competitor, American superiority in numbers looked more advantageous, but by war's end, it was clear that numbers did not always translate into victory, and that sometimes, a small well-trained force was more beneficial than a massive force.

The war was the first real testing ground for the 1792 Militia Acts, and it demonstrated how empty the acts were. In the 20 years between the acts and the war, the Federal prescriptions for the composition of militias and punishments for non-compliance were just not enforced in any meaningful way, and the acts' implementation at all levels was haphazard and incoherent at

⁷⁷ U.S. Congress, "War of 1812 Declaration," June 17, 1812, https://history.house.gov/Records-and-Research/Listing/lfp_012/.

⁷⁸ American Battlefield Trust, "War of 1812 Facts;" Blum and DeBruyne, "American War and Military Operations Casualties: Lists and Statistics."

best with little Federal or state bureaucratic structure to enforce compliance or to rectify problems the militias faced in terms of training or funding. Post-1792, states had been left up to their own devices in implementing the acts, so states acted as they saw fit, which was not much different than in the decades before the 1792 acts. The Federal Government largely focused on developing its small standing army and let the state militias develop on their own. Once the war began in 1812, old habits came back and the militia were used similar to how they were during the Revolution; most stayed close to home to defend their own states or land and supplemented regular forces in battle as needed. Thus, the 400,000-plus strong force was dispersed across the entire country, which meant that the militia never really proved decisive in any American battlefield victory.⁷⁹

Where militias did excel was in demonstrating their ineffectiveness. We can look to one battle in particular, the Battle of Bladensburg, to see this ineffectiveness on display. Much like the Battle of the Wabash in 1791, Bladensburg revealed the flaws of relying on militia in combat, only this time the consequences were much more symbolic, resulting in the British capture of Washington D.C. and the burning of the White House. In August 1814, an American force made up of upwards of 8,000 of militia men with a small component of regular army forces met a British contingent in route to Washington D.C. at Bladensburg, Maryland. The American force outnumbered the British force of 1,500 regulars by at least five-to-one, but the American militia were no match for the British, who were battle-hardened from years of war in Europe against Napoleon. The battle occurred near the Anacostia River west of Bladensburg with the American force set up in blocking position against a British move towards Washington. American forces

⁷⁹ Robert L. Kerby, "The Militia System and the State Militias in the War of 1812," *Indiana Magazine of History* 73, no. 2 (1977): 102-106.

guarded the single bridge crossing the river and had artillery aimed at the British and overwatching the bridge. To overcome this, the British force simply forded the river and began launching assault after assault on American lines, consistently outmaneuvering and outflanking the largely untrained militia forces. Additionally, the British use of Congreve rockets, a new type of indirect fire weapon developed by the British, created massive disorder in the American lines. By battle's end, the British had forced the entirety of the American force to retreat in chaos, and they were able to march into Washington unabated, subsequently burning the White House and other buildings, in perhaps the most dramatic episode of the war.⁸⁰

Bladensburg exposed the multiple failures of the militia system. First, training and equipment were key in the American force's defeat. The militia's lack of training meant they had less experience than the British regulars, but also that they were slower to react to the dynamics of a fast-moving battlefield against a quickly-outflanking enemy, relying on the only maneuver the militia were accustomed to, the retreat. The retreat is the maneuver that the militia excels at, and this is by design. Even during the Revolutionary War, militias slowed British movement and bought the Continental Army time. They were not meant to be in full direct contact with a regular army unless they were supplementing and supporting a regular army. One can add to this the British use of Congreve rockets, a new technology that the American militias had not seen on the battlefield before, which further aggravated their lack of training and ability to withstand the British advance. Another failure to consider is the lack of motivation to fight, given the symbolic value of protecting the nation's capital. This should have provided motivation to fight the British, and since this was a defensive battle with superior numbers of the American side, the militia should have had the upper hand. This was not the case though, and

⁸⁰ Department of Research at the Infantry School, "Battle of Bladensburg" (The Infantry School Press, 1921), 3-8, 23.

such an astounding defeat marred the reputation of militia forces at even defensive operations. Finally, it should also be noted that the U.S. commander during the battle, General William Winder, had only joined the army two years before the battle, and prior to joining, he was a lawyer.⁸¹ This is particularly poignant because, much like the idea that a citizen can become a soldier at a moment's notice which is a cornerstone idea with the militia system, giving such major commands to inexperienced individuals denotes a similar line of thinking that military leadership can do something similar, that citizens can become military leaders simply by being given command. Bladensburg showed that that was not the case, and the battle was a clear repudiation of relying on the militia during wartime, particularly against experienced State military forces. The inexperience of the militia had been laid bare for all to see.

Old habits die hard, and in aftermath of Bladensburg and the War of 1812, little changed. The militia system was not abandoned, but went back into a dormant state when the British threat was gone. There could be a couple of reasons that the system was not abandoned, first being the numerical argument. What the militias did was "provide an immense reservoir of the most basic military resource, manpower," at least in theory.⁸² The massive number of troops the militia system could provide, as shown in the War of 1812, was good at providing some deterrence and, in theory, it provided for military forces at a moment's notice. A second reason, however, which may be more appropriate is the overarching shadow of the Founders and their rather strong anti-statist philosophical beliefs. This was the first major interstate war after the Revolution, and many Founders were still alive. James Madison was president, and former presidents Thomas Jefferson and John Adams remained influential, along with other Founders,

⁸¹ Ibid., 8.

⁸² Kerby, 111.

so to completely discard the militia system simply would have gone against any of the prevailing philosophies against standing armies or that citizens should help to provide for a common defense. The militia-centric line of thinking was just too strong, and legal norms and customs had not changed enough in the intervening decades since the Revolution to diminish the system. The pragmatism of militias, and in some sense their tradition, remained. With no imminent threat after the war, the militia system endured, but not in a fully active state.

The War of 1812 was the first true testing ground of the Militia Acts after the Battle of the Wabash, and while it did swell the number of servicemembers to a high level, this did little to help in decisively engaging the British during the war and exposed new issues in militia effectiveness. Over the next three decades after the war, with no major U.S. conflicts, the militia system was not called up on any notable scale, and the atrophy within the system continued. In the meantime, as expansion westward shifted the focus of military operations towards offensive operations against Native Americans and soon Mexico, the nature of American war required a shift in military tactics and thinking, but more prominently, as the looming shadow of the Founders began to fade over those decades, diverging political shifts away from the militia system could begin.

The Mexican-American War and the New Class of Volunteers

The Mexican-American War from 1846 to 1848 was the first major interstate conflict that the United States fought against a non-European power outside of the territorial boundaries of the country. This war was particularly prescient because it was the first conflict that sidestepped the militia system almost entirely and provided the political impetus for shifting the U.S. military structure away from the states and investing it in the Federal Government. Unlike the

Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War was an offensive, expansionist conflict. It was effectively the philosophy of Manifest Destiny in war form, and the first major U.S. territorial expansion since the Louisiana Purchase. In terms of the militia system, it demonstrated that the American State could take military power for itself with relative impunity if it had a politically-accepted justification.

The facts of the war presented two major factors which helped influence the political decision to not use the militia: territory and control. Since the battles of the war occurred in Mexico, beyond the territorial boundaries of the United States, a Federalized expeditionary army was more suitable than a militia. Additionally, direct Federal control of the army was more suitable than having to negotiate with states for troops. The nature of this particular war necessitated a military force capable of being deployed far from home for an extended period, which was antithetical to the militia system and its general focus on defense of the country. Militias also had other limitations that made them undesirable for such a war. Militias at the time were mostly limited to three months of active service, clearly not long enough to send to Mexico and fight without having to return almost immediately once they arrived. Militia officers were often chosen by the states which limited the Federal Government's ability to influence the militias, and said officers were only required to follow Federal orders if they were related to insurrections or defense.⁸³ Such politics embedded within the militias could possibly jeopardize any unified national effort or gains on the battlefield. One should also not forget history and the militia's ineffectiveness at the Wabash and Bladensburg. If militias had already demonstrated themselves to be ineffective defensively against Native populations and smaller professional forces, any militia-based offensive campaign against a foreign state in its own territory could

⁸³ Matthew Waxman, "The Mexican-American War and Constitutional War Powers."

become chaotic instantaneously. In short, the political climate of the mid-1840s, especially, given the desire for more territory, were ripe for ignoring the militias altogether.

However, to accomplish this required a political solution. President James K. Polk and Congress were aware of how ineffective the militias were, and neither wanted to use militias to fight Mexico. Yet, one legal problem remained; the Militia Acts of 1792 were still in place. In order to avoid using the militia as an expeditionary force, Polk and Congress managed a workaround which addressed the militia, but avoided using the militia as the primary force in Mexico. Congress did not expand the regular army, which remained limited at the time, nor did it negotiate for state militias to serve. Instead, Congress used a new category of soldier, the volunteer, to supplement the regular army in a number of different capacities, authorizing the recruitment of 50,000 volunteers. Congress also upped militia service from three to six months, while also allowing volunteers from the militias, but requiring them to serve for twelve months.⁸⁴ This category of volunteer is legalistic novelty of the time. There were regular army soldiers and then militias. Volunteers were neither of these, but they could be treated like regular soldiers in almost every capacity. This was a very unique way of circumventing the law, but for Polk, Congress, and the state militias for that matter, it was a practical solution. It gave direct control to Polk as commander-in-chief to execute the war as he saw fit because he could command regulars and volunteers without consulting the states on the use of their militias. States also were not burdened with having to provide their own military forces for a conquest war beyond their borders, so accepting this legalistic solution was to their own benefit as well.

⁸⁴ U.S. Congress, “An Act Providing for the Prosecution of the Existing War between the United States and the Republic of Mexico” (1846).

None of this is to say that this was a proper decision, however. The constitutionality of such a move was questionable, but little prevented the Federal Government doing it anyway. States, even if they wanted to, could not really object because while their militias were being mobilized at home, they were not doing the brunt of the fighting. Polk also had the blessing of Congress which was likely not going to challenge such an action, especially given the political desire for expanding the country across the continent. Constitutional questions aside, one must also remember that the Founders had long since passed away by the time the war had begun. The fear and idea of a standing army remained palpable, so much so that Polk addressed it a mere six months before the war against Mexico began, arguing much like his predecessors that standing armies threaten liberty.⁸⁵ This was not in question, but without the towering figures of the Founders around to clarify any distinctions or where to draw the lines on the standing army issue, let alone any other Constitutional question, Polk and Congress were left to their own devices and interpretations as well as how they would go about circumventing the laws already in place. This is particularly poignant because it shows a generational shift in the interpretation on standing armies and militias. Whether the Founders may have agreed with the execution of the Mexican-American War or their opinion on volunteers as a compromise in the militia system is moot; they were not around to give their opinion, and a new generation of leaders took State power for themselves and used the system to create a stronger Federal and centralized army. It set a precedent, and much like all precedents, they can be used later.

None of this is to say that militias were maligned or abandoned after this conflict. On the contrary, volunteer units were equally criticized for being ill-equipped and lacking discipline as the militia had been in wars and battles prior.⁸⁶ Additionally, more American troops were killed

⁸⁵ James K. Polk, "First Annual Message," The American Presidency Project, December 2, 1845.

in the war than Mexican troops, denoting that the American force composed primarily of volunteers was not any more lethal or effective in terms of tactics.⁸⁷ Yet, the war gave the United States two things which reinforced how a larger military force at the Federal level could be effectively used in a way that militias could not: victory and more territory. The war against Mexico was largely a success, in spite of heavier American losses. In practically every major engagement of the conflict, American expeditionary forces were victorious against Mexican forces. That victory reinforced the perception around the use of regulars and volunteers as an effective offensive force. Moreover, the war put almost all of the American Southwest under U.S. control, growing Federal power and influence even more given that the territory fell exclusively under Federal jurisdiction. With the desire for territorial expansion under Manifest Destiny, the ends of the war justified the means. It was easier to accept the use of an expanded military force at the Federal level without militia support, whatever the cost fiscally or politically, as a means of achieving a larger territorial footprint. The war fed into the expansionist spirit of the country at the time, and since most militias never had to serve in Mexico, the consequences of the war were not felt by the greater population, a lesson learned in 1848, but with repercussions well-beyond.

A Summation of the Militia Regime

The militia regime era was, at best, a period of failed intentions and ideals. The archetype of a militiaman as a defender of his homestead, willing to stand up and defend his country against enemies foreign and domestic, is an engaging model for a nation's birth. It

⁸⁶ Library of Congress, *Volunteers for Texas. As You Were*, accessed October 10, 2020.

⁸⁷ Micheal Clodfelter, *Warfare and Armed Conflicts: A Statistical Encyclopedia of Casualty and Other Figures, 1494-2000* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2008), 268.

embodies the ideal of civic-minded citizens who are willing to lay down their lives for their country and its principles. During the Revolutionary War, this model worked. Militias were able to engage the most powerful army on Earth at the time defensively which assisted the fledgling Continental Army. Since the war was a success, this helped confirm the preconceived notions that the Founders had about militias being a well-suited unit for defense, while simultaneously allowing them to decry standing armies. They thus built a system where militias were integral to national defense. The realities and inconsistencies of the militia system, though, soon caught up. The Battles of the Wabash and of Bladensburg, two of the most stunning defeats in American military history, demonstrated that militias simply could not be relied upon in all cases, especially for defensive purposes or against professional and non-professional military units. Despite reforms like the Militia Acts of 1792, the militia system simply did not improve, though as an idea, it remained influential and strong in political discourse. Once the Founders had passed away, it became easier to ignore the system. The Mexican-American War saw the first legislative bypass of the militia system, using volunteers instead to bulk up the Federal army. By this point, the militia system had become an antiquated shadow of what it once was, and political leaders like President Polk paid lip-service to the ideal while ignoring it in practice. American success in the Mexican-American War set the precedent that not only was bypassing the militia legally allowed, but also that led to greater battlefield success.

With hindsight, it is clear that the militia system began to atrophy as soon as it was implemented. Its importance, however, does not lie within its effectiveness as a military organization, but more with the ideal it created and how that ideal formed American identity. The ideal that the militias created, that of individual citizens arming themselves and standing up to defend their country, remains a strong political desire in some American circles, even if just in

theory. Some modern organizations embrace the idea of a militia as an ideal for our current period, including the Three Percenters or other state militia or right-wing paramilitary groups, all of which model themselves upon the idea of the common man taking up arms to protect the greater country.⁸⁸ It is also of note that these organizations tend to have strong anti-statist philosophies attached to them, which is in line with how militias were envisioned as, a stop-loss against tyrannical governance. The historic conception of the militia still shapes part of American identity even to this day. Next, we will examine the militia's connection to American identity so as to understand why such a flawed failure of a system remains strong in American thought today.

Militias and Identity

Despite modern militias being linked more to right-wing paramilitary organizations than it is to any State-sanctioned military organization, there is an important element of study, that of identity nested within militias. This identity is linked to a greater understanding of the American political and historical development. Identity is largely a social construction of how one views oneself within the greater society, often shaped and molded by external input and factors. Early forms of common American identity, especially during the militia regime period, were fragmented at best. A uniform American national identity at the country's formation was relatively weak with surges of unity in times of crisis. The Revolution and the period around Constitutional ratification serve as examples of these times. However, these moments of unity existed mainly at the elite level with political leaders serving as the decisive agents for how the Federal and state governments would act. These sorts of actions were mostly outside of the

⁸⁸ "The Three Percenters," accessed May 5, 2020, <https://www.thethreepercenters.org>.

common person's control, and thus their ability to have any say was limited. While national identity was weak, the militia served as a means of unifying both elites and the common man into a cohesive unit, and it was through this cohesion that we see at least one way in which American identity began to develop at its most basic, the individual state level.

Individual State-Centric Identity

During the early parts of militia regime, the primary sculptors of American identity were the individual states, not the Federal Government. Individual citizens were more closely tied to their state government and localities than they were to the Federal Government, and the Founders recognized this. Madison argued that state governments simply had many more advantages over the Federal Government in terms of influencing individual citizens and their actions.⁸⁹ While this was an argument made in support of the Constitution, it also conceded that in terms of military power, states were more dominant and able to organize their populations more efficiently. Plus, having a Federal-level military force capable of threatening liberty and state autonomy was simply anathema to how the Founders envisioned the proper functioning of the nation. If states had more influence on their citizens, then they could also shape identities more easily and impose that identity through laws or required militia service. States could thus develop identity in ways that the Federal Government could not at the time, at least for a few decades after the nation's birth.

One practice which reinforced state-based identity within militias was the identification of units. States varied on their unit identification nomenclature, but most had variations on a numbered-based system, where units are identified by a numbered regiment similar to what we

⁸⁹ Hamilton, Madison, and Jay, 226.

see in the modern military, and a name-based system to identify particular units, usually using the name of a particular commander. Examples of both of these sorts of systems include the Connecticut 5th Regiment in 1775 or Vermont's Nelson's Company in 1781.⁹⁰ By forming these militias and connecting their command exclusively to the state government as the highest level of responsibility to which each of these militiamen were responsible, this coalesced a perceived version of national-like identity not around the United States as a whole, but rather around the states themselves. As we will see in future chapters, the forms of military unit identification changed with the growth of new steps in national identity, but of our purposes here, the states remained central to identity in this early period.

The early American states that were formed out of the 13 original colonies also had distinct cultures from one another, resulting differences in state militias. Some were founded as religious refuges for particular groups, while others were founded as commercial ventures or for farming primary commodities.⁹¹ Each of these colonies, becoming states after the passage of the Constitution, had their own distinct culture, and that culture was reinforced further by militia service. Militiamen mostly served with people that they knew in communities with whom they were familiar. This was geographic-based military service rather than some sort of melting pot of people from around the nation. One can look at these individual state identities and associated cultures as microcosms of State nationalism, and some academic literature on nationalism would likely support this conception of sub-national identity development within American states in the late 1700s and early 1800s, especially given the strong elements of sovereignty given to

⁹⁰ John K. Robertson and Bob McDonald, "Revolutionary War Unit Rolls," accessed October 20, 2020.

⁹¹ Walter A. McDougall, "The Colonial Origins of American Identity," *Orbis* 49, no. 1 (Winter 2005): 14-17.

individual states, even within the Constitution.⁹² Such sovereignty along with a history of their own distinct culture allowed for each individual state to create their own identities and nationalisms, reinforcing both as they saw fit.

Militias Forming States

Up until this point, the discussion has focused on how states were the primary driver in developing identity and militias to reinforce that identity. There are, however, examples during this early American period of militias existing outside of officially-sanctioned state control which reinforced particular identities, and which in some cases led to the creation of states themselves. One particularly well-known example is the Green Mountain Boys, a militia which was a key military unit during the early part of the Revolutionary War when it seized Fort Ticonderoga from the British. The group was originally founded in 1770 to protect encroachment by the New Hampshire and New York colonial governments on land which eventually became Vermont.⁹³ The leader of the Green Mountain Boys, Ethan Allen, once described Vermonters as regular people and New Yorkers as more corrupt, seeking to take land that was not theirs, clearly an effort to delineate a distinct Vermonter identity separate from that of New York.⁹⁴ The Green Mountain Boys' efforts allowed for the founding of the Vermont Republic, an independent State for 14 years, until joining the United States as the 14th state in 1791. This was the inverse of the state-creating-militia argument, but it is still a compelling

⁹² Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 4-5; Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7.

⁹³ Daniel P. Thompson, *The Green Mountain Boys: A Historical Tale of the Early Settlement of Vermont* (Montpelier, VT: P. Walton and Sons, 1839), 7-10.

⁹⁴ Robert E. Shalhope, *Bennington and the Green Mountain Boys* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 95.

argument for the connection. A militia fostered a particular national identity in defiance of another individual state, which, over time, that nation was eventually subsumed into the United States as a distinct state identity. This is particularly telling because it shows us the strength that a militia can have at forming an identity, especially in this early part of American national development.

This sort of militia influence in creating state identities was not unique to the Revolutionary period either. In 1823 while Texas was still under Mexican rule, Stephen Austin, leader of Mexican Texas colony at the time, created a militia group answerable only to him, a unit that would eventually become the Texas Rangers.⁹⁵ Austin's act became one of the first steps in creating a distinctly Texan military force and identity, separate from that of the Mexican State and society. Over the next decade, Austin fostered these forces, growing them into a functioning army composed of regulars, volunteers, and militias, eventually leading them during the Texas Revolution. Texas became an independent republic in 1836, only to be followed in 1845 by Texas' integration into the United States.⁹⁶ While Austin's militia was not the only reason that Texans were able to foster an individual identity, such militias did reinforce a distinct identity at a time when Texas had not yet become a state, very much similar to the Green Mountain Boys and Vermont some five decades prior.

While Texas and Vermont are examples of militias forming identity while preceding the state, as time went on, militias became less effective at fostering identity. One example of a militia preceding a state that did little to build any identity was the creation of the Oregon

⁹⁵ Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum, "Founding of the Texas Rangers in 1823," accessed October 27, 2020, <https://www.texasranger.org/texas-ranger-museum/researching-rangers/laws-1823/>.

⁹⁶ William Ransom Hogan, *The Texas Republic: A Social and Economic History* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1969), 4-5.

Rangers in 1844, some 15 years before the state of Oregon was admitted to the Union. The Oregon Rangers disbanded not long after their establishment with no discernable achievements, but were reconstituted in 1846 for a short period. Their only engagement at a place called Battle Creek ended in embarrassment after the unit attacked peaceful Indians foraging in the area. After much ridicule from local settlers, the Rangers disbanded, this time for good.⁹⁷ The Oregon Rangers' example demonstrates the declining effectiveness of the militia-identity connection over time. This could be in part because the Oregonian identity in the 1840s was not as strong as those of Vermont in the 1770s or Texas in the 1820s or there could be some other extraneous factors at play, but when compared with the other trends of the time, like the sidestepping of the militias during the Mexican-American War, it is in line with a perceived declining prominence in the militia.

Whether one looks at the state forming the militia or vice versa, what we can discern is that American national identity on a larger scale was weak at best in the early years of the United States and individual state levers for forming and shaping identity were much stronger. Militias were part of a defensive system, ordained by the Founders, that reinforced state identity. Over time though, the ability for this system to reinforce a state-level identity diminished, almost coinciding with the decline in the view that the militias were even an effective fighting force. As militias declined, so too did their ability to act as a force shaping identity.

⁹⁷ Frances Fuller Victor, *The Early Indian Wars of Oregon* (Salem, OR: Frank C. Baker State Printer, 1894), 77; James Henry Brown, *Brown's Political History of Oregon* (Portland, OR: Wiley B. Allen, 1892), 236-238.

A Short Note on Regional Identity

While this section has focused on the individual state identity and its relationship to the militia era, it is important to note that especially towards the end of this regime, regional identity in the United States had become much stronger in the political sphere and likely overtook state identities as predominant. When considering regional identities, our focus during the early parts of American history usually breaks down along the North-South divide or the free state versus slave state divide. In the next chapter, we will discuss these regional identities more because the zenith of their applicability occurs during and just after the Civil War, so they are more pertinent to that particular regime. However, we must keep in mind that identity is a rather fluid concept in which many identities may be manifest at once in a particular individual or group. Simply because we are associating the militia regime with a state-based identity does not necessarily mean that this was the only identity for the duration of the entire period. On the contrary, the weakening of the militia system towards the end of this regime could be indicative the growth of a higher version of identity, particularly that of regional identity. It will suffice to know at this point that regional identity had already taken root during the militia regime, but its highest manifestation, the Civil War, corresponds more with the growth of State coercion than it does with a militia-based regime. Hence why it is sections more in the next chapter than this one.

An Analysis of the Hypotheses for the Militia Regime

Since we have discussed the militia regime and its related trends surrounding identity, we can now analyze our hypotheses to see if they are supported and valid for this particular regime. The militia regime is the one closely linked to the Founders' conception of military service nesting itself within American society as well as how that idealized conception failed fairly

quickly. As a reminder, these hypotheses focus on the length of war and identity as primary dependent variable of analysis. Of the four hypotheses, the militia regime can give us insight to the first three.

The first hypothesis argues that military regimes with diffused costs and compulsory service required from the public reduces the length of American wars, and for the most part, this hypothesis remains sound within the militia regime. Of the three major conflicts of the era, two lasted less than three years, while the Revolutionary War lasted eight years, with only about six years of actual fighting. Since the Revolutionary War was the moment of the nation's birth, it can be considered an outlier for this period since it was an existential war for the nation's right to exist independent of Great Britain. The longer length can be linked to the circumstances and the justification for the war. Yet, in another sense, it is not an outlier for this particular regime as it defined the period with its heavy, but successful reliance on the militia. The War of 1812 also had a major militia component, while the Mexican-American War had less so, substituting volunteers which did little better than what the militia likely would have done. Either way, the overarching paradigm of militia service, which connected individuals to American war, was strong during this period and likely served to abbreviate the length of these wars to only that time which was necessary to execute the conflicts.

The second hypothesis on conscription shaping American identity through shared sacrifice has some support during this particular regime, but it is limited. The militia stands as a rudimentary conscription component for this particular period, but in a much weaker and less compelling form than in wars after this period. The Militia Acts of 1792 attempted to codify a conscription-like regime through the militia, but the Federal and state governments did little to apply the acts coherently across all state militias. As for the conflicts, the War of 1812 and the

Mexican-American War did little to contribute to the personification of shared sacrifice within American identity, but the Revolutionary War likely did. The reliance and success of the militia cemented it as an institution during this particular period, and at least theoretically, this required that individuals sacrifice their time, energy, and even lives for the benefit of the nation, if asked. In this sense, this at least creates a basic common connection of American identity with all serving the militia.

The third hypothesis, concerning American identity being a State-led development, both by individual U.S. states and the Federal Government, associated with the development of specific military regimes, has a lot of support in this particular period, particularly at the state level. Given the weaknesses in the Federal Government during this early period of American history, the states became the primary institution for the development of both their own militias and of their particular portions of American identity. States both created militias and, in some cases, were created by the actions and existence of certain militias. The Federal Government was an actor, but did little at first in shaping an overarching national identity. Individual states could thus shape identity and culture based on their own values or economic interests. One should consider here that the states were originally separate colonies, and these colonies had their own identities and histories, both which defined the people of the colonies. These histories did not disappear with the Revolution, but instead created a patchwork of identities across the country. Militias, in spite of their problems on the battlefield, reinforced identity and connections with the state governments, more so than with the Federal Government or greater American identity.

Concluding Remarks on the Militia Regime

Overall, the militia regime from the 1770s through 1860 was defined by a simple idea, that regular, ordinary citizens should contribute to their defense through militia service. This largely fell in line with anti-statist thinking at the time, and it kept a sizeable force of military power out of the Federal Government's hands and closer to the people. Militias were successful during the Revolution, but their effectiveness did not last beyond the war. The militia system remained in effect for the duration of this regime, primarily for lack of a better system, but battles like the Wabash and Bladensburg demonstrated how the militia could not always be effective, even if militia held a superior numerical advantage. By the time of the Mexican-American War, the militia system had become a sidelined military force, and in its place was at least the legal framework for a Federal standing army that could grow at a moment's notice.

Despite militia failures and their declining use over time, the militia created a unifying effect around common issues and identities during this period. States created militias and militias created states, reinforcing identity in both directions from both institutions. These individual states held more political power because of their military strength, which paled in comparison to what the Federal Government had at its disposition at any point during this regime. Within the notion of the militia, there rests a strong anti-statist ideology, and this in part may be why the ideals of the militia lived beyond the period. Modern usage of the term militia usually references the original militias of the Revolutionary period, but this is also a means of denoting a notional model the original, good American. There is a reverence for the militias of the Revolution and, along with that, any person who serves the country. It is that reverence and idealized version of what the militia was which remains part of American identity to this day.

In conclusion, the militia regime was first step in creating American military service and in establishing a rudimentary, but fragmented common identity. The militia's idealized form of citizens serving for a common defense was not realistic or practical beyond the Revolution, but it allowed for the American State to innovate its way out of its own constrictions. The end of the militia regime debuted with an era of mass warfare on a scale that the Founders likely never envisioned. As such, the militia system became even more of a relic from an unrealistic philosophy, steamrolled over by the needs of a bigger war machine fueled by the Federal Government, which inevitably consolidated American identity around newer archetypes.

Chapter Four

Coercion, the Military Draft, and Growing National Identity

“God created war so that Americans would learn geography.”

--Mark Twain

War creates new demands on States and societies, requiring them to respond to the crises at hand. If wars threaten the existence of the society, this can provide massive incentives to allow for State growth, and such was the case for the American Civil War. The four-year long conflict serves as the seminal event that amassed more power at the Federal level both during and after, and this is largely supported by the APD literature. Richard Bensei argued that “the modern state's inheritance from the antebellum period was nil,” indicating that the American State that grew out of the Civil War an original creation, not wholly linked to the decades prior. He also argued that existence of two States, the Union and the Confederacy, created two varied cases of State mobilization and creation for study.⁹⁸ Stephen Skowronek argued that the early American State was dominated by “courts and parties,” which after Reconstruction was “was stretched to the limits of its governing capacities” and required a reimagining of the administrative State at the turn of the century.⁹⁹ Unlike Bensei’s argument, Skowronek connects the post-war

⁹⁸ Richard Franklin Bensei, *Yankee Leviathan: The Origins of Central State Authority in America, 1859–1877* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995), ix, 94-99.

⁹⁹ Stephen Skowronek, *Building a New American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877-1920* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 16, 23.

era after the end of Reconstruction to the pre-war period, but argues that societal changes eventually forced it to change, especially at the beginning of the 20th Century. Both of these arguments are well-founded, but they focus less on the military components of State-building, to include the military drafts, and more on other administrative components. Skowronek addresses the army, but only as a case in a greater part of his State-centric argument.¹⁰⁰ These arguments also do little to shed light on how American identity grew or was reinforced by these State actions during the period.

This chapter seeks to blend the State-centric growth arguments coming out of APD along with military development and the evolution of American identity by proposing a new prism through which we can view this period, that of the coercive regime. We will define it as the coercive regime because during this period, the American State created more forcible system, both political and legal, for compelling military service from individual citizens. The Mexican-American War saw the declining use of militias and the increased use of volunteers, setting the stage for furthering the growth of Federal military power. However, prior to 1861, the only thing missing from further growing Federal military power was a catalyst to push beyond the militia-centric intellectual paradigm. The Civil War became that catalyst. The four-year conflict introduced Americans to mass warfare on a scale that the nation had never seen. More Americans were killed in this conflict than any other American conflict, and much of the reason for this was the massive number of soldiers used on both sides against one another.

The defining element that sets the coercive regime apart from the militia regime is the use of conscription for Federal military service, colloquially termed the military draft. Military drafts create a legal framework through which the American State can induce individuals into

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 85.

military service, even against their will. This is distinctive from the militia system in a number of ways. First, the power to compel service no longer comes from the states, but rather from the Federal Government. The Federal Government no longer has to ask states directly for militias to serve, but can reach out directly to the people. This, in turn, pluses up Federal military power in terms of sheer numbers for however long is politically sustainable. By avoiding the states completely, military power and influence flowed to the Federal level, and the states could be bypassed completely. This is indicative of another line of thinking within APD, that of “durable shift[s] in governing authority,” championed by Skowronek and Karen Orren.¹⁰¹ Military power, vested mainly at the individual state level and rooted in anti-statist rhetoric at the Founding, had by the Civil War, begun a permanent shift upwards towards the Federal Government. There were still militias in the postbellum era, but their function had changed from national and state defense to more civil and racial purposes.¹⁰² This made them more a theory than a reality in terms of military organization. States still retained militias, but as we will see with the Dick Act of 1903, the Federal Government consolidated more control over militias, transforming them into the National Guard that we have today and creating bureaucratic frameworks for their use at the Federal level. The onus of military power shifted from states to the State during this regime.

Also, we should break down the term coercion into two specific kinds, State and social. With State coercion, we are describing a pressure that uses the monopoly on violence belonging to the State to accomplish a task without necessarily having a public buy-in. Basically, this

¹⁰¹ Karen Orren and Stephen Skowronek, *The Search for American Political Development* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 123.

¹⁰² Examples include the White League, the Red Shirts, and other paramilitary groups which sprang up as a response to increased Federal intervention to protect blacks. These groups caused domestic disturbances, like the Thibodaux Massacre for example, but never served as military organizations for the defense of the United States.

means the State forcing the society to do something that the society does not generally want to do. With social coercion, we still have elements of State coercion, but there is also a general social consensus on accepting a particular State action, thus applying social pressure on individuals to comply with a State action. Both of these kinds of coercion play a role in this regime. During the Civil War, both the Union and Confederacy drafted individuals into serving, albeit without public buy-in. Both sides failed to some extent, but not without planting the seed that the State could coerce citizens into military service. By World War I, the public almost entirely bought into going to war, which in turn created a social coercion for military service. This combined with State coercion to serve fully enveloped the compulsion to serve.

Our examination of the coercive regime will consist of three major conflicts, as displayed in Table 4-1 with their corresponding data points listed. The longest and deadliest conflict of this period was the Civil War, and both Union and Confederate service numbers are included to fully encapsulate the use of coercion during the conflict. Additionally, it is also the only war listed classified as an existential conflict during this regime since it was fought to preserve the nation as the entity. The next major conflict was the Spanish-American War, a relatively short expansionist conflict which put a number of overseas territories under U.S. control. The final conflict of this regime was World War I, which from the U.S. perspective, was a dispute fought in Europe overseas against the Central Powers for the benefit of American allies. This one was the largest in terms of number of individuals mobilized, but U.S. involvement was brief, so American losses were truncated. Each of these conflicts will be examined to show the piecemeal changes that coercion had on both military service and American identity. Of note, volunteers play a role as well in these conflicts, but State power plays less of a role with volunteers than it does with draftees. A true analysis of State power comes not out of its ability to coax or

encourage, but rather out of its ability to force and compel individuals to do what they may not otherwise do. This is why our focus will be more on the drafts and how they shaped identity because both military service and identity are being imposed by the State.

Table 4-1. Major Conflicts During the Coercive Regime¹⁰³

Conflict	War Type	Out- come	Length in Days	Total Served	Draftees Served	Total U.S. Deaths
Civil War (Union) (1861-1865)	Existential/ Offensive	Win	1488	2,213,363	~164,000	364,511
Civil War (Confederacy)	Existential/ Defensive	Loss	1488	~750,000- 1,227,890	~300,000	~258,000
Spanish- American War (1898)	Expansionist/ Offensive	Win	115	306,760	0	1,662
World War I (1917-1918)	Dispute/ Offensive	Win	585	4,734,991	2,810,296	116,516

In terms of war length, the wars of this coercive period were abbreviated when compared to the other regimes we have or will examine, with each being a victory for the U.S. military. One possible explanation for this is because war consumes resources, and being in a permanent state of war requires constant resource supply in terms of materiel and manpower. The American State, let alone most other States at the time, could not sustain permanent war footing on a massive scale. Another possible reason may be that the goals of these conflicts were fairly

¹⁰³ Accurate numbers are difficult to come by and sources vary, so the numbers listed here are from an amalgamation of the following references on hand, with gaps filled in and adjustments made by the author based on the numbers available: David A. Blum and Nese F. DeBruyne, “American War and Military Operations Casualties: Lists and Statistics” (Congressional Research Service, July 29, 2020), 2; James W. Geary, *We Need Men: The Union Draft in the Civil War* (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1991), 82-84; Albert Burton Moore, *Conscription and Conflict in the Confederacy* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1924), 356-357; National Park Service, “Facts: The Civil War,” May 6, 2015, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/civilwar/facts.htm>; Selective Service System, “Induction Statistics,” accessed November 18, 2020, <https://www.sss.gov/history-and-records/induction-statistics/>.

clear and once accomplished, the military demobilized. There was no need for a large and permanent military structure to remain in place persistently. This was one of the benefits of the draft in that it allowed the military to mobilize and demobilize personnel quickly. Yet, there may be another explanation that is more pertinent here, which is the overarching shadow of anti-statist, anti-standing army philosophical tradition in American political culture. Demobilization lessens the threat of amassing too much violent power in the State.

In the first section, we will examine the coercive regime and how it developed, analyzing what we discussed above. In the second section, we will examine how these forms of coercion further constructed American identity, specifically how State coercion helped to reinforce regional identity and how social coercion encouraged the coalescence of American national identity. The coercive regime coincides with a major American period of identity growth, superseding individual state identities, which were linked to state militias, and at its final state, creating a national identity and national army in its wake. It is an evolutionary process, built on individual state, regional, and finally national identity, but it is also forged in a common experience of war.

The Coercive Regime

Much like the militia regime, it is important to see the coercive regime not as a constant during the period of study, but rather as a period with spurts of growth dependent on the situation. Our primary focus is on the elementary versions of the American military draft, of which, there were three during this particular period, two during the Civil War and one during World War I. These drafts were not perfect; in fact, they were quite controversial due to some of the associated litigious elements within their structures. However, much like the militias, they

serve as a step towards growing State power and military power. They allowed for the American State to grow its war machine in times of crisis, beyond what it could previously do, and certainly beyond what the militia regime allowed. We will also consider some of the events in the intervening period between the Civil War and World War I because they can serve to demonstrate this evolution towards more military power at the State-level. Of note, while the focus here is on the military drafts, volunteerism remained strong during these conflicts as well, and this will also be considered in terms of how it molded military service and identity over this particularly period.

The Civil War and State Coercion in Simultaneity

The Civil War serves as perhaps the first major rupture point and shock to the militia system, fundamentally changing how the American State inducted military members into service. Even though the 1792 Militia Acts formally established an expectation of service and consequences for not serving in the militias, all elements which are part of a military draft, the lackluster enforcement of the Militia Acts by both the Federal and state governments did not establish a fully compulsory military draft in any effective sense prior to the 1860s. Because of the unique circumstances of the Civil War, including that eleven states seceded, and along with them their own state militias, the militia system itself was almost completely sidelined for a voluntarist-centric military force, supplemented with drafts as the war dragged on. The war produced two drafts, one Union and one Confederate. Since each side was its own State, each implemented its own draft which varied from the other's, meaning different strategies and incentives were used to compel service and resources. Both sides also had different objectives for the war, which shaped the form and timing of their militaries and draft regimes. The South

was fighting for its right to exist as a separate slavery-oriented State from the North and did not need to dominate the North in order to accomplish that task. However, the North did need to dominate the South to keep its goal of preserving the Union. The South had an easier task because it just had to survive in order to win, but its fight was more existential than the North's because a loss would mean the end of the South as a separate State. The results of these different motivations are two almost simultaneous attempts at forcing individuals into a particular State's will, based on different justifications, bureaucratic formations, and exclusions, which in both cases resulted in largely ineffective and failed draft regimes.

The Confederate draft was on the whole a desperate attempt to compel service to ensure the Confederacy's survival while maintaining elite support for the cause. In April 1862, the Confederate Congress passed the first official military draft in American history, requiring "all white men [...] between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five" to serve for a term of three years.¹⁰⁴ Not long after in October 1862, the "Twenty Negro" or "Twenty Slave" Law was passed exempting plantation owners with twenty or more slaves from military service.¹⁰⁵ In 1863 and 1864, the Confederate Congress applied more changes to these conscription laws, reducing the requirement in the Twenty Slave Law to fifteen slaves, and then requiring those exempted under the law to pay \$500 or send 100 pounds of bacon to the Confederate government.¹⁰⁶ With each

¹⁰⁴ "The Statutes at Large of the Confederate States of America, Commencing with the First Session of the First Congress; 1862," Documenting the American South, 1999, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/statutes/statutes.html>, Chap. XXXI.--An Act to Further Provide for the Public Defence., accessed September 27, 2018.

¹⁰⁵ "The Statutes at Large of the Confederate States of America, Passed at the Second Session of the First Congress; 1862," Documenting the American South, 1999, <https://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/csstat62/csstat62.html>, Chap. XLV.--An Act to Exempt Certain Persons from Military Duty, and to Repeal an Act Entitled 'An Act to Exempt Certain Persons from Enrollment for Service in the Army (sic) of the Confederate States,' approved 21st April, 1862, accessed September 27, 2018.

of these draft law changes, it became clearer over time that the Confederacy was desperate for soldiers and resources and that the actual purpose of the draft was to extract both from the populace, which likely undermined the greater war effort itself. One estimate of Southerners drafted gages the number at around 300,000, although that number remains debatable and does not count volunteers.¹⁰⁷ However, given the Southern non-slave population stood at around 6 million and if we accept the 300,000 as the estimate of draftees, then this pegs the drafted population of the South at just about five percent of the total population, which is quite large.¹⁰⁸ This draft was successful in compelling service, but the social impositions and implications made it simply unsustainable.

The North did little better with its draft, but for the first two years of the war, it did not need it because many individuals volunteered. By the beginning of 1863, “some 1.3 million men [...] had joined the Union forces” voluntarily, a number that was triple what the South was able to recruit in the same period.¹⁰⁹ However, in that same year, hundreds of Northern soldiers started deserting daily due to low morale from losses suffered by Northern armies.¹¹⁰ In March 1863, Congress passed the Enrollment Acts, requiring “[t]hat all able-bodied male citizens of the United States, and persons of foreign birth [...] between the ages of twenty and forty-five” to

¹⁰⁶ Susanna Michele Lee, "Twenty-Slave Law," Encyclopedia Virginia, May 31, 2012, , accessed September 29, 2018, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Twenty-Slave_Law; Margaret Wood, "Civil War Conscription Laws," Library of Congress, November 15, 2012.

¹⁰⁷ Albert Burton Moore, *Conscription and Conflict in the Confederacy*, 356-357.

¹⁰⁸ "1860 Census Results," The Civil War Homepage, accessed September 27, 2018, http://www.civil-war.net/pages/1860_census.html.

¹⁰⁹ Barnet Schecter, *The Devil's Own Work: The Civil War Draft Riots and the Fight to Reconstruct America* (New York: Walker & Company, 2007), 103.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 104.

serve in the Union Army.¹¹¹ However, just like with the Confederate draft, there were exceptions. If chosen for the draft, individuals could provide substitutes to go in their place or they could pay \$300 to be exempted. In addition, failure to either provide a substitute, pay the fee, or show up for the board was considered desertion and subject to court martial.¹¹² These rules aimed the draft at the lower and poorer classes who were less likely to pay the sum, let alone find a substitute. In July 1863, tensions over the draft culminated in New York City when groups of immigrant whites who were now under the threat of being drafted took their anger out on the black population in the city, leading to four days of intense rioting.¹¹³ Despite social backlash, the Northern draft continued, and by war's end, over 776,000 were drawn from the 2.2-million-man draft pool, and over two-thirds of those drawn were exempted, discharged, or did not show up. Once payments and substitutes were added, just over 164,000 men were drafted into the Union Army, which represented approximately 13 percent of the overall Union Army, and quite a smaller percentage of the overall population compared to the 22 million who lived in Northern states.¹¹⁴

These Civil War drafts had mixed results as they produced only supplementary military forces for their respective causes and they had negative adverse effects on their respective populations. The Confederate draft catered towards protecting elites who benefited the most from preserving slavery from having to serve and, as time went on, its purpose changed to providing a means of extorting resources just as much as it was recruiting soldiers. The Union

¹¹¹ U.S. Congress, "An Act for Enrolling and Calling out National Force, and for Other Purposes.," § Chapter 75 (1863), Section 1, <http://legisworks.org/sal/12/stats/STATUTE-12-Pg731.pdf>.

¹¹² Ibid., Section 13.

¹¹³ Schechter, *The Devil's Own Work*, 17.

¹¹⁴ James W. Geary, *We Need Men: The Union Draft in the Civil War*, 82-84.

had no better luck, only drafting a small percentage of those pooled, while also sowing social discord and extorting money from the public. In the end, the war was largely fought with volunteers on both sides, and the drafts were secondary recruitment tools.

The success or failure of these drafts is less important than how they changed the interaction between the American State and the general public. The drafts created a sizeable change in the American social contract, with the demands created by a crisis changing what is expected out of citizens. The questions and debates arising from the early militia regime about whether the American State could or should create massive armies and raise large numbers of troops were eclipsed by the demands of this particular war. No longer was it a question whether the American State could forcibly conscript people; it could and it did. The issues inherent in both Confederate and Union drafts became lessons learned to inform political figures some fifty years later when the next draft was to be implemented. Also, during and after this war, individual states and their military power was surpassed overwhelmingly by that of the Federal Government. The onus of defending the nation, rather than remaining a state and Federal partnership as it was during the militia regime, became primarily a Federal responsibility because of the massive amount of resources that the Federal Government could bring to the war effort. Manpower was one of those resources, and with the power to conscript now a precedent, the American State had little need for individual states contributions. It could fully furnish its manpower directly from the people. After the war and especially after the end of Reconstruction, Federal demobilization caused much of the military control to revert back to a state militia-based system after the war, but these drafts set the precedent and set the stage for

future drafts and growing Federal military power. That “durable shift in governing authority” vis-à-vis consolidating military power at the Federal level began here.¹¹⁵

The Spanish-American War, Expansionism, and the Dick Act of 1903

The turn of the 20th Century saw another major American conflict, albeit on a much smaller scale than the Civil War in terms of military personnel mobilized, and a major shift on the Federal level towards the complete usurping of state militia and military power. The Spanish-American War was an expansionist war for imperial purposes. While it is considered a major conflict, it did little to change the American military itself, with the Federal Government using mainly volunteers and no draft. However, its importance is not in its use of volunteers with no draft, but rather how it created the environment for further permanent military change legislatively. In the wake of the Spanish-American War and the subsequent Philippine-American War, Congress passed the Militia Act of 1903, also called the Dick Act after its sponsor Ohio Representative Charles Dick, which was the first step towards codifying the military structure we see today, with the individual state National Guards replacing state militias, creating a framework for federalization of these Guard units, and making them directly answerable to the president in times of crises. This 5-year period between 1898 and 1903 is pivot point because it fundamentally changed the relationship between the Federal Government and how states control their organic military forces.

The Spanish-American War demonstrates the changing nature of American war, especially compared to the wars prior. The 1898 conflict is one of the briefest major conflicts in U.S. history, lasting less than four months. Initiated because of a perceived Spanish attack on the

¹¹⁵ Orren and Skowronek, *The Search for American Political Development*, 123.

USS Maine, the conflict was expansionist in nature with the United States acquiring a number of Spanish overseas territories, such as the Philippines and Puerto Rico, and stipulating Cuban independence from Spain. The justification for the war was imperialist, intended to grow U.S. international influence abroad and, much like many European powers at the time, grant the United States an empire for itself.¹¹⁶ This was not an existential war because there was no real threat to U.S. sovereignty or integrity, but instead it was a conflict of choice. The war had an effect of consolidating political opinion around more Federal control of the military, especially given that that the conflict was fought abroad and that state militias were not the type of military unit this war needed.

Yet, even in 1898, the political class had to at the very least allude to the militias. The Congressional resolution declaring war gave the president the power “to use the entire land and naval forces of the United States, and to call into the actual service of the United States the militia of the several States.”¹¹⁷ Ironically, despite the language in the war declaration, militias did not represent any sizeable force, except for a small number of state National Guard and naval militias. Even then, almost all overseas deployed forces were volunteer units. States provided ground units by raising volunteer regiments, but these were not militias per se. These volunteer regiments served alongside other volunteer regiments recruited by the Federal Government.¹¹⁸ The term militia in the declaration serves as more of a traditional term rather than a reality by this point. In addition, there was no draft in this war, so no one was compelled to serve against one’s own will. This was an expansionist war, but it was fought by those willing to do the

¹¹⁶ Immerwahr, *How to Hide an Empire*, 72-79.

¹¹⁷ U.S. Congress, “Declaration of War with Spain,” Pub. L. No. H.R. 10086 (1898).

¹¹⁸ The Spanish American War Centennial Website, “Spanish American War Military Units,” accessed December 8, 2020.

fighting. The social discord that was prevalent during the Civil War drafts was practically non-existent for this war. No one went to war forcibly, which made this the first fully volunteer major war in American history.

Moreover, American ground forces were not the most critical element of the war; instead, it was naval power which dominated the battlespace. Much of the military theory popularized at the turn of the 20th Century focused on projecting State power through control of the seas.

Alfred Thayer Mahan was one of the principal proponents of American naval power at the time, and this war provided a unique showcase of American naval power.¹¹⁹ With such long distances to travel by sea, the U.S. Navy became the crucial military service in not only fighting, but also transporting ground forces into the different theaters of operation. The entirety of the U.S. military was fighting in two different hemispheres, so having a sizeable naval force which could operate and logistically support campaigns over such distances far from home gave the American State not only an advantage over Spain militarily, but also over the individual states at home.

Navies do not lend themselves to the same sort of individual state control as militias do.

Individual states could easily organize and form state militias since they require individuals and their weapons, but they could not effectively operate their own navies because that is more resource-intensive and requires ship-building capabilities, for which this was not a requirement or need for landlocked states. Individual states, particularly along the coasts, did form state naval militias beginning in the 1880s, but these were and are not commonplace, even today.¹²⁰

Furthermore, the use of naval power as force projection across the globe naturally lends itself to

¹¹⁹ See Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1957); This book was pivotal to shaping views on Sea Power at the turn of the 20th Century.

¹²⁰ Naval History and Heritage Command, "Naval Militia," accessed January 3, 2021; Currently, only six states still have active Naval Militias.

international affairs, which is in the purview of the Federal Government, not individual states. Naval power was practically exclusive to growing Federal military power. The Spanish-American War's display of naval power as a key military asset provided further a justification for growing naval power, a domain entirely exclusive to the American State, and thus Federal military power as well.

Finally, one should not also discount victory as a justification for further Federal military control. The U.S. military quickly vanquished Spain without using militias, military drafts, or deploying people abroad against their will. It showcased its naval power to stunning success, and it fought a war in two major theaters, seizing new territories and achieving victory against a historical European power within a matter of months. Such victory demonstrated, rather justly, that the Federal Government's use of military power was efficient in its tactical use, further blunting arguments for remaining within a state-centric militia system. With that said, it is of note here that after the conclusion of the Spanish-American War, the U.S. military fought an insurgency war against in the Philippines until 1902, but similar to the Spanish-American War, this conflict was fought with volunteers.¹²¹ Additionally, with no individual state involvement, the Federal Government could claim sole credit for the victory.

Not long after the end of the Spanish-American and Philippines conflicts, the Federal Government set about reorganizing the entire structure of the American military, to include state militias. The Militia Act of 1903, also called the Dick Act after its sponsor, Ohio Senator Charles Dick, was a major turning point in solidifying Federal control over all American military power by creating a nationalized military structure which incorporated state militia forces. The act modified the term state militia to "National Guard," a term still used to this day for state-

¹²¹ Trevor K. Plante, "Researching Service in the U.S. Army During the Philippine Insurrection," National Archives, Summer 2000.

based military forces that are answerable to the Federal Government if called, and set about standardizing the treatment of Guardsmen equally to Regular Army soldiers, such as in terms of pay, assignment, or pension.¹²² If we recall, standardization was a primary goal of the Militia Acts of 1792, as state militias varied in their composition and overall effectiveness. We can look to the lack of Federal bureaucracy in the 1790s to compel states to standardize as a reason for the Militia Acts' ultimate failure, as well as the strong anti-statist philosophies at the time which impeded national standardization. The Dick Act, however, did not have either of these bureaucratic or philosophical problems as the United States faced a world in the 1900s vastly different from the one of the 1790s. The frontiers of the United States had reached the extent of their expansion, so the domestic threats that state militias were intended to counteract were not as tangible as in times past. Plus, the Federal bureaucracy was more robust than in the 1790s, and thus the Federal Government could more easily compel states, whether legally or through monetary incentives, to standardize their militias into National Guard units. Some 13 years after the Dick Act, Congress went even further with the National Defense Act of 1916, further standardizing not just National Guard units, but the U.S. military at all levels, to include promotions, types of units, and more instructions on how the Guard was to integrate with the Regular Army.¹²³

Both the 1903 and 1916 Acts were major steps in consolidating Federal power over practically all aspects of the American military, whether at the national or state-level. While there were no drafts during this period, the success of the Spanish-American War along with another generational shift had created the atmosphere to complete the movement towards

¹²² U.S. Congress, "Militia Act of 1903," Pub. L. No. 57–33, 775 32 (1903).

¹²³ U.S. Congress, "National Defense Act of 1916," Pub. L. No. 64–85, 166 39 (1916).

American State control of the military. The concept of militia had been replaced with a National Guard for each state, standardization across the military had become more complete, and above all, the Federal Government could now control state military forces directly and incorporate those forces into the greater national military. The “durable shift in governing authority” that began with the Civil War was complete by the moment just prior to World War I.¹²⁴ The American State retained its own military power, and it was about to use its power not only to go to war, but also to force its own citizens to go as well. As we will see in the next section, one more element was needed to make State coercion complete, and World War I provided it.

World War I and Social Coercion

Before World War I, if an American wanted to avoid military service, there were many ways to do so. Militia service was rather porous, which allowed people to slip through if they physically left a particular state or geographic region. When drafts were implemented during the Civil War, if a person paid enough or offered resources to their respective State, he could avoid serving. Additionally, in spite of prescribed legal punishments, the State had little recourse if draftees simply avoided service by not showing up. Drafts also caused massive upheavals when there was inequality in those forced to serve, as previously discussed with the 1863 New York City Draft Riots. In short, public buy-in to any form of mandatory military service before World War I was lackluster at best, and the Federal Government relied more on volunteers than they did forcing people into service. By relying on volunteers, public buy-in was not fully necessary if the State wanted to go to war. However, the coercive regime was about to become more all-encompassing with the addition of social coercion. This along with the changes in Federal

¹²⁴ Orren and Skowronek, *The Search for American Political Development*, 123.

bureaucracy and absolute State control over the military, the ability of the State to draft and force its citizens to go to war was about to grow exponentially.

The 1910s were a time of crises, both at home and abroad. The passage of the National Defense Act of 1916 occurred when the United States was not even at war, but this did not mean that the precipice of war was not in sight. Small skirmishes like the Mexican invasion of Columbus, New Mexico, in early 1916 exposed a pressing need to expand the power projection of the U.S. military beyond simply defending the borderlands to keep Americans safe, and with a war raging in Europe, exhausting many of its participants, war itself did not seem far off.¹²⁵ Despite this and the passage of the 1916 Act, American political leaders remained rather averse to going to war, especially in Europe. Woodrow Wilson famously ran for reelection in 1916 on a platform of keeping the United States out of the war. Additionally, the U.S. Army and Navy at the time were relatively small and ineffectual, maintaining a small standing force of less than 200,000 total for both services.¹²⁶ However, within a few months of taking office for his second term, Wilson had to renege on his promise to keep the United States out of war due to increasing danger to U.S. interests.¹²⁷ The small American military needed troops once war had been declared, so once again a draft became necessary. Only this time, unlike during the Civil War, it was quite successful in filling the ranks.

¹²⁵ Friedrich Katz, "Pancho Villa and the Attack on Columbus, New Mexico," *American Historical Review* 83, no. 1 (February 1978): 101-102.

¹²⁶ Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, "Selected Manpower Statistics: Fiscal Year 1997" (U.S. Department of Defense, 1997).

¹²⁷ Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project, "Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924)," accessed November 25, 2018.

In May 1917, Congress passed a conscription resolution creating the Selective Service and authorizing the president to raise some 500,000 troops to conduct the war effort.¹²⁸ The Federal Government required all adult males to register with local draft boards, and those boards made decisions on who was or was not drafted. Additionally, these draft boards were apportioned based on geography and population, and draftees were, at least in theory, chosen equally, so no matter what one's class was, service was required.¹²⁹ Some 4,000 draft boards were set up nationwide, answering directly to the president, and young men overwhelmingly went to these boards to register.¹³⁰ With the State apparatus in place to draft and use the military more effectively, the draft could efficiently induct people into the military and use them more resourcefully than occurred in the Civil War.

The American public, despite being largely isolationist a year prior, willingly accepted the drive towards war and pushed for individuals to register and serve, creating a social obligation to serve that at times bordered on neurotic. Individuals who avoided service were termed "slackers," and spontaneous gangs coerced these slackers into registering for the Selective Service.¹³¹ The social compulsion was further solidified by groups who sought to use the patriotic fervor and the support for war to achieve their own political goals. For example, women's suffragist groups used their support for the draft and the war effort as a means of demonstrating their value to the country, and thus why they deserved the right to vote, even

¹²⁸ U.S. Congress, "The Selective Service Act of 1917," Pub. L. No. 65-12, § Chapter 15, 76 40 76 (1917).

¹²⁹ Ibid., Section 2.

¹³⁰ Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 36-37.

¹³¹ Ibid., 41-44.

though they were not subject to the draft.¹³² The outgrowth of this social compulsion to serve was that military service became practically all-encompassing. Individuals were required to, at the very least, register for the draft, and if they chose not to, they became social outcasts. This was dissimilar to wars past where one could escape service by not showing up, finding a replacement, or paying a fee in money or resources. Service and sacrifice became the patriotic thing to do and was expected from the public as well, and by war's end, some 24 million Americans had signed up for the Selective Service, with just over 4.7 million Americans serving, of which just over 116,000 lost their lives. The majority of servicemembers in this war were draftees, a first in American history.¹³³ By the end of 1918, however, the war ended and so too did the World War I-era draft, but not before social coercion had become a primary motivator for compelling military service. The Civil War draft counteracted the public's will, but the World War I draft faced no such sustained backlash.

In summation, the coercive regime was a period of transition from a militia-based regime to a Federally-controlled modern military. This transition supplanted the militia system completely, effectively reorganizing the structure of the American military from the Federal level down to the newly formed state National Guards. Through experience and experimentation, the American State established a new paradigm vis-à-vis American military service and the public's relationship to said military. This paradigm is built on two primary means of coercion, State and social, both of which manifested themselves over this time in both drafted and volunteer military service. The Civil War allowed for experimentation in draft systems to see what worked, and the Spanish-American War demonstrated that a volunteer force

¹³² Ibid., 103.

¹³³ Ibid., 7, 21, 209; see Table 4-1.

could operate effectively and encouraged the consolidation of military power at the Federal level. By the end of World War I, the American State had learned how to forcibly conscript its own citizens into the national military with overwhelming public support. By the end of the coercive regime, the process for transferring American military power to a Federal responsibility had been completed. Along with that, State power to conscript had been achieved as well, thanks in part to public buy-in.

Coercion and Identity

As noted in Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, the State plays a role in shaping the nation as a self-identifying community. He uses the examples of the census, maps, and museums as tools for the social construction of the make-up of the people, where they find themselves in the greater world, and their own history.¹³⁴ Therefore, if the State can shape and mold its people to its will, it is fair to say that as State power grows, its influence over the public it has can increase as well. How one measures this power is not as important as seeing the power itself and how it spills into other domains. There is a clear trend in the American case where in spite of those anti-statist tendencies, the State grew military power, which in turn allowed it to forcibly impose newer forms of identity upon the nation. This is the essence of the coercive regime, a forcible State-centric application not just of forced military service, but also of an identity upon a nationalized group. It is during the coercive regime that we see a coalesced and stronger formation of American national identity applied across all groups in the nation.

Yet, we should not see the leap from individual state identity to national identity as an instantaneous process, but rather a gradual one, slowly building over time. As a result of this

¹³⁴ Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 184-185.

slow and gradual process, there was an intermediate stage briefly reference in the last chapter, regional identity, which developed and remains in some forms to this day. In this section, we will examine first regional, then national identity and how they connected to the coercion of military service during specific wars. We will also look at how State and social coercion work with one another to assist in creating these identity formations, with State coercion alone overlapping with regional identity and social coercion overlapping with national identity. Once both types of coercion were in play, then compulsory military service becomes practically inescapable, lest one relinquish American citizenship and move elsewhere. Military service thus became one part of American identity.

A Formation of Regional Identity

Any definition of American regional identity would revolve around geographic regrouping of individual states around a common ideology or culture. These sorts of regional identities are still commonplace, and Americans today still identify with particular regions of the country based on where they are from and where they live. These geo-constrained and socially-constructed identities are part of the American experience and can fluctuate over time. The most notable example of regional identity is how Southerners identify with one another more so than they might with Americans from Northern or Western regions, and this self-identification can manifest itself socially, economically, and politically. An example where regional identity shifts or changes in time is with political realignments. With the Southern example, in the 1960s, Southern states changed their party affiliations en masse from the Democratic to Republican party after the passage of the Civil Rights Acts. Yet, even in that example, the shift was not just geographically-based; it was political as well. The geographic constraints of the region created

real-world demarcations, but the shift within the identity was a result of State actions. In short, we should not see regional identity as simply the geographic location of particular states or its inhabitants alone, but it should be viewed as a State-constructed identity as well, born out over time and State actions. Such is the case of the main regional identities we will discuss here, those of Northern and Southern identities, as these two serve as the major building blocks towards achieving a full American national identity.

When discussing these two particular identities, it is natural to lean on the Civil War as the event that puts them on full display. The war is the seminal event of Northern versus Southern states, a dichotomous battle of political culture over slavery. We should be clear that Northern and Southern identities, while ever apparent during the Civil War, predate the conflict by decades. For our purposes, the use of the Civil War as a focal point is intended to fix these identities in time, but at the same time, the Civil War acts only as the culminating event in the formation of these identities. Much of the work in the establishment of regional identities occurred in the antebellum era, and thus within the confines of what this project defines as the militia regime. In spite of regional identity having its origins before the beginning of the coercive regime, this does not mean its placement here is incorrect. Identity is nebulous and ever-changing so putting exact dates on its origins is a difficult task. The use of the Civil War as the zenith of this regional identity is appropriate because within the coercive regime, we saw the American State and a quasi-State system in the South forcing identity through conscription and other means onto their citizens. As a result, we will look at State construction of regional identity through a before- and after-the-war lens to fully flesh out regional identity.

Prior to the war, the American State reinforced Northern and Southern identities through legally-structured means. For instance, the identification of free states versus slave states

reinforced a type of political, economic, and social identity at the state-level, and the Federal Government used such state identities to establish and give legal grounding to these states as well as justification for political actions. Since states had fostered their own identity, the growth of the nation westward fomented debates on the admission of new states as either free or slave states. The Missouri Compromise is a good example of this sort of legalistic regional identity created by the early Federal Government. By admitting so-called free and slave states one-by-one in order to maintain a balance of power at the Federal level, the Federal Government was creating separate regional identities and parsing states in to separate categories. The Missouri Compromise even created a geographic boundary where no states north of the line would be slave states.¹³⁵ The American State was the primary actor in superimposing these regional identities onto the states because it was also responsible for the creation of new states. It created a State-sanctioned framework through which states would self-identify with one another and work together for their common interests. It is within that framework that not just political, but also economic and social ties formed, and the war provided a clear example of where each state came down on their regional identity.

At the same time though, the war exposed cleavages within states regarding their particular regional identities and where they would align. Not all citizens of the states were uniform in their state's chosen cause. One example of this is to look at border states and their loyalties during the war. Border states like Kentucky and Missouri, which did not secede during the war, saw Confederate insurgencies within their states from their own citizens who supported

¹³⁵ U.S. Senate, "Missouri Compromise Ushers in New Era for the Senate," accessed January 5, 2021.

the Southern cause.¹³⁶ Even within states, the existence of two regional identities caused divided loyalties. A more extreme example of these identities causing divisions is the breakaway of West Virginia from Virginia, which created the new state in 1863. The northwestern parts of Virginia which encompassed most of modern West Virginia were culturally different from the rest of Virginia. The largely mountainous region of the state had less agricultural land and thus was less bound to slavery. The war had exposed largely pro-Union sympathies in the area, and the secession of Virginia was the moment that those areas decided to unify and proclaim themselves as separate, succeeding at joining the Union in the midst of the conflict.¹³⁷ The war exacerbated these identities and forced people living in these borders areas to make decisions on which side they were going to support, and in the West Virginia case, the State creation of these identities indirectly led to the fracture of an entire state.

Up until this point, we have looked at these regional identities as part of a prism of geographic location or historical support for slavery. Perhaps another way to look at these identities is to go beyond the regional focus and see them as developing national identities in distinctly separate ways. We can view this perspective through each side's goals during the Civil War. The South sought to separate itself from the North, creating its own separate State, while the North sought to preserve the Union. The Southern version of identity in this case was a regional identity imposed on it by the Federal Government in the decades prior to the war and with aspirations to be a distinctive national identity, centered on preserving slavery as an

¹³⁶ Leo E. Huff, "Guerrillas, Jayhawkers and Bushwhackers in Northern Arkansas during the Civil War," *The Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (1965): 128; Andrew Fialka, "Federal Eyes: How the Union Saw Kentucky's Civil War," *Ohio Valley History* 18, no. 3 (Fall 2018): 16.

¹³⁷ Jonathan A. Noyalas, "Deep Blue in a Reb State," *America's Civil War* 33, no. 6 (January 2021): 40-43; Charles Henry Ambler, *A History of West Virginia* (New York: Prentice-Hall, inc., 1933), 236, 326.

economic system with other strokes of political and cultural similarities amongst the secessionist states. The Northern version, however, was more closely linked to what we could consider to be the American national identity of the time, that of keeping the states that had joined the Union, whether in the 1790s or much later, from willfully leaving the Union. In the North's case, its form of identity was not so much a regional identity based on geographic location or aversion towards slavery as it was preserving a status quo of all states remaining in the Union, whether by will or by force. We can see this in Northern patriotic narratives at the time which focused on the concept of loyalty, a term which is still debated by historians as to what it exactly was and probably varied depending on which part of the North is being discussed.¹³⁸ At its most basic level, however, loyalty meant loyalty to the Union, and Southern secession contradicted this loyalty. In order to maintain this form of identity, the North needed to dominate the South to preserve the Union, which it did so through State power of imposing that national form of identity. In this framework, the Civil War-era regional identities are more of a dichotomy between a nationalist-imposed identity in the North and an aspirational quasi-national identity in the South.

No matter the framework used to view regional identity in the Civil War's context, the State remains the primary actor in fomenting and applying this identity. Once again, the Civil War had two State structures which were attempting to impose identity on their respective populations, with our focus being on the military drafts. In the South, the use of conscription forced individuals to fight for the South's cause of preserving slavery as an institution. Much like in the case of the militias, though, the realities do not always match the historical perceptions afterwards. The Southern draft was one of poorer individuals, most of whom did not own slaves.

¹³⁸ Robert M. Sandow, ed., *Contested Loyalty: Debates over Patriotism in the Civil War North* (Baltimore, MD: Fordham University Press, 2018), 3-5.

The greatest benefit in preserving slavery as an economic system would not go to those who fought, but rather those who did not fight. It was a draft intended to benefit Southern elites, which did not provide the most compelling reason for individuals to serve. As such, the use of Southern identity imposed by the Confederate State as it were, backed up with the Southern monopoly on violence, became a tool to inspire and, in the case of the draft, compel service. Without full social buy-in and without a strong historical rooting, however, the draft's ability to consolidate Southern identity was weak at best. Additionally, it is difficult to ascertain how effective the Confederate State was at fomenting a Southern identity overall, but at the very least we can see that the war left a psychological division in which Southern regional identity exists even today. The Lost Cause myth and terms used for the war, like the War of Northern Aggression, are examples of modern psychological manifestations of Southern identity.

On the other side, Northern use of identity was more effective and efficient, especially in compelling military service, but only for a time. A large swath of volunteerism at the onset of the war meant that, first, the draft was not needed early on and, second, that their form of identity was already deeply rooted in Northern states. We can look at this identity as regional or national, but volunteerism is indicative of at least a form of social buy-in to American identity or the cause of retaining the Southern states in the Union. The North resorted to a draft at a time where volunteers were drying up and the war effort needed more men and resources. In fact, the use of the draft to extract money and resources from the population, which to be fair the South did as well, likely did little to strengthen that identity. Despite this, the Northern form of identity compelled more volunteers than it did draftees, and perhaps this is at least one indication that the Northern identity was stronger than the Southern one. The Northern cause to preserve the Union was already rooted in an identity dating back to the nation's founding, whereas the novelty of the

Southern identity was perhaps one part of its undoing. These drafts were certainly not the only expression of regional identity, but they did demonstrate the extent to which each State could compel its will and form identity upon its respective publics.

As we can see, there is a lot of interpretation related to these identities, how they formed, and what real-world effect they had. The key point to consider here is that they serve as a stepping stone towards consolidated national identity, no matter what interpretation we accept. Whether we treat Northern or Southern identities as full regional identities based on geopolitical ideals or connections or as quasi-or fully national identities, these regional identities serve as a connective tissue and foundation upon which American national identity was eventually achieved. In the next section, we will move ahead some five decades to the consolidation of American national identity during World War I.

The Solidification of National Identity

World War I saw the coalescence of American national identity around a common cause and a foreign enemy. What set this particular conflict apart from the prior wars is how the public openly embraced the war, creating peer pressure to register for the draft and serve in the U.S. military. This trend was not unique to the United States; the political atmosphere surrounding World War I, both at home and abroad, created a mixture of expectations for military service and fused it with the growing nationalism that was growing across North America and Europe. Conscription, national identity, and public buy-in for war are cornerstones to understanding all nations involved in World War I. The American case, however, is unique in how vastly different it was from the Founders' intentions. The American State had, over the course of a century, taken military power for itself from the states, built a Federal-level military, and forcibly drafted

its own citizens, and had eliminated much of the anti-statist philosophical opposition to any of these actions. By World War I, the American State had the legal ability and the capacity to go to war. It also had the ability to shape and mold its citizens' identity into whatever it needed to succeed at war.

There are a few examples which demonstrate the strengthening position of the Federal Government in reinforcing national identity through the military. The first of these is associated with a perceived shifting of power from Congress to the Executive. Political scientists have generally noted this trend of Congress ceding power the president or the president exercising a broad range of powers over Congress, and this trend is prevalent, especially in times of crisis like during wars when the president serves as commander-in-chief of the armed forces.¹³⁹ Bruce Porter argued that World War I had a “ratchet effect” in building State capacity in the United States because the war effort expanded Federal bureaucracy, which thus granted more power to the president.¹⁴⁰ William Howell argued that presidents have the ability to take unilateral action in the absence of Congressional action, whether at war or in policy, and this ability grants the president a significant amount more power to set the political landscape.¹⁴¹ On top of this, one should consider the power of the bully pulpit. Richard Neustadt argued that presidential power lies in the president's ability to persuade, both Congress and the public, and because of the one voice with which the president speaks compared to Congress' many factions and many voices, it

¹³⁹ William G. Howell and Jon C. Pevehouse, *While Dangers Gather: Congressional Checks on Presidential War Powers* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 4.

¹⁴⁰ Porter, *War and the Rise of the State*, 269-272.

¹⁴¹ William G. Howell, *Power Without Persuasion: The Politics of Direct Presidential Action* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 14-15.

is easier for the president to win over hearts and minds.¹⁴² Neustadt and Howell do not address World War I directly, but they do point to some of the other abilities that the president has at his disposal.

Because of the president's unique position, any expansion of military power at the Federal level grants more power directly to the president, whether in wartime or not. A larger military meant a greater ability for the president to shape the military and to shape the culture around service. For example, at the onset of World War I, Congress passed military draft legislation which provided more comprehensive explicit Executive power over military-related affairs, down to the minutiae.¹⁴³ The president was given power to regulate alcohol sales and restrict brothels and other kinds of vice-based establishments near military encampments and installations.¹⁴⁴ On face value, this may not seem to be noteworthy, but it is indicative of an increasing cultural power of the presidency over shaping young servicemembers. If a common experience through military service is being defined by Congressionally-enumerated powers given to the president, then the Federal Government through the presidency is shaping and molding a common identity through that experience. The large numbers of enrollees in World War I, combined with the social coercion of the time, gave the military draft in 1917 a particularly cogent ability to shape and mold that national identity, unlike military campaigns of the past.

¹⁴² Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 29-30.

¹⁴³ A search of both the Union Civil War draft and the World War I draft legislation (both cited above) shows that the term "President" was mentioned only 23 times in the 1863 Act while the same term appears 51 times in the 1917 Act, indicating a progressively more proactive role for the president in the draft and military affairs in general.

¹⁴⁴ U.S. Congress, "An Act To Authorize the President to Increase Temporarily the Military Establishment of the United States." (1917), <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/65th-congress/session-1/c65s1ch15.pdf>. Sections 12-13.

Another way in which the Federal Government consolidated national identity was through military unit identification. If we recall it referenced in the last chapter, military units during the militia regime were identified by their state of origin or by a particular commander.¹⁴⁵ By World War I, that sort of state- or leader-based unit nomenclature had all but disappeared, but it was a process to get to that point. During the Civil War and the Spanish-American War, military units were still identified based on their state or region of origin. The Civil War saw large formations like the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia square off against the Union's Army of the Potomac. These large armies were national armies, defending their respective States, but their origins still came from local, regional, and state-based units from where they were rooted.¹⁴⁶ The Spanish-American War had state-based volunteer units complement national units. For instance, at the Battle of San Juan Hill, the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry, also known as the Rough Riders, served alongside state-volunteer units like the 71st New York Infantry Regiment.¹⁴⁷ However, by 1917, World War I units deployed to the European theater had no state names nor did they use volunteer designations either. Instead, units were designated through alphanumeric job-oriented unit combinations that the U.S. military continues to use to this day.¹⁴⁸ Additionally, the entire force that was deployed to Europe was called the American Expeditionary Force, another term that implies a national origin, not a state or regional one. These unit names are indicative of the progressive development of an American identity at the

¹⁴⁵ Robertson and McDonald, "Revolutionary War Unit Rolls."

¹⁴⁶ American Battlefield Trust, "Civil War Army Organization," accessed January 11, 2021, <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/civil-war-army-organization>.

¹⁴⁷ HistoryNet, "Spanish-American War: Battle of San Juan Hill," June 12, 2006, <https://www.historynet.com/spanish-american-war-battle-of-san-juan-hill.htm>.

¹⁴⁸ Center of Military History, *Order of Battle of the United States Land Forces in the World War: American Expeditionary Forces*, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army, 1988).

heart of military service. Those who joined American units during World War I were not representatives of their respective states of origin; they were instead Americans, mixing with other Americans from all states, regions, and territories to create a national fighting force. This was a symbol of the State developing both the military and identity simultaneously. The usurping state-based unit names and the disuse of the term volunteer are both examples of the creation of a sameness within American identity. Whether draftee or volunteer, all servicemembers were Americans.

Ultimately, the construction of the American State built not only its military but also its ability to create a national identity over time. Coercion was an outgrowth of the State's growth. Once the public had bought into the State's construction of American identity and with the bureaucracy well in place, its use to compel military service was rather easy. With State and social coercion both complete by World War I, national identity or, perhaps more appropriately, American national conscience was forged in the common war experience and reinforced by common military service under national banners. By war's end, the American State's control over the U.S. military was unquestioned, a far cry from the Founders' intentions, and yet the public acquiesced, in part because their identity rested upon that very military. The seeds were planted for American military dominance worldwide.

An Analysis of the Hypotheses for the Coercive Regime

Turning towards our hypotheses, the coercive regime is the second period of analysis, and it builds upon the militia regime with a keen focus on growing military power almost exclusively at the Federal level. The American State took more power for itself at the expense of

the states, but the process was not immediate. Of the four hypotheses, the coercive regime can, like the militia regime, give us insight into the first three.

The first hypothesis argues that military regimes with diffused costs and compulsory service required from the public reduces the length of American wars. When looking at the wars of the coercive period, they are relatively brief when compared to other periods. The Civil War was the longest American conflict at four years in length while the Spanish-American War was the shortest at four months, if we do not consider the Philippines-American War as an extension of that conflict beyond the official end date. The coercive period's evidence does not hold water for this hypothesis at first glance. World War I and the Civil War were the conflicts during this period with compulsory service and diffused costs, but they were longer than the Spanish-American War, which was all-volunteer force. While this may contradict the hypothesis, it might be important to consider other extenuating circumstances which affect the outcome of our assessment of this hypothesis. First, volunteer forces tend to have more mobility than drafted or militia forces, and this may be why the Spanish-American War was over so quickly. The rise in American naval power against a weakened Spanish enemy may also have contributed to the brevity of the war. It is also perhaps important to consider that none of these wars were terribly long when compared to other American wars. The Civil War is not a short war by any means, but remains shorter than Afghanistan, Iraq, Vietnam, and even the Revolutionary War. Because of this, if we consider the length of these wars from a macro-view, in that we combine the length of these wars together, then this particular regime has some of the shortest major wars in American history, which does help to confirm this hypothesis.

Our second hypothesis deals with conscription components within military regimes shaping American identity through shared sacrifice. The coercive regime demonstrates that

identity can at least in part be shaped by shared sacrifice through conscription. The Civil War had the first official American conscription regimes which correlated with regional or quasi-national identities. These were relatively weak conscription regimes, but much later once the United States became involved in World War I, American identity consolidated around shared sacrifice and military service, making all three strongly correlated with one another.

Yet, the third hypothesis is perhaps the most appropriate and visible within the coercive regime. This third hypothesis argues that American identity over time has been a State-led development, both by individual U.S. states and the Federal Government, associated with the development of specific military regimes. This regime served as the transition period from individual state-based identity to national identity with the intervening step of regional identity, manifesting itself around the Civil War. Creation of regional identity and American national identity was clearly the result of State-level interventions, whether through legislation or growing military power at the Federal level. Wars were a means of unifying the public under a common cause, and while volunteerism tended to dominate the Civil War, by World War I, public pressure for service meant the military draft came to symbolize a typified and common version of American national identity. The American State had created the environment in which national identity could be fostered, and the World War I draft manifested that identity in military form.

Concluding Remarks on the Coercive Regime

If the militia regime was the infancy of the American military, the coercive regime was its teenage years, filled with growing pains and figuring out who it wanted to be. This regime is defined by the growing American State and experimentation with what that state could or could

not do. It is the transition period from state militias to a federalized military, capable of conducting war beyond the borders of the United States. While early militias denoted a concept of universal military service, they were not effective military forces. To achieve some form of effectiveness, the Federal Government subsumed military service for national causes. States retained militias, but Federal military power grew through volunteerism and the military draft, which allowed it to reach out and directly impact the lives of its citizens in wartime. By the end of this regime, not only could the American State forcibly conscript its own citizens into military service, but it had the backing of the population. The Federal Government had taken a primary role in creating, sustaining, and using its war machine, something that ran counter to what the Founders intended. However, with the growing complexity of war both domestically and internationally, the evolution of American military power necessitated changes, and those changes usurped power from the states and invested it at the Federal level. By the end of the coercive regime, it was no longer a question whether the Federal Government could have a large military or whether it could force its citizens to go to war. It could, and it had the legal framework, associated precedents, and pressing crises to make it happen.

Along with growing State power over the military came radical changes to identity. As more individual Americans served together for national or quasi-national causes, common experiences bred common identity. A militiaman in the 1790s may never have met other militiamen outside of his own locality or state. His identity may have been more vested locally than nationally. However, by the 1910s, this was no longer the case. The American State had created a national identity and had forced its citizens to adopt that identity through service or through supporting the war cause. American identity was no longer a nebulous concept; it

existed, Americans had at least a common idea of what it was, and it became a tool of the State when needed.

Much like the coercive regime built onto the existing militia regime, the coercive regime was also a step towards an even larger military, more conscription, and a brand-new form of American identity, which hundreds of thousands of volunteers and draftees sacrificed themselves for at the State's direction.

Chapter Five

The Peacetime Draft, International Identity, and the Apex of Service

“A peacetime draft is the most un-American thing I know.”

--George Wald

The militia and coercive regimes were both transformative periods for American military service. Militias represented an ideal of service, nested at the state-level, while the coercive regime saw growth in Federal military power and the ability to compel service from citizens. However, during the coercive regime, conscription was limited in scope only to the times of crises in which the country found itself at war. The next regime we will discuss, the Peacetime Draft regime, was different in that the American State’s conscription bureaucracy initially implemented a draft with no war and maintained it in times of peace between wars. For the duration of the Peacetime Draft, the United States fought three different wars, but the existence and use of the draft was not predicated on any state of war. From 1940 to 1973, almost uninterrupted, the United States conscripted individual male citizens during wartime and peacetime into its military, applying themes about military service and identity from prior regimes to the greater part of American society. This had a major consequence of enlarging the size of the American military to a permanently high state in an effort to counterbalance against perceived threats abroad. This in turn fostered a new kind of American identity, an international identity, which encompasses the values that the United States represents to the rest of the world.

Many of these can be named off-hand because they are still within the popular American narratives of today, like democracy or freedom. At the time though, these values were a pivotal part of distinguishing sides in the Cold War, serving as a means of setting the United States apart from the Soviet Union. The Peacetime Draft regime serves the high-water marks of military service to the country and of constructing American identity. It established the permanent military footprint at the heart of the Federal Government while also using that military to defend the apogee of American values within the self-perceived form of international identity.

Table 5-1. Major Conflicts During the Peacetime Draft Regime¹⁴⁹

Conflict	War Type	Outcome	Length in Days	Total Served	Draftees Served	Total U.S. Deaths
World War II (1941-1945)	Existential/ Offensive	Win	1365	16,112,566	10,110,104	405,399
Korea (1950-1953)	Dispute/ Defensive	Draw	1128	5,720,000	1,529,539	36,574
Vietnam (1964-1973)	Dispute/ Defensive	Loss	3097	8,744,000	1,857,304	58,220

The Peacetime Draft regime was marked by three major conflicts, as noted in Table 5-1. The first of these was World War II, which serves as the height of patriotic service, duty, and embodying American identity. While not the deadliest conflict in American history in terms of casualties, it had the highest number of Americans serving in the military during any one conflict, including the highest number of draftees. The second of these conflicts is the Korean conflict, which had a high number of those who served, but a lower percentage of draftees out of

¹⁴⁹ David A. Blum and Nese F. DeBruyne, “American War and Military Operations Casualties: Lists and Statistics” (Congressional Research Service, July 29, 2020), 2; Selective Service System, “Induction Statistics,” accessed November 18, 2020, <https://www.sss.gov/history-and-records/induction-statistics/>.

the total served when compared to World War II. The final of these conflicts, Vietnam, was the longest and had an even lower percentage of draftees in terms of total served than either of the first two conflicts, but it was the most controversial since the use of the draft created public outcry against the conflict. Up until that point, the Vietnam conflict was the longest in American history, and despite the military's efforts, the war has been considered a loss because of the North Vietnamese invasion of the South two years after the war's official end.

When comparing all three conflicts, the only one which was existential and offensive war was World War II. The totalitarian threat from Germany, Italy, and Japan was perhaps the most substantial threat that the United States had faced since the Civil War. The other two conflicts were international disputes involving the U.S. military on the side of an allied partner. In the Korean War, the U.S. military fought alongside South Korea, while in Vietnam, it fought alongside South Vietnam. These disputes were different from the existential conflict in World War II because they were limited in scope to a particular region and had a mission of preserving a particular status quo within that region. Additionally, these two conflicts were oriented towards fighting communism and preserving American interests, both of which had become the primary motivator for U.S. interventions abroad at the time.¹⁵⁰ This new type of intervention, not just based on defending against existential threats to American territory, but now based on an ideological fight against an outside threat, fed into the development of a new kind of American international identity, which projected onto the world what the United States stood for and was willing to defend with its blood and treasure. Within this identity are common tropes about who Americans are, to include being guardians of freedom, defenders of democracy, and a dedication

¹⁵⁰ Harry S. Truman, "Address of the President to Congress, Recommending Assistance to Greece and Turkey," Harry S. Truman Library, accessed February 1, 2021, <https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/library/research-files/address-president-congress-recommending-assistance-greece-and-turkey?documentid=NA&pagenumber=1>.

to consumer capitalism, as well as encapsulating all of these within a paradigm of good versus evil, with the United States being in the former.

For this chapter, we will examine the Peacetime Draft regime and how it restructured the American military and notions around military service. This will focus on the 30-plus years when the draft was a principle means of military recruitment during times of war as well as how that system came to an end amidst public outcry and shifting political narratives. Additionally, we will look at how this particular military regime helped to build the United States into an international power, thus creating an international identity which the United States sought to defend. It also built upon elements of the militia and coercive regimes, but when it ended, it destroyed and morphed ideals around military service and American identity. As a consequence, this regime is key to the development of American power today because serves as the precipitating era for the current military regime in which the United States is in, the All-Volunteer Force, and so what took place during the Peacetime Draft regime will be instrumental to understanding our current military and associated identity paradigms.

The Peacetime Draft Regime

The Peacetime Draft regime is defined as the period between 1940 and 1973, where the United States continuously, except for one year in 1947-1948, maintained a conscription regime in times of war and peace in order to bulk up its own military forces in times of need.¹⁵¹ This regime built upon the militia and coercive regimes using the lessons learned from the failures of those regimes and acting upon what made those regimes successful. The Peacetime Draft used coercive State power, social buy-in, and ideals rooted in Americans being citizen-soldiers to

¹⁵¹ George Q. Flynn, *The Draft: 1940-1973* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 1, 105-107.

create American-centric positive narratives around conflict and war. These elements and these narratives were instrumental in fostering and supporting this new regime and birthed new reasons for Americans to fight abroad. With a new international identity to defend, the U.S. Government sought to use its military power to protect its interest and its allies abroad, marking a permanent shift in the American military footprint towards the exterior of the country to be able to maintain persistent international interventions abroad if need be, all while using the draft of citizens into the military to maintain that image both at home and abroad. The coercive regime made the American State's control over the national military structure unquestionable. The Peacetime Draft regime put that structure to work in a multitude of ways.

While this period was the pinnacle of American military service in terms of the number of those who served and social acceptance of the draft, it was not without its issues, and we should not look at it as a monolithic era of like-minded Americans doing their duty without question. In fact, this particular regime should be viewed as culminating towards the beginning, then slowly descending towards transition to the All-Volunteer Force at the end. The 30-plus years of the Peacetime Draft helped build American international dominance, but it also created one of the most controversial periods where the American public debated if forcing individual citizens to fight in wars, especially international wars over abstract ideas that did little to defend the home front, through mandatory military service was proper, if not moral. The collective will created during World War II had been spent by the time Vietnam generation had reached draft age, creating questions around whether a draft was necessary and eventually consigning it to the dustbin of history.

In this section, we will examine three distinct periods of the Peacetime Draft regime, first starting with World War II and how it shaped the Peacetime Draft through a perceived just

cause. We will then look to Korea and some of the political and cultural investments made by the greater American society in the 1950s to maintain the draft as an institution. Finally, we will look at Vietnam and how it tore at the core of the draft with a perceived unjust cause, effectively ending any State or social requirement to serve.

World War II, The Just Cause

After World War I, the draft drawdown reverted the American military back to having a smaller footprint, maintaining a relatively small active-duty force numbering on only the hundreds of thousands for both the Army and the Navy. The post-World War I military still had more personnel, having at least 100,000 more members than in the decades prior to the war, but overall, the number of military personnel remained limited.¹⁵² With no conflict, the American State saw no need to continue its use of the draft, and so military members during this intervening time between 1918 and 1940 were volunteers recruited for Federal service through enlistment, Service Academies, or other means. In this particular time of peace, the U.S. military maintained itself without a draft.

Yet, this changed in 1940 with growing tensions worldwide. In Europe, Germany had invaded Poland the year prior, and in June, Germany conquered France, leaving the United Kingdom practically alone in Europe against the Nazi threat. On the other side of the world, Japan had expanded its empire into mainland Asia, increasing its military and naval power. The United States, however, remained out of these conflicts, with the exception of providing

¹⁵² Department of Defense, "Selected Manpower Statistics," 1997, 50-51.

assistance to the United Kingdom and engaging in political quarrels with Japan.¹⁵³ Similar to the period prior to World War I, isolationism had been a predominant foreign policy, and the political will for war was not there. However, with these creeping threats abroad, Congress and President Roosevelt began to prepare for the eventuality of war.

In September 1940, with no war declaration or state of war existing between the United States and another country, Congress passed the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, establishing the first and only Peacetime Draft in American history. The act outlined that all males between the ages of 20 and 45 in the United States were required to register for the draft. Additionally, the act laid out provisions for implementation by creating local registration boards, where individuals were required to present themselves in person in order to be registered.¹⁵⁴ The Peacetime Draft used practically the same bureaucratic structure as the World War I draft, just without the impending crisis or push for war. Its implementation was a signal by American political leadership that war was possible and preparations needed to be made.

Even if Congress and the President perceived threats abroad, this did not mean that the American public accepted those threats as legitimate enough to warrant compelling military service. On the whole, the public did not embrace the Peacetime Draft upon its implementation. Many at first saw the forced military service at peacetime as a threat to an individual's right to anti-violence beliefs, particularly for conscientious objectors or pacifists. Groups formed against the draft and tried to influence Congress to oppose and nullify the conscription regime.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ U.S. Congress, "An Act to Promote the Defense of the United States," Pub. L. No. 77-11, 31 (1941); History.com Editors, "United States Freezes Japanese Assets," History, November 26, 2009, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/united-states-freezes-japanese-assets>.

¹⁵⁴ U.S. Congress. Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, 50 § 302-305 (1940).

¹⁵⁵ J. Garry Clifford and Samuel R. Spencer, *The First Peacetime Draft* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1986), 126-129.

Additionally, within a year of the law's passage and still with no war to fight, some draftees in the Army began to actively resist against serving by spreading word to family members and the press about their treatment in the Army. Congress was forced to make compromises by changing certain aspects of the draft, to include changing the length of service. Along with this, the public largely believed that draftees should not be sent abroad for military operations, in some sense negating their usefulness.¹⁵⁶ For the first fourteen months of the Peacetime Draft, its legitimacy remained unconvincing and unproven. Between September 1940 and December 1941, there was no social compulsion to serve because the perceived threat to the nation was not apparent, and with that, it became difficult for those drafted and their families to see a point to their service. In spite of this, the Peacetime Draft remained in place because the resistance to it had not grown beyond the control of the American State.¹⁵⁷

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 effectively eliminated any reservation that Americans had about the wars or resistance towards mandatory military service within the Peacetime Draft structure. The attack provided the United States with a rationale to enter the war, allowing Americans to paint themselves as the victims of an unprovoked attack, and as such, they would respond with force. This created a just cause narrative around the American fight because it was defensive against an enemy who had attacked it. This just cause is a central aspect to the U.S. military and its draft because it provides an impetus to act with haste. Within days, Congress expanded the fight to include both Germany and Italy as well. By painting the U.S. response as a just and noble cause, the United States could portray its war actions in a positive light, towards a greater goal of a more secure world. The Peacetime Draft

¹⁵⁶ Flynn, 48-52.

¹⁵⁷ Clifford and Spencer, *The First Peacetime Draft*, 229.

and the rest of the war effort became rather effective once the United States had this just cause. With cause in hand, the draft allowed the United States to mobilize for total war on two vastly different geographic fronts. In total, from 1941 to 1945, the United States drafted around 10 million men into the armed forces.¹⁵⁸ There were also a sizeable number of volunteers, but the vast majority of servicemembers were draftees. The draft filled the ranks, but the whole of American society shifted towards the war effort. American industry oriented itself towards wartime production, so not only were draftees and volunteers serving, but the general public working in factories or rationing supplies also provided a sense of unity and service towards the greater goal. The whole of the United States was united in the war effort and service was a commonality amongst all, no matter what position they were in, whether inside or outside of the military.

American success in the war reinforced the belief in the Peacetime Draft's effectiveness. By war's end, the United States, save Hawaii, was largely untouched by the war's direct effects, and its massive industrial power allowed the country to emerge from World War II as the primary industrial and banking power, in a prime position to rebuild the world. The American civilian population was largely untouched and avoided most other threats plaguing other countries at the time, like hunger or deprivation of resources. Additionally, a good-versus-evil paradigm associated with this particular conflict reinforced the just cause paradigm. Especially once the war was over, with the horrors seen in the Holocaust and the atrocities carried out by the Japanese in hindsight, American political and cultural portrayals of the U.S. role displayed the United States as on the side of good against a world filled with evil. Since conscription played a major role in the United States achieving victory on the side of good, the war's strong

¹⁵⁸ Selective Service System, "Induction Statistics."

association with massive military mobilization helped to demonstrate the novelty and usefulness of a military draft and a growing security structure against threats to the American homeland.

World War II set the standard for national mobilization for a patriotic war, and it belayed any question over the usefulness of a military draft, at least for a time. At war's end, the U.S. military quickly demobilized and millions of veterans returned home. Yet, what they returned home to was a vastly different United States, one that was elevated to a position of leadership on the global stage and one in which military power became a primary requirement for the new superpower to maintain its commitments. The fight against fascism had dissipated and, in its place, the United States found a new foe in the Soviet Union. The American State began to build anew a permanent national defense apparatus, passing the National Security Act of 1947, which fundamentally reshaped the military and intelligence communities, including creating a separate and independent Air Force.¹⁵⁹ At the same time, the Peacetime Draft was ended in 1947, only to be resurrected by President Truman in 1948 due to the increasing fears over Soviet aggression in Europe and elsewhere.¹⁶⁰ The Cold War became the justification to continue the Peacetime Draft, providing personnel for the country to maintain its international supremacy.¹⁶¹ It was essentially a new just cause, brought forth as a means of maintaining the American military and its position in the world. While at a much-reduced level, the Peacetime Draft became a mainstay of American life and social expectations. More importantly though, the American State had effectively consolidated control over all facets of the American military and national defense. With World War II, the American State had demonstrated the extent to which it could leverage

¹⁵⁹ U.S. Congress, "National Security Act of 1947," Pub. L. No. 235, 496 61 (1947).

¹⁶⁰ Flynn, 101-102.

¹⁶¹ Clifford and Spencer, *The First Peacetime Draft*, 229.

its military capabilities, and its new-found global status put it in a position to permanently leverage that ability on the world stage.

Korea, State Investment in Veterans, and Cultural Acceptance

This post-World War II Peacetime Draft period was not without challenges. If anything, the mix of State power compelling service along with social expectations, given the events leading up until that point, created in American society both an understood need for military service and a tension concerning the appropriateness making service mandatory. Suffice to say, the post-war Peacetime Draft was not necessarily a period of unity around the draft as a beneficial element to society, but rather a generational expectation given the new international position the United States found itself in. The imposition of this U.S. conscription regime at peacetime was more of a question about what had worked rather than answering any questions as to if it were appropriate for the given international conditions facing the nation. It was a tool of the American State, not the only tool, but one nonetheless that had been effective in the past. The late 1940s and 1950s tested the use of this tool, but at the same time, it was also a drastic period of solidification of Federal military power, which included a State expansion of veteran benefits and a growing push to gain cultural acceptance of the draft and military service.

The first real test of the draft after World War II was the Korean War when the United States supported South Korean and United Nations forces against an invading North Korean force. From 1950 to 1953, a total of 5.7 million Americans served during the conflict, of which the Selective Service drafted approximate 1.6 million.¹⁶² In comparison to the number of volunteers, the draftees were outnumbered more than two-to-one, meaning they only made up a

¹⁶² See Table 5-1.

smaller component of those who fought. With the Korean conflict being on a much smaller scale and localized to one specific peninsula, the need for World War II-levels of military personnel was simply not necessary, nor was it feasible. The draft overall was relatively successful with very few protests against it, and most who were drafted responded to the call to serve.¹⁶³ At the same time though, the American public was not very supportive of the war, especially given the stalemate situation from late 1950 onward and the firing of General Douglas MacArthur in 1951.¹⁶⁴ Because of President Truman's handling of the war, his approval rating towards the end of his term had dropped to 22 percent.¹⁶⁵ The public generally supported the draft, while not necessarily supporting the war effort or how it was fought. Perhaps one major reason for this is the lack of generational shift between World War II and the Korean War. With the end of World War II and the start of Korea less than five years apart, the memories and experiences of war were still fresh in the minds of most Americans. With that, the expectation of military service was also fresh, so the draft was less controversial. In addition, the Korean War was only three years long, with most of the fighting during the first year, so the conflict was relatively abbreviated, giving little time for a sizeable or formidable protest to form. No matter our interpretation, the public's willingness to accept the draft while pushing back against the war is remarkable here because it shows that support for the institution of the draft can be distinguished from the war that the draft is supporting, something that was not the case in Vietnam as we will see. The Korean War serves as the first example of the draft being used to increase military

¹⁶³ Flynn, 125-126.

¹⁶⁴ William Stueck, *The Korean War: An International History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 170.

¹⁶⁵ Jeffrey M. Jones, "Who Had the Lowest Gallup Presidential Job Approval Rating?" Gallup.com, December 26, 2019.

personnel as needed for regional and non-existential conflicts for the United States, and it was rather successful.

On a separate note, during this same period, the American State vastly increased its investment in veterans. Prior wars had seen pension systems enacted for veterans, but post-World War II, State investment in veterans was taken to a new level. With millions of servicemembers returning home from a global conflict, the American State collectively created programs beyond pensions for its former military personnel as way of valuing their national service. The Federal Government established the G.I. Bill, a program designed to allow servicemembers to go to college through government-paid benefits, to repay the effort that servicemembers had put forward during the war. Original estimates were that the G.I. Bill would be used by about 10 to 20 percent of the returning veterans, but in reality, approximately 50 percent ended up using the program.¹⁶⁶ The G.I. Bill was the first modern program after World War II to cater exclusively towards veterans, a way of rewarding service from a grateful nation, and it was not the last veterans-centric program.

The creation of such a program is indicative of a shift in societal expectations towards veterans. As veterans return home, social expectations required the State to take care of the veteran to return the favor. In the wars before 1941, pensions in the form of money received at a certain age or time were the primary means of meeting this social expectation. The G.I. Bill went beyond that, instead catering to veterans' educational needs, and doing so on a massive scale. With some 16 million serving during World War II, a large number of them draftees, and just about half of those who served used the G.I. Bill upon their return, this program was a colossal infusion of money on the domestic front towards veterans. The conscription of

¹⁶⁶ Mettler, *Soldiers to Citizens*, 22-23.

American citizens drove up the number of people who were eligible for this program. In that sense, the Peacetime Draft not only invested in American citizens for their warfighting capabilities, but also for their own personal development at war's end, which added to the nation's political and economic development as well. Military service, thus, became not just about adventures abroad or fighting wars, but also a conduit for the State-assisted investing in oneself. This is an important change because it modifies the relationship between the veteran and the State. It is no longer simply about required service from the individual to achieve a certain State goal in wartime, but the State also has a responsibility to take care of that individual. This marked the beginning of a shift in what service entailed and how it was rewarded. The relationship between State and soldier became more symbiotic rather than one-directional, a trend which continues even to this day.

The Peacetime Draft also had a cultural aspect to it as well. With American men having to register and serve if called and the shadow of World War II and Korea looming over American society, military service was integrated into cultural elements which reinforced service expectations. Perhaps one of the most prominent examples of the intersecting military service with culture was when Elvis Presley was drafted into the U.S. Army in the late 1950s. Elvis was already a musical star in his own right before being drafted, but the local draft board where he lived drafted him in 1957, a service that he did not avoid because of his stardom and willfully did his duty from 1958 to 1960.¹⁶⁷ Elvis was not assigned to any difficult duties nor did he serve in an actual combat zone, given that the United States was not actively engaged in a combat during his time in service, but his presence was a boon for the military and the maintenance of the Peacetime Draft. In 1960 after his military career had ended, Elvis starred in the film *G. I. Blues*,

¹⁶⁷ Brian McAllister Linn, *Elvis's Army: Cold War GIs and the Atomic Battlefield* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 1.

“a faux-autobiographical movie about his army career.”¹⁶⁸ The movie was as a pop culture reference for this time period about Elvis’s service as well as a Hollywood commercial for military service and the draft. Elvis’s service was not necessary; at no point was he the pivotal soldier in a battle or anything of that sort. Instead, his military service functioned more as a symbol of the era rather than the actual need of his personal military service. It indicated that no one, not even a superstar like Elvis, was above serving in the Peacetime Draft, if and when called. Such a cultural reinforcement of the draft and military service is emblematic of the centrality of this sort of social expectation at that particular time.

From the late 1940s through the early 1960s, this was a period of nesting the Peacetime Draft and military service as a part of the American experience, but what is unique about this period is that war was not the only element reinforcing the expectation of service. The draft augmented the number of military personnel during the Korean War, but the confluence of other events and actions during the time period allowed for the draft to endure. Massive State investment in veterans through the G.I. Bill showed that war and the draft could also create incentive for individual self-improvement. Cultural reinforcements, like drafting Elvis or the film *G.I. Blues* helped foster the social expectations around military service. On top of this, the generational shift away from the World War II generation had not fully occurred, so with the war fresh in people’s minds, so too were military service expectations still prominent. For the time being, the Peacetime Draft continued to be effective part of American society.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 3.

Vietnam, The Unjust Cause

The Peacetime Draft regime began its decline in the 1960s, stoked by the controversies surrounding the Vietnam War. Whereas World War II cemented the ideal of military service in American minds through a perceived just cause, Vietnam broke that service expectation with a commensurate unjust cause. This particular war marked the end of 33 years of compulsory military service and created an increasing uncertainty about the U.S. position in the world. It raised questions around if forcing individuals to fight in a supposed unjust war was appropriate, and what resulted from Vietnam was a simple answer: no. Of note, the war itself was only one of the contributing factors to the social discord at the time as the 1960s was a period of social angst around Civil Rights and other domestic social issues. Vietnam was a contributing factor to exacerbating these social and political perturbations of the time, but its close linkage to the draft caused the draft to be a primary target for those protesting the war itself.

Despite the war's controversial nature and wide-ranging ramifications, the Vietnam-era draft was not very different from prior drafts. It was still built on the same Selective Service structure and bureaucracy as prior war periods, but the number of draftees was more limited than prior periods. Only 1.85 million were drafted for the duration of the conflict, a small figure when compared to the over 10 million Americans were drafted during the World War II. The numbers of Vietnam draftees peaked from 1966 to 1969 when total draftees averaged about 300,000 a year, which once again was a relatively minor number in proportion to the overall number of servicemembers.¹⁶⁹ Additionally, of the approximately 58,000 U.S. servicemembers in Vietnam, only about 17,700 of those killed were drafted from the Selective Service, the rest of those killed being volunteers.¹⁷⁰ Of all Vietnam-era servicemembers, draftees only represented

¹⁶⁹ Selective Service System, "Induction Statistics."

about 21 percent of total military personnel, a much smaller percentage than either World War II or Korea.¹⁷¹

The issue surrounding the Vietnam War, though, was not facts or data about the number of draftees, but rather how American society felt about the war and, by proxy, the draft. Perceptions about the conflict were quite different from Korea or World War II. First, this was not a war of existential consequence for the United States. If Vietnam was lost, the United States was not going to disappear, thus lessening the consequences of losing. Additionally, it became more unclear over time why the United States was even engaged in conflict in Vietnam. While the initial justification was to prevent communism from spreading throughout Southeast Asia, as time went on, the war became seen more as an occupation and success became less apparent, especially after the Tet Offensive. American citizens began to question the war in Vietnam and its usefulness given its unclear goals and execution.¹⁷²

Perhaps the most detrimental perception of this conflict was the alleged inequality in the draft. The Selective Service seemed to pick certain, less privileged individuals while allowing others not to serve. The deferment process provided an opportunity to postpone military service to a later time or even avoid military service altogether if one were able to get enough deferments and reach a certain age. There were a number of different deferments available, which included job deferments, ministry deferments, among others. Doctors could also medically disqualify individuals for military service if there was something that could negate

¹⁷⁰ National Archives, "Vietnam War U.S. Military Fatal Casualty Statistics," January 2018, <https://www.archives.gov/research/military/vietnam-war/casualty-statistics>.

¹⁷¹ See Table 5-1.

¹⁷² Beth Bailey, *America's Army: Making the All-Volunteer Force* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2009), 1-3.

their ability to serve as well.¹⁷³ Additionally, if an individual chose specific kinds of military service, he could avoid Vietnam altogether. The National Guard, in spite of being an integrated military service within the national military framework capable of being federalized, was often exempted from having to go to Vietnam to serve. Given the Cold War mentalities of the time and the concerns over a conflict with the Soviet Union, homeland defense remained essential, and thus, the National Guard was the main component of the military to remain stateside. While some guardsmen did end up in Vietnam, the vast majority were able to remain stateside without having to go to Vietnam, thereby fulfilling their service obligations without having to defy any draft orders.¹⁷⁴

The most prominent deferment, however, was the college deferment, which allowed males who were going to college to avoid military service temporarily in order to complete education. In one study on the matter, estimates were the college attendance for the male cohorts between 1965 and 1970 saw around a five-percentage point increase in college attendance for males, a jump that tended to subside after the draft was over.¹⁷⁵ Colleges also during this time period remained a center of protest against both the draft and the war. These anti-war, anti-draft protests culminated with the 1970 shooting at Kent State where National Guardsmen opened fire on a protest crowd, killing four.¹⁷⁶ College deferments pushed individuals who did not want to

¹⁷³ Arlo Tatum, ed., *Handbook for Conscientious Objectors* (Philadelphia, PA: PDQ Printing Company, 1970), 15-17, 29-30.

¹⁷⁴ NPR, "International Guard: How the Vietnam War Changed Guard Service," April 25, 2015, <https://www.npr.org/2015/04/25/402045128/international-guard-how-the-vietnam-war-changed-guard-service>.

¹⁷⁵ David Card and Thomas Lemieux, "Going to College to Avoid the Draft: The Unintended Legacy of the Vietnam War," *American Economic Review* 91, no. 2 (May 2001): 97, 101.

¹⁷⁶ Lyle Denniston, "The Campus and the Vietnam War: Protest and Tragedy," National Constitution Center, September 26, 2017, <https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/the-campus-and-the-vietnam-war-protest-and-tragedy>.

be drafted into college, where the environment was largely anti-war and anti-draft, thus reinforcing even more their desire to not go to war.

Finally, others chose to avoid the draft by simply defying it. An estimated 100,000 fled the United States to avoid having to serve in the draft. By fleeing the country, they were able to escape the State-compulsion component, although socially, these individuals were ostracized.¹⁷⁷ Additionally, those who did not flee the country but still refused to serve could expect to serve in prison. In one guidebook for conscientious objectors published in 1970, it described what the expectations were for prison life should the objector's request to not serve be denied.¹⁷⁸ Draftees had to be prepared to face legal consequences if they chose not to serve and did not have a proper justification.

Resistance to the Peacetime Draft grew in the years prior to the war's end. In 1968, Richard Nixon ran his presidential campaign in part on the promise to eliminate the draft and transition to an All-Volunteer Force. This act was both to politically-motivated to help garner support for election, but also it harnessed the political and social movements against the war.¹⁷⁹ Nixon was elected, continuing the war for some time along with the draft, but after his reelection in 1972, he made good on his promise. With Paris Peace Accords in January 1973, the war officially ended, and the United States withdrew from South Vietnam. With no war and no need for draftees, the Peacetime Draft officially came to an end on June 30, 1973 when the last man was drafted into the U.S. military.¹⁸⁰ On July 1, the All-Volunteer Force was born.

¹⁷⁷ Natasha Frost, "When President Carter Pardoned Draft Dodgers, Only Half Came Back," History, March 21, 2019, <https://www.history.com/news/carter-draft-dodger-pardon-half-returned>.

¹⁷⁸ Tatum, *Handbook for Conscientious Objectors*, 74-86.

¹⁷⁹ Beth Bailey, *America's Army*, 1-3.

The view of Vietnam and the draft both as unjust helped to end the war, but the peace agreement did not last. Within two years of the Paris Accords, the North Vietnamese broke the treaty and overran South Vietnam with no active U.S. resistance, handing the U.S. its first major war defeat, at least according to the popular narrative. As stated before, perception is key when discussing the Vietnam War, and the fall of South Vietnam after the war's official end tainted the entire conflict as a loss. The Peacetime Draft was the casualty of an unpopular war and the political and social machinations of the time, but it did not help that, in retrospect, it was associated with the first major loss for the U.S. military. The Vietnam era draft was not different from prior drafts. As shown above, most military personnel were not draftees, but how the public perceived the draft and its use was quite different than prior drafts. One could connect this once again to a generational shift. Whereas Korea was only a few years after World War II and many servicemembers served in both wars, Vietnam had a whole new generation of soldiers, draftees, and family members who had not necessarily lived through World War II or at least did not have the war as vividly in their memories as the older generations. Whatever the explanation, Vietnam ended any sort of mandatory military service in the United States. Vietnam was the end of a long State-building enterprise of compelling Americans to serve their country when asked. From 1973 onward, requiring military service from citizens was no longer in the political cards. The political class, the general public, and the American State generally agreed that the military should not be compulsory, or at the very least, requiring compulsory service was not politically feasible.

With the Peacetime Draft officially ending in 1973, so too ended the individual expectation of military service, and thus, service became exclusively a choice by those who

¹⁸⁰ New York Times, "Last Draftee Glad He's Out," May 31, 1982, <https://www.nytimes.com/1982/05/31/nyregion/last-draftee-glad-he-s-out.html>.

volunteered. The Peacetime Draft regime marks the high point and low point of military service in the United States, but its end also changed the relationship between the public and the State. No longer could the State effectively reach out to its citizens and compel service in times of war. The personal connection that people could viscerally feel to the wars that the State was conducting in their name was dismantled. If we consider the prior regimes as well, this is the first real retrenchment in State power growth, at least in terms of the State and its citizens. Militias and drafts compelled some form of service, but after 1973, this was no longer needed. However, there is a divergence that occurs here. Less power to force military service did not correlate to a decline in military power at the hands of the American State. State military power grew with the draft, but it did not decline with the draft's end. If social cohesion around a common just cause created a permanent draft, social discord around an unjust cause destroyed it, but not without leaving Federal power over the military in place to develop in a much different way under an All-Volunteer Force.

The Apogee of Military Service and Identity

The Peacetime Draft of 1940 to 1973 serves as the high-water mark of military service in the United States. The confluence of world events like World War II and the onset of the Cold War forced the United States to respond much differently than prior international conflicts that it had been in. The nation instead chose to integrate itself within the international structure, using its military strength as a guarantor of a new international order. The U.S. position as a world power created an international identity with interests across the globe that needed to be protected. This was novel in the American experience up until this point. While there had been prior international conflicts and skirmishes, the American State had never nested itself in the

international world politically, save for trade agreements. American policy changed as a result, and the American State reshaped the internationally-oriented parts of its bureaucracy to meet the new challenges. Americans now identified themselves within the international order, mostly as the headline actor amongst a theater of supporting and antagonist characters. With this international identity came a need for military personnel, not just in times of war, but in times of peace in order to maintain a bulwark against the Soviet Union and other perceived American enemies. The Peacetime Draft served as at least one way of intersecting American international identity, military service to the country, and State power into one organization, building onto this identity and spreading the cost of this international integration onto the American public.

In this particular section, we will examine how American international identity was constructed as well as how that shaped the American experience during the Peacetime Draft regime. Military service played a critical role in the establishment of this identity during World War II and its maintenance in the post-war period. By looking at some particular elements within American international identity, we will also be able to ascertain why this identity along with the Peacetime Draft fell apart. On top of this, we will also examine the veteran as an element of identity. With more veterans produced during this 30-plus year period than any other, we will see there is something inherent that Americans retain from their relationship to their own servicemembers that is critical to American identity. One final note to consider, as with our examination of the Peacetime Draft regime, we should not look at the American form of international identity as a monolith, but rather as an evolving paradigm that is consistently shifting with new political actors and events shaping it, but with common trends and themes throughout. International identity as we discuss it rests upon the identities that came before it, and its construction is not limited to one period. However, the world events during this

particular regime elevated international identity to a status not seen before in American political development.

Pax Americana and the International Identity

The catalyst for catapulting American international identity to the forefront of Americans minds was World War II. The war is the cornerstone event for shaping American policy after 1945. In 1918 at the conclusion of World War I, the United States retreated from the international community and once again became mostly disinterested from what happened elsewhere, save for those events that affected American interests. World War I had solidified American national identity around a common cause, but American life continued as usual. Nationalism was a way of bonding people together and motivating them, but the nation was not necessarily central to one's identity on any given day. Americans collectively had forgone any responsibility for what happened abroad as it did not fundamentally affect them, at least as they perceived it. The attack on Pearl Harbor changed this, and the United States no longer ignored what was going on internationally. Upon the war's completion, the United States was able to use its military and economic might to rewire to the world in its own image, being that it was one nation that was relatively untouched by the ravages of war. The war marks a turning point in how Americans viewed themselves and their position in the world, and that view was vastly different from more self-centric views after World War I. As with many things, success can breed confirmation, and with American grit succeeding in ending in the war, American international identity grew out of the success of the war through a number of different narratives.

The first narrative of this identity to consider the unique position that the United States, that of an emerging superpower. The war brought the economic capacity of the nation to the international stage, pumping billions of dollars into the war and rebuilding efforts. Most nations

that were international powers prior to the war had been devastated and exhausted by war's end. Most of Europe and Asia had been ravaged by war. Yet, the American economy emerged practically untouched and at a maximum capacity. In an effort to keep the American economy going, industries transitioned from wartime building to an export-based economy, allowing trade to develop worldwide mostly on American terms. This engrained capitalism at the heart of the American identity, but that was not unique to this period. If anything, capitalism has been part of American economics for practically all of the country's existence, but what was notably distinct after the war is that American-style capitalism became a philosophical and economic commodity for export, and with much of the world in ruin, it became hard for other countries to resist. On top of this, economic interests often work together with the military. The military is used to preserve freedom of movement for goods and maintain stability for economies to grow. While this sort of thinking may not have been at the forefront of servicemembers' minds at the time, that they were simply protecting economic interests, preserving American stability likely was along with preserving American economic dominance in the face of competing philosophies that threatened the American-dominant world order, such as communism.

Secondly, a narrative connected with preserving economic freedom and development, the United States saw itself during and after the war as preserving democracy for the world, which was. As an example, prior to U.S. entry into the war, President Roosevelt described the United States the "arsenal of democracy" as the Lend-Lease program allowed for U.S. arms to ship overseas to American allies.¹⁸¹ During the war, the U.S. role at defending democracy was much more active, directly engaging and fighting non-democratic states that threatened the safety and well-being of the United States and its allies. Fighting totalitarian states like Germany and Japan

¹⁸¹ Franklin Roosevelt, "'Arsenal of Democracy' Speech," Mount Holyoke, accessed February 3, 2021.

made this sort of dichotomy much easier to establish for both the American State and the public, especially as democracies fell across Europe and elsewhere. Putting the United States in the role as preserving democracy, as the defender of peoples and their right to self-governance, made the war effort and the sacrifices associated with it much more tolerable and acceptable. Not only that, but after the war, this narrative persisted. In the face of the perceived Soviet threat, the United States remained the arsenal of democracy and the protector state for democratic regimes against communism. In short, this is a compelling narrative at the heart of American identity because it fosters once again that just cause that the American public is dedicated to and is willing to sacrifice for.

One final narrative to consider which overlaps with the other two narratives is what we could term as the good-versus-evil paradigm. World War II was not just unique in the scale and types of warfare exercised during the conflict, but also the atrocities that both the Germans and the Japanese committed against local populations and groups. The Holocaust is a prime example of this, with the German government attempting the wholesale extermination of the Jewish people, among other minority groups. The Japanese were no better with many of their atrocities conducted throughout China and elsewhere. With the United States being on the victorious side, liberating prisoners from concentration and work camps all while exposing the greater atrocities that occurred and holding those who committed said atrocities accountable, the natural position for Americans was to accept that the U.S. effort was one not just of national defense, but also of beneficence to humanity. Seeing these atrocities in hindsight and how shocking they were reinforced narratives that the United States had defeated a greater evil. This good-versus-evil paradigm fits into nationalist narratives as well since these narratives usually pit the nation as a natural good versus those outside as inherently bad or evil. The American experience during the

war is a clear example of this. The U.S. role in World War II confirmed narratives of U.S. goodness, and the central component to what made the United States successful was U.S. military power, including the draft.

As we can see, American international identity fused a number of different narratives together, and the war served as the pressure cooker which fused these narratives together into a common American identity. With war being the event that forges an identity like this, the Peacetime Draft was an incubator for imposing these sorts of narratives upon a public. It forged a common American experience, reinforcing these narratives and further ingraining this identity into American citizens. We can still see the narratives and their associated elements in political discourse to this day.

Yet, the Vietnam War was the moment where these narratives were challenged, and this was linked very strongly to the draft. International conflict for nebulous ideals or concepts like freedom, democracy, or the preservation of an economic system are generally acceptable to the public when the threat to each of those is tangible, but much less so when the threat is elusive or remote. When the public perceives the threat, the public can more willingly accept State action to negate the threat, as was the case in World War II when the public accepted the military draft. The Vietnam War, however, was not an example of this, and in fact, it ran contrary. The prolongment of the war exposed many of the fissures within these obscure elements of American international identity and caused the public in general to question whether forcing people to put their lives on the line against their own will was proper in the pursuance of an ideal that, if the war was lost, would not be affected with the grand scheme. The threat to democracy, particularly American democracy, if Vietnam was lost was not obvious, nor was the threat to the American economy or freedoms. This particular war exposed the American public to a war that

was unnecessary for the preservation of those greater American ideals, and the draft forced the American public to face the reality of that war head on. After Vietnam and the end of the draft, this real-world connection to American conflict no longer existed in its dispersed form, but the ideals lived on, leaving the State with something to fight for internationally, but less of a chance of being checked by the public if any overreach.

The Veteran

Another element of study to consider within American international identity is the role played by the veteran. When we use the term veteran, we are encompassing all of those who have served or are serving in the military. The term veteran is rather fluid in who is considered one and who is not, but for our purposes, it is anyone who has served. Arguably, the veteran is the central figure in this form of identity because he or she has experience in the conflicts that the American State embarks on. The veteran also plays a primary role in fostering American identity and a sense of pride in what the nation is. During the Peacetime Draft regime, with American politics oriented towards the exterior of the country and new interests abroad to defend, the American veteran became the actor upholding this identity as well as the entity deserving the most reverence and respect. When one considers the narratives above within American international identity, they focus on a nexus of defending something considered precious. Freedom, liberty, the ability to choose one's economic future, and even the defense of good all add to a greater developing patriotic account fostering an image of an American ideal, and the manifestation of that ideal is the veteran. The veteran represents something moral and upright. What sets this period apart from other periods is the relative strength of the personal connection between the veteran and the American public, fostered by the State's drafting of

servicemembers. The Peacetime Regime created more American veterans in terms of sheer numbers than at any point in American history. The byproduct of this was a renewed reverence given to American veterans because so many more people had fought for the country and the preservation of those ideals. While one cannot say that respecting veterans began at this moment in time, it is fair to say that this reverence accelerated as more Americans became veterans from wars abroad.

With a just cause like World War II, the veteran became that representation of goodness and selfless service. It was easier in that case to rally around servicemembers during the conflict because supporting them was instrumental in ensuring that the nation succeeded. Servicemembers were a point of pride, so the natural progression after the war was to repay the veteran by creating veterans' programs, like the aforementioned G.I. Bill, as a compensatory measure. The veteran became a patriotic symbol during this time, and respecting the veteran became a civic duty and a responsibility of both the State and the public alike. There were other consequences to this though as this likely took social coercion to a new higher level. If the veteran is wholesome and good, then it makes sense for society to make more veterans. By using the military as a means of providing wholesome growth for individuals, the outcome is that American society becomes better overall. This provides justification for maintaining the Peacetime Draft, but it increases the dangers associated with war. If the draft provides an endless supply of personnel for war, then this may make society more militaristic. Either way, making more veterans can have both a positive and deleterious effect.

The veteran as a symbol obviously connects to war, but it also connects to patriotic sentiment within the public. If veterans are revered, it is because they idealize a particular theme or narrative running through the American spirit, and those themes we could encompass within

patriotism. This becomes almost a triangular relationship at this time. Patriotism is connected to war and the veteran, and all three interact within one another to foster an American archetype. This is by far not a perfect model, but it can clue us in on what was occurring with the growing American international identity at the time. The veteran is the representative of this idea, embodying a nebulous, but willingly-accepted patriotism, and he is willing to give his life in war for the American cause. This model works during World War II as a means of sustaining public support for the war effort. American society in all its aspects had to come together in order to support the troops abroad. In this sense, patriotism was not just supporting the war, but also supporting the fighter of the war.

This veteran-centric model had issues, which Vietnam brought to the forefront and the Peacetime Draft helped accelerate. If the war was connected to the servicemember, then being a servicemember made one supportive of the war. With Vietnam being a largely unpopular conflict, then the image of the veteran was also tarnished as a result of its association. Forcing individuals to serve in an otherwise unpopular and unjust conflict forced the nation to confront the veteran ideal and if it should truly be forced upon the public, to which the answer was no. This particular moment in time was one of high civil strife over the war, but in context, this period did not completely destroy the veteran's connection to patriotism and American identity. The veteran connection created in the post-World War II era and reinforced by the Peacetime Draft remained, albeit in a subdued state, but what this period did harm was the personal connection that Americans had to war. Veterans did not have to be family members or friends, and going forward, entire families could become entirely disconnected from American war.

This divergence is particularly important here. If World War II showed us that patriotism was to support the war and the warfighter, and the popular urge during Vietnam was to do the

opposite, to resist the war and the warfighter simultaneous, then we see that the patriotic sentiment has an ability to diverge, that the public, if given the opportunity, can distinguish support for the war and support for the soldier, similar to what we saw in the Korean conflict. This ability to diverge these two kinds of support is an important distinction that will come into play in the next chapter, but the construction of the veteran as a key role player in American identity is rooted in this Peacetime Draft regime and the proliferation in the number of veterans with American society. Just like with the ideals that are central to American international identity, the supplanting of the draft does little to change this reverence and respect for veterans. This aspect of American identity rooted in the veteran will become more apparent in the All-Volunteer Force regime.

An Analysis of the Hypotheses for the Peacetime Draft Regime

The Peacetime Draft regime serves as the third period of analysis for our hypotheses, and it is the critical period of military service because it contains the apogee and the destruction of mandatory military service in the United States. It fused and perfected many of the elements from the militia and coercive regimes, only to see its demise in the face of social discord. Of the four hypotheses, the Peacetime Draft regime can help us to explain at least parts of all four.

The first hypothesis, concerning military regimes with diffused costs and compulsory service required from the public reducing the length of American wars, is confirmed by the Peacetime Draft, with some caveats. Unlike prior regimes, this was the sole regime where compulsory military service was characteristic of the entire period. Thus, the cost of military service was diffused throughout the public for the most part. In looking at World War II and Korea, the length of these wars remained abbreviated at less than four years for both.

Mobilizations and the costs that these wars had on the greater American population through the draft kept these wars short. Vietnam, however, was a longer war at just about nine years, over double the length of the other two major conflicts of this period, and it effectively dismantled any possibility of conscription in the future. This can be looked at as contradicting this hypothesis, but it actually helps to confirm it. The extended length of the war exposed the lack of clear and concise watermarks for victory. Without decisive engagement or a clear objective, the U.S. presence in Vietnam served no other purpose than just to be present and preserve a status quo. This forced draftees and their families to consider whether the war was worth the effort, thus creating the social discord. By forcing individuals to serve in the military, the American State was eventually going to have to reckon with the objectives of the war if the war was not concluded in a timely manner, which that reckoning did occur. Thus, even though the Vietnam War effectively abolished conscription and sewed social discord, the draft worked at shortening the conflict because it forced the American public to face the war with their own personal connections.

The second hypothesis is confirmed as well since the Peacetime Draft regime shaped American identity through shared sacrifice, and it did so in a number of both positive and negative ways. With the draft's close association with World War II and the wartime economy, the shared sacrifice fostered an ideal of American identity as something good and that the nation was a defender of democracy and free-market capitalism in the years after the war. This moment in the regime probably did more to shape American identity around a common nexus, international or otherwise, than any previous regime. With that though, the draft was used during Vietnam, a war that was intended at upholding this view on American international identity as the defender of democracy and freedom, but the civil strife caused by the war and the

draft created a reckoning for Americans and their position in the world. After Vietnam, Americans would not be required to serve in the military to defend American identity or its ideals. The State-based compulsion mechanism was gone, and that personal connection to war was gone with it.

The Peacetime Draft regime does lend some credibility to the third hypothesis, which argues that American identity over time has been a State-led development, both by individual U.S. states and the Federal Government, associated with the development of specific military regimes. The era of the Peacetime Draft was a moment where political demands necessitated a new form of American identity to broadcast to the world, and this was a State-led project. The Federal Government fostered this identity by using the general unity after World War II to create political narratives around what the United States stood for as well as the defense of its interests. The State leveraged its power over people to compel military service throughout this period, and other leverage measures were implemented to keep the regime in place, to include higher spending on veteran programs as well as using Elvis as a cultural ambassador for the Army. Even with the disestablishment of the draft at the conclusion of Vietnam, the State still remained the crucial actor in fostering American international identity.

Finally, the fourth hypothesis, concerning the disestablishment of conscripted military service creating a more unstable American identity, reinforced by high levels of patriotism, while not fully answered by this particular regime, does have some more clarity because the ending of the Peacetime Draft shows some trepidation in this international form of American identity. With the American public facing the U.S. conflict in Vietnam in terms of seeing the actions taken on the ground on television, the perceived lack of purpose or goal, and the personal cost through being forced to send loved ones abroad, the ideals of the United States being a

defender of freedom or democracy came into question. The American public had to openly debate how much they were willing to sacrifice in the pursuit of an imperial conflict in a faraway country. One cannot fully say here that the disestablishment of the draft caused questions around American identity because it was clear that those questions were occurring before the draft's end, one can say that the draft was a casualty of these questions around American identity because the draft forced Americans to face the resulting wars with their own flesh and blood. In World War II, this worked to establish American dominance and build a new international identity, but by Vietnam, the American public was less inclined to self-sacrifice, especially when faced with an unclear or ill-defined conflict.

Concluding Remarks on the Peacetime Draft Regime

The Peacetime Draft regime was unique in American history because the American State used the lessons learned from prior military regimes and broadly implemented them across the whole of the American public. The Peacetime Draft was the pinnacle of military service in the United States with more people serving in them military during this time than at any time prior. The maintenance of the U.S. position in the world necessitated a stronger military, and thus the American State set up a permanent military structure funded by money and manned with volunteers and draftees. Sustaining such a military structure was necessary to protect American interests abroad, but it also fostered an American international identity based on general concepts of freedom and democracy. Out of this regime rose a portrayal of the American servicemember as the defender of what is good and wholesome, and with it, most American citizens had at least a personal connection to servicemembers, either through family members who were veterans or through serving in the military themselves.

Vietnam challenged this archetype with servicemembers no longer seen as wholesome and instead as imperialist troops for an unjust war. The draft forced the American public to view its own connection to this, and generally, the war was not a popular effort, not even close to the extent that World War II had been. Vietnam ended an era of commonality around military service, a period of general public connection to the military that protects it. Vietnam ruptured that connection, leading to the creation of the All-Volunteer Force and changing how Americans relate to their military.

Overall, we can look at the Peacetime Draft as the zenith of the State-led construction of military service and American identity. The State managed to implement a permanent draft structure and used it three times for three different conflicts. Keeping that structure in place for as long as it did was a monumental feat unto itself. The State also built an American identity to broadcast to the world and fostered that through the draft and within the public. There were no higher forms of military service or identity to be achieved beyond this. With no more draft after 1973, military service entered a new stage of development, unconcerned by the political considerations of the masses. What resulted was unchallengeable State military power and an unmoored American identity, ripe for exploit.

Chapter Six

The All-Volunteer Force and Retrospective Identity

“Freedom costs a buck o’ five.”

--Song from the film *Team America, World Police*

The end the military draft inaugurated a new era of military composition, that of the All-Volunteer Force, or AVF. The AVF marked a finality in terms of compulsory service in the American military. No longer would American citizens be forced to serve in the military at any level, Federal or state. Instead, the entirety of the military transitioned to a force only composed of volunteers. This meant that all soldiers, sailors, airmen, or marines, whether on active duty or in the Reserve or National Guard, chose to serve on their own accord. With the launch of the AVF, all compulsory military service laws from the Militia Acts up until that point were no longer in effect. The only vestigial element of the draft era that remained, and still does to this day, is a registration requirement for the Selective Service where all males 18 and older in the United States are obliged to enroll in the event that there is a future draft.¹⁸² Yet even with this, there has been little to no chance of any repercussions for failing to register. Even though there

¹⁸² Selective Service System, “Selective Service System,” accessed March 4, 2021, <https://www.sss.gov/>.

are still prison and compensatory penalties for not enrolling, no one has been prosecuted for failing to register since 1986.¹⁸³

In short, there is no real compulsory element for military service during the current AVF regime. Neither the Federal Government nor do any states require service. This stands in stark contrast to the prior regimes discussed because it is a retrenchment from the responsibilities of individual Americans to serve in the defense of their own country. Even during the militia regime, the expectation of service still existed, and it only grew stronger with the growth of the American State and its power over military affairs. This is no more, and it has had a transformative effect on American military power and identity, all of which we will explore in this chapter.

First, we should consider the major conflicts of the AVF regime, listed in Table 6-1, of which there were three. The first of these was the Persian Gulf War, which the first decisive victory for the AVF in a major land war since the end Vietnam. Over two million served during that war with a total number of deaths only numbering in the hundreds. The other two conflicts, Afghanistan and Iraq, began after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. These conflicts overlapped for about eight years and resulted in just under 7,000 American military deaths total. The number of those who served in each is difficult to ascertain simply because many of the servicemembers who served in Afghanistan also served in Iraq, and vice versa. These conflicts are linked in the time period and geopolitical landscape in which they occurred, and so the total servicemembers for both conflicts has been combined. The part that is of particular note in all three conflicts is that there were no draftees or militias. No one was forced to serve who did not willingly volunteer to serve in the military.

¹⁸³ Kristy N. Kamarck, “The Selective Service System and Draft Registration: Issues for Congress” (Congressional Research Service, April 11, 2016), 17-18.

Table 6-1. Major Conflicts During the AVF Regime¹⁸⁴

Conflict	War Type	Outcome	Length in Days	Total Served	Draftees Served	Total U.S. Deaths
Persian Gulf (1991)	Dispute/ Offensive	Win	210	2,225,000	0	383
Afghanistan (2001-?)	Dispute/ Defensive	Undecided	7000+	2,770,000+	0	2,352
Iraq (2003-2011)	Dispute/ Defensive	Undecided	3195		0	4,418

There were other minor conflicts during this period as well, and they will not be ignored or discounted because of their size relative to these major conflicts. Our analysis of the AVF focuses on the three major conflicts, but the minor conflicts contribute to many of the same arguments, that American war has proliferated and the American State's war footing is permanently engaged in the world. These conflicts include interventions in Grenada, Panama, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, Kosovo, Liberia, Libya, and Yemen, just to name a few. While they may not be central to the analysis here, they do color the argument with more cases confirming the largess of American military power in the world, particularly during the AVF regime.

The fact that these conflicts have been fought with volunteers is consequential for modern American society because it changes the relationship and the dynamics with how

¹⁸⁴ Since Afghanistan is still ongoing, some of the exact numbers are difficult to find. As a result, these numbers are from an amalgamation of sources and are accurate only through December 2020. Since Afghanistan and Iraq were simultaneous operations with many military personnel serving in both war zones, the total served number has been combined for both conflicts. David A. Blum and Nese F. DeBruyne, "American War and Military Operations Casualties: Lists and Statistics" (Congressional Research Service, July 29, 2020), 3, 15; Niall McCarthy, "2.77 Million Service Members Have Served On 5.4 Million Deployments Since 9/11 [Infographic]," *Forbes*, accessed December 3, 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2018/03/20/2-77-million-service-members-have-served-on-5-4-million-deployments-since-911-infographic/>; U.S. Department of Defense, "Casualty Status," November 30, 2020, <https://www.defense.gov/casualty.pdf>.

Americans interact with the wars that are fought in their name. In Chapter Two, we discussed a trilateral relationship between civilian leaders, the public, and the military. These three entities have had some direct relationship over the course of American history, but not in the same way during the AVF regime. The dwindling connections between the military and the public are becoming further diminished as fewer Americans serve and service becomes the purview of the select few. The lack of that connection has likely created political and cultural dynamics that perpetuate war, and that is what we will explore in this chapter.

In the first section, we will explore the AVF and how it has worked in the three major conflicts and a number of minor ones. With no draftees, the U.S. military has had to transform how it uses the military forces at its disposition and surge them at particular moments to meet critical mission needs during these conflicts. We will explore how this has created privatized elements of the military structure which answer demands created by the State while offering less of a perceived military footprint to the public. In the second section, we will explore how American identity has changed in the AVF era, particularly how identity has become retrospective and focused on past glories. If we recall from the last chapter, American international identity's growth was interrupted by the social changes during the Vietnam era and the end of the draft. However, for the first part of the AVF, this international identity remained rather strong given American dominance through the end of the 20th Century. Yet the entrenchment of a retrospective identity took hold after the attacks of September 11, when perceptions on American superiority changed with bogged down wars and the rise of new world powers. With the American public disconnected from American conflicts, they became more supportive of the military through strong patriotic temperaments and militarism. With no draft to mold citizens, the State does little to change this form of identity, except to use it for its own

political ends and continue the war effort. Retrospective identity is thus an is an unmoored form of identity which combine elements from prior identities and regimes. It harkens back to periods where the United States was a perceived positive actor on the domestic and world stage, exacerbating modern wars with no personal cost to most citizens.

The All-Volunteer Force

If we recall, Huntington and Janowitz were the two academics who fostered the debate over the professionalization of the military force in the 1950s, and their concerns focused on whether the civilian leadership would be able to retain control over the military in a post-draft era. Both agreed that civilian control would remain for different reasons. Huntington argued that a professionalized officer class would keep the military at bay, and Janowitz argued that as long as civilians remained strongly connected to the military and its oversight, professionalization should not be a concern or a threat.¹⁸⁵ The advent of the AVF provided a space for the debate of its merits to play out and a field of experimentation for a professionalized force to shows its value, and Huntington and Janowitz would probably see a lot of similarities to their predictions with what occurred.

Yet, there is an important element to consider with the advent of the AVF: there was no alternative after 1973. Compulsory service was simply no longer politically feasible. There were no state militia alternatives to rely on, and any military draft was just going to be avoided due to the political cost. This raised the stakes with what could be lost if the United States were to enter again into a major war scenario and raised questions as to how effective the AVF would

¹⁸⁵ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 260-261, 465-466; Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier*, 438-440.

be. The force being born out of the Vietnam era, its birth was so traumatic that it left many unsure as to how and if it would succeed. Thus, the shadow of Vietnam loomed large over the AVF for about the first two decades of its use.

However, the AVF would succeed, and the American State made it work. The Persian Gulf War was the first validation of the AVF as well as the new format of American military centered less on masses of available personnel and more on technology. At around the time of the Persian Gulf War, the geopolitics of the world shifted dramatically with the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. For much of the 1990s, the U.S. military was involved in small regional conflicts, all of which it was able to maintain with a relatively mobile force. This changed in 2001 with the attacks of September 11 when the use of the military abroad went into overdrive. The United States invaded Afghanistan soon after and remains there to this day. In 2003, it also invaded Iraq, and despite that war officially ending in 2011, the United States still remains heavily engaged in Iraq because of the weakened internal structure of the Iraqi State. Interventions against ISIS, in Libya, Syria, Yemen, and elsewhere have painted this post-2001 era as heavily military-dominant in terms of American State power projected onto the world.

When we consider the AVF regime, we should look at it as two distinct periods, that of pre-2001 and that of post-2001. The reason for this is that each of these periods presents unique challenges to the AVF and the American State's use of its military. The shadow of Vietnam loomed large over the first two decades of the AVF, but once the Persian Gulf War validated the use of the force in a major war, this boosted confidence in what the AVF could do. Such confidence though was tempered in the post-2001 era when that same AVF, albeit in a smaller size thanks to the Cold War drawdown, fought two major wars and countless other conflicts around the globe during and after the Global War on Terrorism. State power clearly did not

diminish with the AVF, but as we will see, the public's connection to how that power was used abroad did diminish.

Vietnam Syndrome and the Persian Gulf War

The Vietnam War, the politics surrounding it, and the social turbulence caused in its wake was not curtailed once the war was over. If anything, the post-Vietnam era was still shaped by the experiences of the war. Both the public and the military had suffered trauma of different kinds as a result of the war and its end, the first perceived major war defeat in U.S. military history. The psychological trauma suffered by veterans of war effectively created a whole new category of medical diagnosis, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder which shaped how military personnel who served in the war were portrayed both in public and in culture.¹⁸⁶ The image of the Vietnam veteran as broken took root and shaped the treatment of veterans for the years to come. Along with that, social stigmas against war and American intervention abroad shaped political discourse throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, and events like the Carter Administration's failing to respond effectively to both the Iranian Hostage Crisis or the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan compounded the sinking belief in American military superiority.¹⁸⁷ The period was marked by Vietnam Syndrome, a term used to describe "the malaise that [had] allegedly reduced the United States to a state of impotence in a menacing world."¹⁸⁸ Into that void of confidence stepped the AVF to fight the nation's wars.

¹⁸⁶ Lenny Grant, "Post-Vietnam Syndrome: Psychiatry, Anti-War Politics, and the Reconstitution of the Vietnam Veteran," *Rhetoric of Health and Medicine* 3, no. 2 (May 25, 2020): 190.

¹⁸⁷ Robert McGeehan, "Carter's Crises: Iran, Afghanistan and Presidential Politics," *The World Today* 36, no. 5 (May 2020): 164-167.

¹⁸⁸ George C. Herring, "The 'Vietnam Syndrome' and American Foreign Policy," *The Virginia Quarterly Review* 57, no. 4 (Autumn 1981): 594.

The first few years of the AVF were rough for both the nation and the military, to say the least. Some twelve days after the fall of Saigon to North Vietnamese forces, the first real international test of the AVF was the *Mayaguez* Incident, which was disastrous for the U.S. military. The Khmer Rouge had seized a U.S. ship named the SS *Mayaguez* near an island off of the Cambodian coast. The Ford Administration, with other international threats elsewhere, wanted to conduct a rescue operation for the *Mayaguez* crew as a show of force after the fall of Saigon, but the National Security Council and the Department of Defense blundered the planning. Both the Marine Corps and the Air Force planned simultaneous rescue operations with no interagency coordination, which both operations failed with over a dozen U.S. casualties total. The captured crew was released during the operation without incident, but were not on the island that the U.S. military was assaulting.¹⁸⁹

Additionally, some five years after the *Mayaguez* incident and in the midst of the Iranian Hostage Crisis, the Carter Administration authorized another rescue mission for the hostages held in Tehran, a mission that ultimately failed before any actions could be taken to secure the hostages. In April 1980, the mission, dubbed Operation Eagle Claw, was an overly complex mission requiring multiple helicopters, aircraft, and a large contingent of Special Forces. The aircraft were to fly from south of Iran, meet up in the desert in central Iran, refuel, fly to Tehran, rescue the hostages, and fly home. Upon their arrival at the refuel point, aircraft issues and dust forced the mission to be aborted, but before all of the aircraft could leave, one helicopter ran into another aircraft, causing an explosion that killed eight servicemembers. The mission was

¹⁸⁹ Christopher J. Lamb, *The Mayaguez Crisis, Mission Command, and Civil-Military Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Joint History Office, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2018), 1-6, 54, 81, 193.

another black-eye for the U.S. military, and the American hostages remained in Iranian custody for another eight months.¹⁹⁰

Both the failures of the *Mayaguez* and Operation Eagle Claw were not due to the military structure being the AVF; no one would argue that conscripted troops in either of these operations would have made them successful. Yet, their failures were significant for the United States and the younger years of the AVF. They were opportunities for the AVF to demonstrate its value and capabilities, at least in very small and concentrated doses. Neither of these operations were direly consequential for the United States, but an element of American pride was tarnished with each. They continued a stretch of military failure beyond the end of the Vietnam War, further causing uncertainty around American military power to linger and casting doubt on the position of the United States in the world. Not long after Operation Eagle Claw, in July 1980, President Carter reenacted the registration requirement for the Selective Service, which had been dormant since 1973.¹⁹¹ With the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and changing world events, the draft once again was prepped for the eventuality of war. Vietnam Syndrome was rife.

Yet, the draft was not going to be used again, and the AVF was not abandoned. As with past cases of military failure, the lessons learned shaped the military of the future. The Reagan Administration gave the military the resources and room to adjust itself and build a new military structure with the clear-eyed understanding that the draft was not going to be politically feasible. The AVF had to defend the United States with the personnel and capabilities at its disposition. One of the signature achievements during the Reagan Administration was the passage of the

¹⁹⁰ Edward T. Russell, “Crisis in Iran: Operation Eagle Claw” (U.S. Department of Defense), accessed March 9, 2021.

¹⁹¹ Jimmy Carter, “Proclamation 4771: Registration Under the Military Selective Service Act,” National Archives, August 15, 2016, <https://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/proclamations/04771.html>.

Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986, which fundamentally reorganized the military and how it operated worldwide.¹⁹² One of the key elements of the act was the establishment of a number of combatant and functional commands which streamlined the command of all military forces for a given region or function under one command structure, creating what became known the joint environment. This allowed Army, Navy, and Air Force personnel to work together for common objectives using each service's strengths to accomplish military objectives together.¹⁹³ However, if we consider this further, this was a pooling of military resources to more effectively use them on the battlefield. The failures of the *Mayaguez* and Operation Eagle Claw inspired the passage of this act, but it was also an acknowledgement in some sense that the AVF had to fundamentally change in order to be effective because the draft was not coming back. The entirety of the Department of Defense had to restructure to meet the conflicts of the future, and the AVF had to succeed because there was no other feasible option. Even with these changes, the AVF still needed to be validated in some conflict.

That chance for validation came when the Iraqi Army invaded Kuwait in August 1990, setting off an international crisis. Kuwait, a small sovereign nation and a pivotal oil port at the western end of the Persian Gulf, was unable to repel the invasion given Iraq's massive military, whose presence also threatened the integrity of Saudi Arabia's borders just south of Kuwait. International response was swift, and the United States began to build up its military presence in Saudi Arabia to deter Iraqi aggression and prepare to an eventual invasion. In January 1991, Congress gave the Bush Administration a green light for military actions, but by a very small

¹⁹² U.S. Congress, "Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986," Pub. L. No. 99-433 (1986).

¹⁹³ James R. Locher III, "Taking Stock of Goldwater-Nichols," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Autumn 1996, 10-16.

margin in the Senate, with only 52 Senators voting for the action. One cannot help but see the strength of Vietnam Syndrome at this particular moment when the first massive military campaign since Vietnam was about to be launched. Some predictions put the number “of American casualties in the range of 10,000 during the first 24 hours,” given Iraq’s experienced military and the threat of chemical warfare.¹⁹⁴ The AVF was about to fight its first war, and no one was sure it would succeed.

Yet, the military structure created under Goldwater-Nichols allowed the AVF to work swiftly once operations had begun. Joint service planning had created a strategy that would weaken and encircle the Iraqi Army in Kuwait. In mid-January 1991, an air campaign some 30-plus days began targeting Iraqi defenses and units. Towards the end of February, the ground campaign began with little to no resistance. In fact, many Iraqi units surrendered en masse and retreated once the assault had begun. By the end of February, the war was over and Kuwait was liberated.¹⁹⁵ The AVF only suffered casualties into the hundreds, while estimates of Iraqi casualties ranged from the tens of thousands to upwards of 100,000 killed.¹⁹⁶

In hindsight, the AVF needed the Persian Gulf War to be accepted as a valid military institution. The Gulf War was the first major American conflict fought without conscripts of any kind since the Spanish-American War, using a military structure that had not yet been legitimized, while Vietnam Syndrome stoked fears of an impending catastrophe in the run-up to the war. It was limited in scope to a particular region and also in time, lasting no longer than it

¹⁹⁴ Bernard E. Trainor, “Gulf War I,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, accessed November 9, 2019, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2009/05/gulf-war-i/>.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Spencer C. Tucker, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Middle East Wars: The United States in the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq Conflicts* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2010), 264.

had to, but it displayed with resounding success the capabilities that the AVF could bring to the fight in terms of planning and effective use of the resources at hand. Just a day after the conflict was over, President Bush proclaimed that “we’ve kicked Vietnam [S]yndrome once and for all,” a sentiment that defined the renewed confidence at the time in American military power.¹⁹⁷ It also helped that a confluence of world events at this particular time bolstered American prestige. The war occurred within a year or so of the fall of the Berlin Wall, German reunification under a West German government, and the collapse of the Soviet Union, ending some four decades of Cold War tensions. At this particular moment, the American State had achieved a number of major political victories, and its AVF stood as a renewed symbol of American dominance. The U.S. military was redeemed.

Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Global War on Terrorism

The 1990s were a period of relative confidence for the United States. With no Cold War, no one was challenging U.S. dominance in the world, and military policy focused more on small-scale operations in localized areas, something the AVF was well-suited to do. Throughout the 1990s, the AVF conducted operations in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo, just to name a select few. The U.S. military also maintained a no-fly zone over Iraq to prevent the Iraqi government from attacking its own civilians.¹⁹⁸ The 1990s were certainly not a peaceful period for the world, but the AVF was able to manage American military operations effectively because no one conflict drained its resources or shifted its focus entirely. The limited scope of these

¹⁹⁷ Voices and Visions, “George H.W. Bush Proclaims a Cure for the Vietnam Syndrome: 1 March 1991,” accessed March 10, 2021, <http://vandvreader.org/george-h-w-bush-proclaims-a-cure-for-the-vietnam-syndrome-01-march-1991/>.

¹⁹⁸ Barbara Salazar Torreon and Sofia Plagakis, “Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2020,” *Congressional Research Service*, July 20, 2020, 13-19.

conflicts allowed the United States to react with the forces at its disposition and do so with little strain on the military or the American State overall.

Such a period though created a glut of confidence in the AVF and the American position in the world. The AVF at the moment of the Gulf War was only a decade removed from the calamity of Operation Eagle Claw, and the Gulf War itself was a major offensive, but also limited in terms of objectives. It succeeded, but it was not a war like Vietnam. Once the main objectives were achieved, the bulk of the U.S. military disengaged. Throughout the 1990s, the public's confidence in the military grew to higher levels, averaging year-over-year about 10 points higher than in the 1980s.¹⁹⁹ These smaller engagements in the 1990s helped confirm that the AVF was a force to reckon with the threats that the United States faced at that time, and it was well-suited for that particular world. Such thinking though can lead to complacency and overconfidence, which it did once that world was gone.

The attacks of September 11, 2001 completely shifted American foreign policy in a drastically new direction. The attacks, in which 19 al-Qaeda operatives hijacked four planes, two of which were flown into the World Trade Center buildings, one of which damaged the Pentagon, and the last of which crashed in Pennsylvania, killed close to 3,000 Americans. Once the initial shock of the attacks had set in, the new Bush Administration launched the Global War on Terrorism, or GWOT, whose effects are still felt to this day. The irony with the GWOT is that it became a nation-building exercise, something that President Bush had eschewed before becoming president.²⁰⁰ The 1990s was replete with debates over whether nation-building should

¹⁹⁹ Gallup, "Confidence in Institutions," accessed March 11, 2021, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1597/Confidence-Institutions.aspx>.

²⁰⁰ Joseph J. Collins, "Toward a Future National Strategy," *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 84 (January 2017): 94.

be what the AVF was tasked with doing. With no major international enemy to fight, the AVF's existence was more to be a force for good and to make the world a better place. The use of the AVF offered stability in regions that needed stability to maintain peace or to grow. Bosnia is a clear example from the 1990s, but the U.S. military has done this prior to the AVF era with Germany, Japan, and Korea as well. The GWOT was about to fundamentally change the U.S. military.

The first major action in the GWOT was the invasion of Afghanistan, dubbed Operation Enduring Freedom, intended to be a direct engagement to capture and kill al-Qaeda planners and perpetrators of the September 11 attacks after the Taliban refused to hand them over to the United States. The invasion itself played to the strengths of the AVF. The U.S. Air Force maintained air superiority, targeting enemy positions at will, while only around 3,000 ground troops, mostly Special Forces, were in Afghanistan during the first few months. These troops worked in tandem with Northern Alliance fighters, who had been fighting the Taliban for years. By December 2001, the Taliban government had fallen and both al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters had fled, leaving the United States and its allies in control.²⁰¹ The AVF made the initial invasion of Afghanistan seamless. The small American footprint, the use of American air superiority, and use of homegrown fighters made the invasion and low-casualty, quick invasion force.

In 2002, the United States turned its attention towards an old foe, Iraq. Iraq in the preceding years had snubbed UN resolutions and sanctions and also expelled weapons inspectors intended to prevent it from developing chemical and biological weapons, which it had been known to use against the Shia and Kurdish populations within its borders. The United States began to make the case for justifying an invasion of Iraq with Iraq's noncompliance with the UN

²⁰¹ Tucker, *The Encyclopedia of Middle East Wars*, 414-415.

weapons inspectors, arguing that such a slight indicated that Iraq intended to develop weapons of mass destruction. After months of international political cajoling with only moderate success, the United States along with a number of other allies launched the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, dubbed Operation Iraqi Freedom. By May 1, the entirety of Iraq had fallen.²⁰²

The invasion of Iraq though was vastly different from the invasion of Afghanistan. Both operations sought to use the strengths of the AVF, but in very distinct ways. As the operation in Afghanistan used a light American footprint supported by local fighters, Iraq did not because of the different dynamics of the war. This was a traditional state-on-state conflict to some degree. The operation looked more like the Persian Gulf War sequel, only this time with the fall of Baghdad. The American contingent of the invasion force consisted of approximately 200,000 ground troops, armed with tanks and heavy equipment, all intending to push right through any resistance the Iraqi military could muster.²⁰³ It was not a display of American ingenuity and subversion in the way Afghanistan was. It was instead a full display of American military might and what the AVF could do. The AVF conquered an entire country in a matter of weeks.

Afghanistan and Iraq though were not over in December 2001 and May 2003, respectively. Those conflicts had only begun, and the AVF was going to bear the brunt of the nation-building program for the next two decades in both countries. From 2003 to 2011, the United States occupied Iraq, having to create a democratic government from scratch and rebuild the infrastructure damaged from over a decade of U.S. airstrikes. The U.S. military had to deal with a Sunni insurgency in Anbar Province, growing Iranian influence within Shia groups in southern Iraq, and the intervening violence between those two sides. Throughout most of the

²⁰² Kenneth Katzman, "Iraq: Post-Saddam Governance and Security" (Congressional Research Service, February 5, 2009), 3-8.

²⁰³ Ibid., 8.

rest of the 2000s, the United States maintained at 140,000 troops in Iraq, with a high point during the period known as the Surge in 2007 of 170,000.²⁰⁴ Even after the official end of the Iraq War in 2011, the U.S. military had to return a few years later to counter the ISIS threat that had spread across western Iraq and threatened the integrity of the country. At the same time that the Iraq War was occurring, U.S. obligations in Afghanistan remained and were a strain on the overall strength of the AVF. For most of the Iraq War, American troops in Afghanistan remained at around 20,000. When the Obama Administration took over the war effort, they drew down forces in Iraq and surged them in Afghanistan, with troop levels reaching upwards of 100,000 in 2010 and 2011.²⁰⁵ At present, only a few thousand remain, but the conflict still continues.

Despite these drawdowns in the Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. military remains in a permanent state of conflict. Throughout the 2000s, the AVF supported operations in Bosnia and Kosovo, while also fighting terrorism in the Philippines and the Horn of Africa. In 2011, the United States and its allies intervened with an air war in Libya to prevent Muammar Qaddafi from killing civilians inspired by the Arab Spring. In 2012, Syria descended into a crisis, then civil war, which the U.S. remained out of, fearing getting bogged down in a new conflict. However, the vacuum created the Syrian Civil War allowed ISIS to grow and dominant large parts of Syria and Iraq in 2014, which forced a massive U.S. response with an air campaign and building up of Iraqi military forces. In addition, the U.S. military has become involved in conflicts like Yemen and Ukraine.²⁰⁶ Even if Afghanistan, the only remaining official major

²⁰⁴ Miriam Berger, “Invaders, Allies, Occupiers, Guests: A Brief History of U.S. Military Involvement in Iraq,” *Washington Post*, January 11, 2020.

²⁰⁵ *Al Jazeera*, “Timeline: US Military Presence in Afghanistan,” September 8, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/9/8/timeline-us-military-presence-in-afghanistan>.

²⁰⁶ Salazar Torreon and Plagakis, “Instances of Use of United States Armed Forces Abroad, 1798-2020,” 20-35.

conflict still going on, were to end, the United States and the AVF would remain engaged in war elsewhere.

Both Iraq and Afghanistan represent the biggest burden that the AVF has had to take on in the post-Vietnam era, and that is not even counting the other conflicts listed above. Iraq and Afghanistan, since they were fought simultaneously, are often blended together since many servicemembers served in both theaters, and each war's duration put a consistent strain on the AVF over time. The total number of servicemembers serving in both is close to 2.8 million with almost 7,000 killed, if referring only to the official dates of each conflict (i.e. Iraq from 2003 to 2011).²⁰⁷ In terms of the sheer number of casualties, these wars are nowhere near Vietnam or Korea levels, but they have taken a much different toll on both the country and those who serve. If anything, the demands created by the wars fought by the American State have not decreased in the AVF, but have increased and shifted over time. What the institution of the AVF has done is take the burden of those conflicts, not just Iraq and Afghanistan, but all of the smaller-scale conflicts, and put that burden on a select few who volunteer. As we will see in the next section, the results are, unlike regimes past, an American State that seeks to avoid burdening military service on the greater public at all costs, while simultaneously finding ways of extending the AVF in unique and often cumbersome ways.

Proliferating War and the Changing Nature of the AVF

In 2003 at the height of the Iraq War, Representative Charles Rangel introduced a bill in the House of Representatives to reinstate the military draft. The bill, if passed by Congress and signed into law by the president, would have required all Americans between 18 and 26 years of

²⁰⁷ See Table 6-1.

age to serve in the military for a minimum of two years. The act would have also required females to register for the Selective Service, thus subjecting them to the draft as well.²⁰⁸ A longtime advocate for the draft, Rangel wrote an opinion piece at the end of 2002 providing justifications for bringing back the draft, citing the pre-Iraq War overextension of the AVF already engaged across the globe and the push for military solutions by the Bush administration to problems abroad.²⁰⁹ Such a bill would allow the post-2001 patriotic sentiment to be harnessed and used for the two wars that the United States was now involved in.

Rangel's bill finally made to a vote in October 2004, where it was voted down in the House with 402 votes against and two votes for the measure. Even Rangel himself voted against his own measure.²¹⁰ The vote effectively killed any discussion of a military draft for the two most consequential and burdensome wars of the AVF regime. This vote was significant because it showed the political non-viability of the military draft, even in the midst of two major wars. That same year, Congress approved over \$90 billion in Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) funds, a category of money beyond the base DOD defense budget, which is used exclusively to fight wars overseas.²¹¹ Congress was willing to spend money to fund the wars, but not to force the public to serve in those wars. Since 2001, Congress has spent over \$2 trillion in OCO funds, with over 90 percent of those funds going towards the military.²¹²

²⁰⁸ Charles B. Rangel, "Universal National Service Act of 2003," Pub. L. No. House Resolution 163 (2004), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/108th-congress/house-bill/163>.

²⁰⁹ Charles B. Rangel, "Bring Back the Draft," *The New York Times*, December 31, 2002, sec. Opinion, <https://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/31/opinion/bring-back-the-draft.html>.

²¹⁰ Rangel, "Universal National Service Act of 2003."

²¹¹ Brendan W. McGarry and Emily M. Morgenstern, "Overseas Contingency Operations Funding: Background and Status" (Congressional Research Service, September 6, 2019), 10.

²¹² *Ibid*, 10-11.

Rangel's draft bill vote was rather telling. The cost to Congress for implementing a military draft would likely have been political suicide as they feared a public backlash, similar to what occurred with the draft during Vietnam. In some sense, that portion of Vietnam Syndrome, despite President Bush's earlier assertion, remained or at the very least had an outbreak at that particular moment. Yet the cost in terms of dollars seemed to matter less as that burden since the public does not directly feel that in the same way they would if they were drafted. With the American State still conducting war in an almost permanent status, albeit with a reduced footprint compared to the Afghanistan and Iraq Wars but still with a global reach, this has led to new methods in how the American State acquires and retains military power and capacity for itself, mainly due to the limitations that the AVF has imposed upon it. The burden for military service cannot come from the people, so the State must find other ways of finding personnel. It achieves this through new methods implemented in recent decades as a result of the wars.

One of the most controversial ways the State has retained personnel is by simply not letting servicemembers go when their service agreement is completed. The stop-loss order, which prevents a servicemember from leaving the military at the end of his or her service requirement, became heavily used during the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars. Officers in the military do not have end of service dates, and while they can leave military service after an initial obligation, they can be extended or recalled at the government's need. Enlisted personnel, however, have expiration of terms of service (ETS) dates which limit their service obligations to a specific date, usually six to eight years after the initial enlistment. Beyond that date, if no reenlistment occurs, the enlisted servicemember owes no further service and cannot be recalled. A stop-loss order is intended to extend the length of service beyond the ETS date in order to retain and preserve servicemembers with particular skill sets during a period of war or for the

rest of a deployment.²¹³ All services used the policy during the Iraq and Afghanistan War because deployment end dates do not always match with an individual servicemember's ETS date. Upwards of 145,000 servicemembers were given stop-loss orders during the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars.²¹⁴ The Army was the biggest contributor of stop-loss orders to retain personnel, and the Army especially exacerbated the use of stop loss during 2007 when it was extending Iraq deployment times from a year to 15 months to meet operational demands. The reason it became so controversial is because of its perception as a "backdoor draft," forcing individuals who had completed their service obligation to continue to serve against their will. While they initially volunteered to serve the country, some even volunteering during the war, the extension was usually done against one's own will since no reenlistment occurred and the servicemember was forced into staying. The program was so controversial that the Army suspended its use in 2010, but this also coincided with the drawdown in Iraq.²¹⁵

Stop-loss is but one piece of a larger trend within the AVF, the overuse of military forces at war time. Since the State cannot compel the public to serve because of the political cost, it uses the military forces at its disposition in a much different fashion than in wars past. One first way was to increase the length of enlistments, which had been a trend over the course of the AVF, but had not really become notably prevalent until the post-2001 conflicts. In the late 1970s, the Army had flirted with two-year enlistment option, but that was quickly discarded. Most servicemembers in the 21st Century incurred at least an eight-year service obligation if they

²¹³ Congressional Research Service, "U.S. Military Stop Loss Program: Key Questions and Answers," April 7, 2010, 1-14.

²¹⁴ Rich Blake, "About 100,000 War Vets Owed Stop-Loss Cash Payments," ABC News, August 3, 2010.

²¹⁵ Congressional Research Service, "U.S. Military Stop Loss Program," 1, 6, 14.

enlisted, no matter the service or component they joined. There were also cases of servicemembers entering an inactive Reserve status right before their obligation had expired, something normal in the last two years of a service obligation, but who were called back up for duty during the wars.²¹⁶

This last part is also indicative of a heavy reliance on part-time forces. The strain put on active-duty forces by these conflicts forced the military to also rely on Reserve and National Guard units within troop rotations. Reserve units were usually able to supplement the needs of active-duty units with extra personnel while National Guard units deployed together as combat units.²¹⁷ One should recall that National Guard service during the 1960s and 1970s was a means of avoiding service in Vietnam since the Guard was meant for homeland defense, and the international Soviet threat to the homeland remained. This was not the case in Iraq and Afghanistan. Reserve and Guard servicemembers were just as likely to end up in each country as active duty. This is also telling because it shows the consolidated power of the American State over individual state National Guard units. They were no longer separated or distinct from the Federal military; they were integrated, and they were used in combat not on American soil.

Another illustration of the overuse of the AVF is that of troop deployments. One study found that between 2001 and 2015, which encompass the height of both the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts, 5.5 million deployments occurred, which were burdened on just under 2.8 million servicemembers. Averaging that out, that is almost two deployments per servicemember who deployed, but as always, the burden was not evenly distributed. The majority of those only

²¹⁶ Bernard Rostker, *I Want You! The Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2006), 379, 696.

²¹⁷ Linwood B. Carter, "Iraq: Summary of U.S. Forces" (Congressional Research Service, November 28, 2005), 1-15.

served one to two deployments, but at least 20 percent deployed 3 or more times, to include over 80,000 Reserve and National Guard servicemembers.²¹⁸ In one extreme case, an Army Ranger was killed in Afghanistan on his 14th deployment.²¹⁹ Since the end of the Iraq War and the drawdown in Afghanistan, such a high number of deployments are unlikely to occur again unless there is another major war, but it does show how the AVF and individual servicemembers are burdened in times of prolonged war with multiple tours of duty.

On one final point, the AVF did not fight these wars alone; it had a lot of external support from private contractors. This is important because private contractors serve as an extension of the AVF. They are volunteers who choose to do a job which often entails work in a combat zone, but the difference is that they do not sign up for the job through enlistments in the military, but rather as a job from a private agency. That private agency then bids on contracts to do work for the government both in and out of war theaters. These contractors serve as logistics support, intelligence analysts, and private security elements, just to name a few. Such use has raised questions as to if the Federal Government was farming out too many inherently government functions to private contractors, but that has not stopped their widespread use.²²⁰ The number of private contractors in all functions reached high new levels during Iraq and Afghanistan. At one point in 2007 in Iraq, there were approximately 165,000 U.S. servicemembers, supplemented by approximately 155,000 private contractors. In 2012 in Afghanistan, there were 88,000 U.S.

²¹⁸ Jennie Wenger, Caolionn O’Connell, and Linda Cottrell, “Examination of Recent Deployment Experience Across the Services and Components” (Rand Corporation, 2018), 3, 8.

²¹⁹ Luis Martinez and Christina Caron, “Army Ranger Dies On 14th Deployment,” ABC News, October 25, 2011, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/army-ranger-dies-14th-deployment/story?id=14811227>.

²²⁰ John R. Luckey, Valerie Bailey Grasso, and Kate M. Manuel, “Inherently Governmental Functions and Department of Defense Operations: Background, Issues, and Options for Congress” (Congressional Research Service, June 22, 2009), 6.

servicemembers, supplemented by approximately 117,000 contractors. The American footprints in both Iraq and Afghanistan were double what the official troop count was. Even in 2020, with troop levels well below 10,000 in Afghanistan, there were still approximately 25,000 contractors in that country.²²¹ The American State used contractors effectively to the point where they now outweigh the number of servicemembers in Afghanistan, all while the official story told of these wars focuses on the number of troops rather than the total footprint.

Contractors are not novel to the 21st Century, and even if we consider contractors to be pseudo-mercenaries or any other sort of older classification of those paid to conduct war, the main point here is that the need for the massive number of contractors during this period was born out of the AVF and the lack of a draft. The proliferation of American war in the 21st Century has pushed the AVF to its limits, with the military preventing personnel from leaving when their enlistments were completed, increasing the number of deployments, and heavily relying on Reserve and National Guard forces, unlike in wars past. Yet, these wars demanded more than what the AVF could provide. The massive footprints in Afghanistan and Iraq compelled the State to add to its military capability, but it could not put that burden on the public, lest it reap the political consequences. The State thus resorted to private contracting as a means of adding manpower and capacity, but it created a whole new dimension in the AVF, where private enterprise enters the void left by the lack, or better yet the fear, of placing that extra burden on the public.

The AVF is the military regime of today and is unlikely to be unseated anytime soon. If Afghanistan and Iraq created the climate where a draft could be used, but it was not used, then the likelihood of a draft ever being used is practically nil. The burdens of war no longer fall on

²²¹ Heidi M. Peters, “Department of Defense Contractor and Troop Levels in Afghanistan and Iraq: 2007-2020” (Congressional Research Service, February 22, 2021), 7-8, 13.

the American public, and even in high demand times, the State will look elsewhere than a military draft to meet those demands. The era of the AVF is distinctly different from regimes past because it lessens the burden of war from prior generations. In each of the previous regimes discussed, the burden for the nation's wars got progressively heavier over time, and social expectations of service grew out of these burdens. The AVF reversed that, and as we will see in the next section, that has created a diverging form of American identity from eras past.

Retrospective Identity

In each of the eras discussed in prior chapters, the military service regime correlated with a particular construction of identity in which either the individual states or the American State was a driver. The militia created state-centric forms of identity, the Civil War-era reinforced regional identities, and the World War I era helped to create a national identity. Our last regime before the AVF, the Peacetime Draft, created an internationalized form of American identity, and it is that identity that has dominated much of how Americans have viewed themselves in recent decades. The generations who have lived since World War II have not lived in a world where the United States was not a dominant international power. The American State has had to work to maintain that dominance, and a major thread of that supremacy is military power. The United States is practically the only nation on Earth that has the capacity to affect world events with a global reach. This international structure with the United States as the central player has been built over time through diplomatic and economic channels, but its stability rests on American military power. This international dominance can be viewed as a constant throughout the Peacetime Draft and the AVF regimes. Americans still view themselves as a dominant nation. As such, American international identity created with the Peacetime Draft persists into the AVF.

Yet, crises breed eras of reassessment, and American identity is not immune to this sort of reassessment. Up until 2001, the U.S. position in the world was practically unchallenged, and thus American international identity remained relatively intact, in spite of the AVF and the lack of a draft. Yet, the post-2001 era has been one of persistent American war. The State has fought these wars with the AVF and no personal cost to the public. What has occurred as a result is a complete change in the relationship between the State, the military, and the public. The State has no role for the public in these wars other than uninvolved support. In wars past, the public were part of the war effort, whether in militias, as draftees, or even large swells of volunteers brought on by social compulsion. They were engaged as a full-fledged member of maintaining American growth and dominance. Now, the public is simply a passive actor in an act where the American State and the U.S. military dominant actors, and their role is nothing more than a supportive one.

That supportive role, compounded by a number of other geopolitical factors, has created a newer era of American identity, which we will term retrospective identity. This is not the same as previous forms of identity that we have discussed because this does not create a newer vision of what it means to be an American. It is instead a reflective and reflexive form of identity which focuses on the components of identity from by-gone eras through a strong form of patriotism for what the nation has accomplished. We can see these components of retrospective identity in patriotic demonstrations, which have become quite common in the post-2001 era. Retrospective identity construction does not require any sort of active participation from the public. Instead, we could consider it an identity in which the nation rests on its laurels and great past deeds to justify itself today. Since it requires no active support from the public, individual citizens can either accept or ignore it. Individual Americans can take pride in being American or not, and they can use retrospective identity to self-identify however they wish. There may be

certain elements within American identity that they may identify with more, and that may be part of their particular form of retrospective identity. What is problematic though, as we will see, is that retrospective identity creates passive supporters of the State's war machine, and this in turn perpetuates war in the current era. The State will use retrospective identity to garner public support for wars, but in this era, the State can still conduct war regardless of public support.

The rest of this section will look at just a few different elements within American retrospective identity to illustrate more what it is and how it manifests to make war more likely. We will look at some of the geopolitical reasons why Americans may be looking to retrospective identity today as a means of compensating for the U.S. position in the world. Then, we will look at war as a means of patriotic expression, thus explaining perhaps why these wars may persist. In the final portion, we will examine the veteran anew as a symbol of national greatness and how that integrates into this form of identity.

America's Disenchanted Place

Perhaps the best place to start to see why retrospective identity is taking root in at the current time, particularly in the post-2001 era of the AVF. The formation of retrospective identity is not simply an outgrowth of the AVF, but is instead a combination of what the AVF created in terms of military power along with geopolitical trends which have shifted the U.S. position in the world. The U.S. position post-1973 has oscillated between extremes of American doubt and overconfidence. Post-Vietnam, there was a lot of uncertainty in American military power, as we saw with the *Mayaguez* incident and Operation Eagle Claw. The changes to the AVF in the 1980s, the Persian Gulf War, and the end of the Cold War brought about renewed hope in the country and its position in the world which lasted through the 1990s. The shift back

towards questioning the U.S. position occurred after the September 11, 2001, attacks, which saw a confidence peak with the onset of new wars, but a gradual slog back towards uncertainty as the wars dragged on. The missteps in Iraq, where no weapons of mass destruction were found despite that being the justification for the invasion, and the extended length of Afghanistan and other minor conflicts have locked the State into a persistent struggle, which has tied down its focus and resource use to particular regions. There are other factors outside of these wars though which exacerbate this uncertainty. The precipitous rise of China and other regional powers in the world present their own set of challenges, for which the American State has few easy answers. Also, this particular period lacks a Cold War-like adversary which might otherwise allow the United States to paint itself as a good standing in the face of an evil. That strong international identity and standing which emerged out of World War II, and even out of the Persian Gulf War, is not as solid as it once was.

At the same time that this uncertainty has grown in the U.S. global position, Americans have had declining faith institutions over the years with fewer Americans trusting government. Institutions like Congress, the presidency, and even the police have all seen declines in confidence in recent decades. Yet, there is only one institution has bucked this trend, the military. The military as an institution has retained high levels of trust from the American public, in spite of the lack of victory in Afghanistan or Iraq and elevated levels of defense spending.²²² This is distinct from the Vietnam period when the perception of a lost war exacerbated the public's feelings against the war and the military. It seems that 21st Century conflicts do not suffer from such consequences from the public. One reason for this may be the strong linkage between American identity and the military, which is likely in a much purer form

²²² Gallup, "Confidence in Institutions."

now than in regimes past. Fighting for the country, no matter the cause, is viewed as a major responsibility for any citizen. Well over 80 percent of the American public views serving in the military as a patriotic act.²²³ Yet, simultaneously, just about 80 percent of the public says the draft should not be reinstated, a figure that has remained constant for most of the duration of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts.²²⁴ This dichotomy may seem contradictory, since if military service is patriotic, then it should be everyone's responsibility to some extent. However, the fact that military service has become a choice makes the decision a more noble one, done for a higher calling, and thus the military retains a higher level of respect. At the same time, the lack of the public's personal connection to the military likely leads to a somewhat ignorant understanding on what the military does and or where it is engaged. By not being forced to serve, the public can remain apathetic to the actions of the military while also expressing tacit support.

What results from all this is a bit of a conundrum. Americans are largely disconnected from what occurs in the world, particularly the wars in which the American State engages. The State can engage in war with or without public support, and in the meantime, the military, whether it wins or not, remains a highly-respected institution, if not the highest respected institution in the nation. The public perceives the U.S. position in the world as falling, to include loss of trust in State institutions, but the military remains a bedrock of perceived strength of the American public. It is likely in that spot because the public does not connect with it as it did in the past. It is a revered institution, and this isolates it from many of the consequences that it felt as an institution during the Vietnam era.

²²³ Lymari Morales, "Nearly All Americans Consider Military Service 'Patriotic,'" Gallup, July 3, 2008, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/108646/Nearly-All-Americans-Consider-Military-Service-Patriotic.aspx>.

²²⁴ Gallup, "Military and National Defense," accessed March 18, 2021, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1666/Military-National-Defense.aspx>.

Retrospective identity factors into this because the public uses patriotism and yearning for past glories as a substitute for their own form of service. Each regime in the past had some sort of public service expected in times of war, but not this current regime. There is no State construction of identity either. Instead, the public is expected to support servicemembers vehemently because the social expectation is to do so. Often, the public may link this sort of treatment as a reaction to the mistreatment of Vietnam veterans after returning home from that conflict, but there is more to it than that. If the public were to lose the military as a respected institution, there would be no other institution to replace it. The U.S. military represents not just a defense of the nation, but a defense of the ideals of the American experience, whatever the individual citizen interprets that to be. It has become the locus and guardian of American pride. From the Revolution to the Civil War to World War II, the military has fought, sacrificed, and died for the country. At this point in American history, where government is perceived to be in constant gridlock and distrust of other institutions is rampant, the military remains the one institution that can make Americans take pride in themselves with little debate. Displays of patriotism thus, particularly those showing reverence for the military, become a form of expected service from the public.

Yet, the problem is that there is no personal cost to this patriotism. Military service and the public's patriotism become siloed entities, often cut off from each other when it comes to war. This is not to say that patriotism is not a component for military service, but more that patriotism becomes the expectation outside of military service. There are those who serve in the military, who perform a patriotic duty, and then there are those who do not serve in the military, who are expected to toe a certain socially-constructed patriotic line. Patriotism thus becomes a main outlet through which the American public deals with the shifting geopolitical environment

in which they feel they have no control along with the move towards a less certain American identity. Patriotism fills that void, and it allows the public to vacate responsibility for considering the consequences of war or doing anything to shrink the military portion of the State. The State and the military thus are able to conduct war unabated with little to no political consequence, as has been the case in the past two decades. Next, we will examine war itself as a possible panacea for the uncertainty in which the American public feels.

War as a Patriotic Enterprise

The compartmentalization of military service and the public's patriotism perpetuates a situation where war occurs, even if there is little justification for it. The State directs the war, the military serves in the war, and the public supports it through patriotism without challenging it. It is here where the problem exists. The public disconnect from war allows patriotism to grow with no limit. During Vietnam, the public shamed the State for its actions. Now, there is no shame in what the State does vis-à-vis military operations abroad, at least no shame to the point of limiting any operations the State may wish to do since there is a lack of political consequences. War is no longer just a means of achieving strategic political goals abroad for the nation, but is also a means of improving the self-image of the nation. It allows the public to feel better about the geopolitical situation in which the United States finds itself. Patriotism perpetuates war, and war perpetuates patriotism in an almost endless cycle.

A walk through almost any portion of American society illustrates the pervasiveness of patriotism, especially in the post-2001 era. This harkens back to Billig's banal nationalism and the use of nationalist flags to recall the nationalist endeavors. The American flag, for example, is plastered on government uniforms, cars, and any number of other representations. American-

made items are used as selling points to indicate higher quality, and even just patriotic support is a selling point as well. Almost all sporting events begin with the national anthem and sometimes even other patriotic and militaristic displays, like aircraft flyovers or veteran call-outs, sometimes even with these events quietly sponsored by the military itself.²²⁵ American life is replete with tributes to the military in some form, and these symbols are often inert in their intention, but undermining in their effect. Patriotism alone does not create war, per se, but it does perpetuate the use of war to make the greater society feel good about itself.

An example to demonstrate this sort of patriotism perpetuating war would be videos which show servicemembers being welcomed home from serving abroad. Many news segments will show unexpected families in a situation, whether at work, school, a sporting event, or elsewhere. Their servicemember will appear and surprise them to much fanfare for those who observe the event.²²⁶ This has become a completely normal and habitual event, and Americans view it as a positive because it reunites a family who has sacrificed their own personal time together for the country. The problem is that these videos necessitate a war or at least the perception that the country is at war in order for them to exist. Without a war to separate the servicemember from his or her family, there would be no need for a reuniting. This element is often left out of these stories because the feel-good element of reuniting the family takes precedent, so much so that these sorts of videos often roll in local news segments, even some two decades after these wars have begun. It would be one thing if these stories of reunification were simply done at the end of conflicts, as was prevalent in images after World War II, but with

²²⁵ Eyder Peralta, "Pentagon Paid Sports Teams Millions For 'Paid Patriotism' Events," NPR, November 5, 2015, <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/11/05/454834662/pentagon-paid-sports-teams-millions-for-paid-patriotism-events>.

²²⁶ These videos are almost too numerous to count, but any online search will likely produce thousands of recent examples.

endless war, these sorts of images are much more commonplace and accepted. This is an example of the placation of public responsibility for war. In its place now rests a patriotic spirit, one in which the public pays no personal cost, but one that entertains the public at the same time.

Additionally, support for the military is expected in almost all social and political situations, and this has become especially prevalent in the major wars of the AVF regime. The problem with this expectation of support is its pernicious ability to silence dissent against any war. For example, at the height of the Iraq War, anti-war citizens would sometimes proclaim support for troops, but not the war.²²⁷ This expression was rather common, and its intention was meant to express support for servicemembers who had to serve while also expressing disdain for the conflict. However, this sort of expression is still tacit support for the military and militarism in general, even if one is questioning the State's actions. The military remains the respected institution that cannot be questioned. This is not the same sentiment as was in the Vietnam era when both the military and the war were questioned; now the military itself is not to be disparaged. One can no longer demean the military because that has other social consequences with it, but at the same time, there is no political animus to change this. To do so would likely be considered unpatriotic. As a result, expressions like this silence a major part of the dissent concerning war. The quelled dissent blunts any argument against war, and along with this, the lack of the public's connection to the war provides no impetus to act against war.

These were just a few examples, but they underline that war can serve as a perpetuation of patriotism for the individual citizen who does not serve. The nation being at war can make the individual feel better because it stokes patriotic feelings through displays of patriotism. These sorts of displays are much less impactful when there is not a war to fight. Wars also play into

²²⁷ Paul Rieckhoff, "Can You Support the Troops but Not the War? Troops Respond," HuffPost, July 31, 2006, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/can-you-support-the-troop_b_26192.

retrospective identity because they harken back to times of victory in which the United States was a positive world actor. With no perceived public cost, war becomes an enterprise unto itself, not just to take actions abroad, but to make the public feel better about itself.

The Veteran Redux

If we recall from the Peacetime Draft era, the veteran came to be the symbol of patriotism and service to the country, especially after World War II and the existential war that it was. This portrayal placed the veteran on a pedestal, separate from society in terms of deserving benefits that other citizens have not earned. The high standard of treatment of veterans diminished during Vietnam, but it has since resurged to the point of persistently high social respect and also persistently high government spending. The veteran of the AVF era is treated more highly and given more benefits than veterans of eras past. This could be linked in part to the choice of serving now as more noble and thus more deserving. It could also be linked to the diminishing number of veterans in the overall population leaving more resources for the select few who serve. Whatever the reason, it has consequential effects on the political execution of war. The veteran becomes a symbol of worship, worthy of social spending that other groups do not receive. The veteran also becomes a justification for political action, even when there is no need for a particular action.

To illustrate these points, we should first look to how the American State rewards veterans in the AVF regime. In the Peacetime Draft regime, the veteran had access to money for college and government-backed home loans. Now, veterans have access to much more. The Department of Veterans Affairs, or VA, in 2021 spend about \$230 billion to administer veterans' programs, which include running VA hospitals and educational programs. This number is much

higher than the approximately \$50 billion spent on VA programs in the early 2000s.²²⁸ Part of this is because of the higher number of service-connected disabilities due to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. These disabilities privilege a servicemember to upwards of \$3000 a month depending on the severity of the disability.²²⁹ Another part of it is recent changes to the GI Bill to increase benefits and accord more money for college to servicemembers.²³⁰ VA money is separate from the DOD budget, meaning that its budget is an additional burden onto the State to take care of veterans. Additionally, veterans who are still in the service can receive large enlistment bonuses, all-but-guaranteed yearly pay raises, and free healthcare from the military as well as a number of other support services that the military provides, like family assistance groups or complimentary legal counsel. All of these programs isolate the veteran from many of the costs that the rest of the public may deal with on a daily basis. The justification is that the servicemembers earns these benefits, but it is also another way of stratifying a line between the public and the military. The military does not have to deal with fluctuations in healthcare prices or concerns about pay cuts, which are often part of the public's existence. Servicemembers simply do the job that the public does not want to do itself or have to think about, and thus they are entitled to such benefits.

Veterans are also further isolated outside of these government programs as well. In terms of monetary costs on the public, there are a lot more free or reduced cost items that are given to

²²⁸ Erin Duffin, "Outlays of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in Fiscal Years 2000 to 2025," Statista, March 5, 2021, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/200507/outlays-of-the-us-department-of-veterans-affairs-since-2000/>.

²²⁹ National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, "Statistical Trends: Veterans with a Service-Connected Disability, 1990 to 2018," May 2019, https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/Quickfacts/SCD_trends_FINAL_2018.pdf.

²³⁰ Department of Veterans Affairs, "VA and the Post 9/11 GI Bill," accessed March 23, 2021, https://www.va.gov/opa/issues/post_911_gibill.asp.

veterans as a recompense for their service. Perhaps the most prominent example of this is the rather recent Veterans' Day tradition of giving free items to veterans. This custom began as a small event just after the attacks of September 11 when companies like Golden Corral, for example, want to thank veterans with a free meal.²³¹ Today, hundreds of chains and stores on Veterans' Day do these types of deals, with everything from free meals, carwashes, haircuts, or oil changes to name a few.²³² It is now to the point where the expectation is that veterans receive something free from just about every private establishment on Veterans' Day, even if it is just a discount.

Along these same lines is an incessant need for the public to thank veterans for their service. This occurs at major events to individual one-on-one interactions and many places in between. Sports events are a clear example of this, with some sort of recognition of military service as part of any program. However, it is probably most common when individual citizens meet servicemembers or veterans, which opens an opportunity for those citizens to express personal thanks. However, this is, once again, a social expectation born out of this post-2001 AVF era. Whether it is meant as a good intention or not does not matter. It places the veteran on a separate plain than the civilian. It perpetuates a stereotype that veterans are distinct and worthy of thanks and respect. Whether one agrees with this or not, it compounds an already patriotic atmosphere that allows the public to accept war as normal, commonplace, and something that

²³¹ Golden Corral, "Golden Corral Honors U.S. Military on 18th Annual Military Appreciation Night," November 1, 2018, <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/golden-coral-honors-us-military-on-18th-annual-military-appreciation-night-300742584.html>.

²³² The one list here lists 155 separate establishments with Veterans' Day deals, but it is not an all-inclusive list. Heather Sweeney, "2020 Veterans Day Free Meals and Restaurant Deals and Discounts," Military.com, accessed March 23, 2021, <https://www.military.com/veterans-day/restaurants-veterans-day-military-discounts.html>.

they are not part of. Without war, the servicemember's service may not rise to the level of praise that it is at today.

All of these elements associated with the treatment of veterans are compensation methods for the public. They play into retrospective identity because, just as the military and war help to make the public feel better about the U.S. position in the world, treating veterans with respect achieves a similar end. The veteran is the cornerstone of service to the nation and the State. It is in the veteran that the image of goodness of being an American emanates from. The veteran serves as the incarnation of a perceived long tradition of Americans standing for principles, even when those principles may not be as clearly defined in modern American warfare.

Overall, retrospective identity plays the role of assuaging concerns over American wars. The public is largely disconnected from the wars and the military, but the public buys into narratives about how the military is a prominent and respectable institution, no matter what situation. This is rooted in much of the historical connection that the public has had with the military in prior regimes, but not so during the AVF. Since the public no longer is forced to serve in the military and the U.S. position in the world is perceived as being in decline, the compensation measure is patriotism, which allows the public to feel reassured in an uncertain world. However, it also placates any public responsibility for the current wars and provides a major political opening for the State to be permanently engaged in war. Even if the war in Afghanistan were to end anytime soon, the sheer length of the war along with Iraq and all of the other minor conflicts fought in the 21st Century show that the United States can now fight in a permanent war footing. The disconnection between the public and the military will likely exacerbate this situation, and the burden for war will rest on those who volunteer. Americans

will continue to use patriotism as a means of compensating for their lack of military service, and this will in turn shape identity for generations to come.

An Analysis of the Hypotheses for the All-Volunteer Force Regime

Shifting back to our hypotheses, the AVF stands as our final regime of analysis for this project. The AVF is distinct from all prior regimes in that there was absolutely no compulsory mechanism for requiring military service to the American public inherent within this regime. All other periods had some mechanism that was used to compel service either at the Federal with military drafts or at the state level with militias. As such, this regime serves as the end point of our analysis as, at least at the time of writing, there is not likely to be a change to this regime. The AVF will remain the structure of military recruitment for the foreseeable future. As for our hypotheses, the AVF can address all four in depth, specifically the absence of the elements addressed in each.

Our first hypothesis concerning regimes with diffused costs and compulsory service required from the public reducing the length of American wars is supported by the AVF, particularly by more recent conflicts. It provides credence to the hypothesis by showing a regime without diffused costs or compulsory service. Afghanistan and Iraq are the two longest major conflicts in American history, with Afghanistan lasting two decades, more than double the length of the Iraq War. Clearly, there is a correlation that no required service has created the environment to sustain longer conflicts in the 21st Century, which is much different than prior eras. The one possible contradictory example to this hypothesis though is the Persian Gulf War, which was relatively brief and used the AVF effectively. However, one cannot negate the extraneous effect that Vietnam Syndrome had on that particular conflict. Keeping the conflict

short with precise objectives and goals was a necessity to making the AVF a success in the early 1990s. Therefore, any extension of that conflict into a quagmire-like state would have risked the public's perception of the AVF, which was politically risky. By Iraq and Afghanistan, the public's confidence in the AVF had grown, so its effectiveness was not in question, but the longer length of these wars seems to correlate with the lack of compulsory service.

Our second hypothesis concerns conscription components shaping American identity through shared sacrifice. Once again, the AVF serves as an example of the inverse, of no shared sacrifice in this particular regime, but still lending credibility to the hypothesis. This regime had neither conscription nor shared sacrifice components. No American was required to sacrifice for any of these conflicts if they did not volunteer. Thus, the burden of these conflicts fell exclusively on the AVF and, by extension, the private contracting firms who worked for the government. This lack of shared sacrifice still shaped American identity, but it did so differently than in regimes past. The public's personal investment in wars was more psychological than physical, and even then, the public had a much easier time at ignoring the war. The burden of sacrifice rested on a smaller population, so sacrifice did not represent an element of shaping any form of identity during this regime.

Our third hypothesis, concerning American identity over time being a State-led development, both by individual states and the Federal Government, associated with the development of specific military regimes, is not necessarily confirmed by this particular regime, but that is mainly because the construction of identity ended with the last regime. There was no new construction of an identity during the AVF regime, in that there was no evolutionary step beyond international identity. Past regimes had built new identities onto prior forms of identity. The AVF regime did not do this, instead creating a retrospective identity rooted in patriotic

displays. Neither the State nor the individual states were substantial creators of any sort of identity during the AVF period. With no mandatory service regime, the State's ability to mold identity within its citizens was limited, and this likely is why this retrospective form of identity exists with strong elements of patriotism at its core as a sort of panacea for the lack of State-guided identity formation. The State, however, was not shy about using historical narratives about American identity to facilitate public support for war. Narratives around the United States being good, wholesome, and defenders of democracy helped to foster public support for the wars, especially after the attacks of September 11. These narratives were called upon to achieve a political end, but they did not create any form of identity. They simply exacerbated the identity that already existed. Therefore, it is difficult to see this hypothesis as confirmed by the AVF, but this is more due to the construction of American identity being completed by this time than any other justification.

Our final hypothesis, that of the disestablishment of conscripted military service creating a more unstable American identity, reinforced by high levels of patriotism, is clearly demonstrated by this regime. With fewer direct connections to the military, whether in terms of family members serving or being a servicemember oneself, the American public has effectively disengaged from the wars in which the U.S. military fights. The professionalization of the military has created a highly-specialized force, but it has lost a durable connection to the public in which it serves. The public is not knowledgeable on what the military does, and with almost five decades completed of the AVF, the public is at least two generations removed from having being forced to consider what the military does or to personally face the wars in which the State fights. The public loves and respects the military, the public supports the military when they fight in war, but the connection ends there. The compensatory act for this disconnection is a

sustained level of patriotism, driven by that lack of understanding, but not wanting to challenge the status quo because there is no personal need to. It is not a newer formation of American identity more so than it is a reflection on past glories in an uncertain time.

Concluding Remarks on the All-Volunteer Force

Since the end of the Peacetime Draft, the AVF has created a U.S. military that is more specialized and more adept at late 20th and early 21st Century warfare. As shown in the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq, the AVF is extremely capable and lethal at fighting adversaries and winning wars against State actors in a quick and decisive manner. However, extended war drains much of the AVF's power, which the State has supplemented through private military contractors and extensive use of the Reserve and National Guard, among other policies and methods.

The period of the AVF, particularly during the 21st Century, has corresponded with a growing retrospective American identity. A perceived loss in prestige and position in the world challenges American beliefs in what the nation represents and where it stands, but to compensate, citizens exercise a form of patriotism which expounds the veteran and war as both noble and good. With no personal connection to the military, the public largely does not intervene in the State's execution of the wars. Because of this, patriotism acts as a means of enacting some sense of service within the public since the public is no longer forced to serve today. This sort of patriotism and form of identity exacerbates the length of modern war because the public is expected to support the military, and the State obliges by fighting the wars and providing resources to veterans. This in turn makes the public feel better, but does not impede the execution of war.

The AVF serves the end-state for our analysis in this project. The American State in the decades to come is likely to face numerous challenges internationally, and the U.S. military will continue to evolve and fight the nation's wars. What will not change is the state of the AVF in terms of how it gets its personnel. Volunteers will likely be the only way in which individuals become servicemembers, whether that be volunteering directly for the military or through private contracting. A military draft or a renewed form of mandatory service is just not likely to occur in the long-term future, if ever again. The status and form of American identity is thus not likely to change either, and the American public, devoid of any sense or connection to American conflict, will use patriotism and retrospective identity as ways of compensating for its lack of personal service and sacrifice.

Chapter Seven

Military Service and Identity: A Summation

“Were the Soviet Union to sink tomorrow under the waters of the ocean, the American military-industrial establishment would have to go on, substantially unchanged, until some other adversary could be invented. Anything else would be an unacceptable shock to the American economy.”

--George F. Kennan

At the beginning of this project, we sought out to discover the American relationship between military service and identity. To accomplish this, we focused on a set of variables, seeking to understand the historical connection and development of military service regimes and American identity. Our goal was first to demonstrate that this connection exists and then to show what effect it has on the political landscape and development of the United States. We looked at major conflicts over the course of some two and a half centuries of American history, and we use war length as a dependent variable to demonstrate a disconnection between the American public and the U.S. military. We attempted to show how war and the State have evolved, particularly how the State was weak in the early decades, reliant on individual states who retained most of the military power, and how over time, the American State usurped military power to the point that it is unquestioned today that military control is a Federal prerogative. What exists today is an American military structure that is nested mostly at the Federal level, with state National Guard units integrated into that structure. The growth of that structure for most of U.S. history was correlated with a strong public connection to military

service, whether in the militias, military drafts or volunteers. Today, only one of these elements, the volunteers, exists, and its use during an era where war has become persistent and commonplace has changed the landscape of war and dynamics of the public-military relationship.

What this chapter will provide is a summation of what we have learned from the previous chapters. We will first look at our hypotheses to see what is supported through our analysis. After that, we will look briefly at the growth of the State's military power on a grand scale from the Founding up until our current era. After that, we will look at the corresponding identity development lines as they grew over that same time period to see how they overlap today and still color how Americans view themselves. In the final sections, we will explore a possible solution to this gap between the military and the public, which is a renewed military draft, as well as some areas for possible future research beyond this project.

An Analysis of the Hypotheses

The first place we should look to is a summation of the hypotheses inherent to the project. The hypotheses for this project were as follows:

H1: Military regimes with diffused costs and compulsory service required from the public reduces the length of American wars.

H2: Military regimes with conscription components shape American identity through shared sacrifice.

H3: American identity over time has been a State-led development, both by individual U.S. states and the Federal Government, associated with the development of specific military regimes.

H4: The disestablishment of conscripted military service has created a more unstable American identity, reinforced by high levels of patriotism.

Table 7-1. Overall List of Data Compiled from All Regimes

Conflict	War Type	Outcome	Length in Days	Total Served	Militia/ Draftees Served	Total U.S. Deaths
Revolution (1775-1783)	Existential/ Defensive	Win	3059	~217,000- 231,000	~145,000	4,435
War of 1812 (1812-1815)	Dispute/ Defensive	Draw	974	286,730 (official)	~251,730- 423,000	2,260
Mexican- American War (1846-1848)	Expansionist/ Offensive	Win	649	78,718 (official)	~60,000 (volunteers)	13,283
Civil War (Union) (1861- 1865)	Existential/ Offensive	Win	1488	2,213,363	~164,000	364,511
Civil War (Confederacy)	Existential/ Defensive	Loss	1488	~750,000- 1,227,890	~300,000	~258,000
Spanish- American War (1898)	Expansionist/ Offensive	Win	115	306,760	0	1,662
World War I (1917-1918)	Dispute/ Offensive	Win	585	4,734,991	2,810,296	116,516
World War II (1941-1945)	Existential/ Offensive	Win	1365	16,112,566	10,110,104	405,399
Korea (1950-1953)	Dispute/ Defensive	Draw	1128	5,720,000	1,529,539	36,574
Vietnam (1964-1973)	Dispute/ Defensive	Loss	3097	8,744,000	1,857,304	58,220
Persian Gulf (1991)	Dispute/ Offensive	Win	210	2,225,000	0	383
Afghanistan (2001-?)	Dispute/ Defensive	Undecided	7000+	2,770,000+	0	2,352
Iraq (2003-2011)	Dispute/ Defensive	Undecided	3195		0	4,418

The data to help us with these hypotheses can be found on the next page in Table 7-1. We will refer to this data throughout the chapter to assist with explaining the results of the hypothesis analysis and the rest of this project. Additionally, in the last section of each chapter, we looked at each hypothesis to see how the regime compared and whether they were supported or not. For the sake of simplicity, the hypotheses and regimes are charted below with their respective results in Table 7-2 along with a scale pointing to whether each hypothesis is supported, partially supported, or not applicable.

Table 7-2. Hypothesis Results

	H1	H2	H3	H4
Militia	S	PS	S	X
Coercive	S	PS	S	X
Peacetime Draft	S	S	S	PS
AVF	S	S	PS	S

Key: S = Supported, PS = Partially Supported, X = Not Applicable

A few things stand out when we look at our hypothesis results. The first is the support across all regimes of the first hypothesis. Each one of our regimes demonstrated in some perspective that regimes with diffused costs and compulsory service do reduce the length of American wars. The militia, coercive, and Peacetime Draft regimes all tend to have wars that are shorter in duration when compared to the AVF, which is the one regime with the two longest wars in American history. The average length of major wars in the militia, coercive, and Peacetime Draft regimes combined is approximately 1384 days.²³³ For the wars of the AVF,

²³³ Individually, the militia regime wars average to approximately 1560 days, the coercive regime to 729 days, and the Peacetime Draft regime to 1863 days.

pegging the war in Afghanistan to just 7000 days, the average is just under 3500 days, and that average is still growing at the time of writing. It would be a step too far to say that diffused costs and compulsory service are the only reasons for the shortening of American war. There are a variety of other factors that could be in play, to include war objectives, political decisions, and other limitations, but we do easily see some correlation here. We have three regimes where war placed some burden on the greater population, and this led to reduced war lengths, while the inverse showed longer war lengths.

The second hypothesis is more or less supported, showing that military regimes with conscription components tend to help create American identity. In the militia and coercive regimes, we saw rudimentary forms of American identity at the state and regional level, which helped to form and mold a greater American identity later one. These state and regional identities corresponded to service in state militias and Northern/Southern Civil War drafts, respectively. By World War I, American national identity had become rooted and grew alongside the military draft at the time. By the end of World War II, American identity had reached a zenith with the creation of an international identity, molded by the shared wartime military experience within that the war had created. Finally, the AVF helps to support this hypothesis by demonstrating the inverse, showing a regime that has no conscription and with the result being an unmoored, unsure form of retrospective identity that focuses more on accomplishments of the past than shaping any sort of identity.

The third hypothesis about identity being a State-led development at different levels related to military regimes is supported as well. Both individual states and the Federal Government fostered forms of identity through their respective military powers. Individual states retained military power early on, fostering their own identities. By the Civil War, regional

identities were reinforced by the respective State structures of the Union and the Confederacy. Once again, by the time of the World Wars, the American State had become supreme in terms of military power, and so too had it in shaping American identity at the national and international level. By the time of the AVF, the State was not molding identity as it had in prior regimes because it could retain military power without molding that identity. Instead, it could use patriotism as means of garnering support for political actions and the military. In short, the American case shows that the State is a strong actor in shaping identity.

The final hypothesis concerns the disestablishment of the conscription regime creating an unstable form of American identity. This particular hypothesis is only demonstrated by the Peacetime Draft and AVF regimes as the moment of transition between these two regimes is the moment where we see the conscription regime end in the United States. Thus, only these two regimes can shed light on this particular hypothesis. The AVF clearly demonstrates that there is some merit to this hypothesis; since there is no mandatory service, there is no institution through which the State can mold and shape identity within the citizenry. This does not mean that the State cannot shape identity in other ways, through education programs or patriotic appeals, but the personal costs of those are much different than of military service. Also, the public can simply ignore these programs or appeals, meaning in some sense that identity becomes whatever the public generally sees it as. The Peacetime Draft also partially supports this with the Vietnam War causing social friction which ended the draft and leading to a period of questioning U.S. supremacy.

Generally, these hypotheses are well-supported. While the regimes may not always line up with the hypotheses, we can see based on the structure of this project the broader trends within the fields of American Political Development, nationalism, and civil-military relations

concerning the State, the construction of its military, what role the public plays in supporting American war, and how all of these play into the construction of American identity over time. The next few sections will summarize some of the general aspects of this study supportive of the hypotheses.

A State-Grown Military

The U.S. military of today is mostly a Federal entity and has been for at least a century. The American State has usurped military power in the two and half centuries of American existence, using it to conduct war abroad to achieve political goals. Those goals have shaped the military, but they have also diverged it from what it once was, forcing it to evolve with each generation that controls it and each conflict that each generation fights. By looking at this project's analysis of the American State, its military, and the historical development of both institutions, we can determine some common trends which have shaped the military into the Federal institution that it is today.

First and foremost, the State and war have served to shape the U.S. military into the structure that it has been in the past and is today. A look back at some of the foundational theory to this study showed how the State is one of the primary, if not, the primary actor in driving military development. In general political science terms, States hold onto territory and require some force in order to defend that territory and the people within it. States are thus bound to develop militaries or, at the very least, quasi-militaristic structures in order to defend their own interests. The other component to this is war. States conduct war as a means of either growing their control or protecting themselves from other States trying to grow their control. The types

of wars that a State may engage force military structures to adapt and evolve beyond their original or intended structure.

What is unique about the American case is that it demonstrates this relationship between the State and war, but adds in a unique strain of anti-statism in the mix. The American military structure as originally intended was meant to invest the majority of military power at levels lower than a central government, dividing the military up among the individual states with the people serving in the militias. These militias represented the bulk of the American fighting force early on, and they kept the Federal Government from becoming too powerful. The Federal Government had to ask states for militias to serve as the bulk of its military units, thus keeping a check on Federal power. This was an idealistic anti-statist system, and at its core were the people, who made up the militias. As intended, the State could still fight wars, but the strong involvement of the people through state militias made the State give a compelling reason for fighting those wars and weakened the State's ability to enter frivolous conflicts.

Yet, this structure failed fairly quickly, requiring State intervention and adaptation. The rest of American history beyond the militia system is effectively a protracted political battle in which the State becomes the dominant entity in military power over time. Soon after the Founding, battles like the Wabash and Bladensburg provided clear evidence of the shortcomings of militias as a major military force. The Federal Government grew its military force outside of the militia with volunteers during the Mexican-American War, and both the Union and Confederacy used directly military drafts, bypassing the states, to supplement their respective militaries during the Civil War. The State by this time had become a primary creator of military force through State coercion, forced in part by the evolving warfare requiring massive armies on the battlefield. By World War I, compulsory service became the standard, linking the greater

society to the wars fought in its name, and the public largely approved through social coercion. World War II perfected the use of military drafts and was the pinnacle of societal involvement in total war, and in its wake, it helped to create the Peacetime Draft which mandated an expectation of military service in war and peace. This expectation lasted until Vietnam, which ruptured this belief, transitioning the entirety of the U.S. military at all levels to an AVF, which it remains today.

For almost all of U.S. history except for the first few years after the Founding, the American State has grown its military power and influence, and each regime has helped to build that power and influence. The initial movement away from the militia system set in motion the gradual creation of what the Founders likely never intended, a national military structure with the bulk of the force at the Federal level. This structure obviously did not occur instantaneously, and we still have elements of military power at the individual state level with National Guard units and other forms of state defense forces, but for more than a century now, the Federal Government has dominated the funding, the shaping, and the use of military forces both on at home and abroad. The structure of the military is now heavily dependent on the Federal Government, and any attempt to return military power to the states would be practically impossible given this dependence.

Yet, when we look at this gradual shift towards aggregating military power at the Federal level, the American public remained a key component of the military at all levels through most of this transition, whether serving in early militias or later as volunteers and draftees. As the State created a system from which it took military power, it still kept the public close to the military and close to war. This was, at least, one portion of the Founders' intent that lasted beyond the initial years of the militia regime. By keeping the public closely knitted to the

military, the push for war could not be fully successful without some form of explicit public support. Even after the militia system was officially dissolved with the Dick Act, the State and the public held onto that belief that if the nation were to go to war, the burden would be shared across the population in some form. This knitting of the public to the military lasted up through the Vietnam era, when this belief broke with the perception of an unjust war. Since then, the American public has largely been a bystander to American war.

Currently, the AVF system is a far cry from the militia-based structure that the Founders originally implemented, but the AVF is the demonstration of the complete consolidation of military power under the State while also negating the need for public involvement in war, apart from just general support. The public is no longer part of the military service equation, except if they volunteer. This changes the political dynamics of going to war because it places the burden of war on a select few and it allows the public to sidestep any responsibility for concerns over war. While the public can still protest war, these protests do little to actually change the dynamics of war. The American political system as it is still perpetuates war as both political parties advocate for war in different contexts and for different reasons, all the while the military, intelligence agencies, and other government departments focused on security consume resources to justify their own existence. The public does not have to politically accept this or agree with it, but as we have seen over two decades of war, the public does little to change this dynamic.

Since 2001, the United States has been on a permanent war footing, and the structure and general acceptance of the AVF has allowed this to happen. The State has created a military force structure which allows it conduct permanent war abroad, and few in the political class or the public challenge it. Once again, the AVF is the only moment in U.S. history where the expectation of any sort of military service does not exist, and during that time, two of the longest

wars in American history have occurred. The lack of public involvement in fighting American war has created an era of permanent, if not, at the very least, prolonged war.

Modern American Identity

Turning towards American identity, this project sought to explore how these military regimes helped to shape American identity. Each regime presented a form of identity that was reinforced with the military service structures of that particular time. With the militia regime, we saw individual state identities arise. During the coercive regime with military drafts, we saw the rise of regional and national identity. With the Peacetime Draft, international identity became a consolidated form of American identity. Subsequently, with the AVF, we saw retrospective identity, which was not so much a new identity, but more a reflection on past identities given the geopolitical situation in the United States finds itself in today. Throughout each of these regimes, the military structure in place reinforced that particular identity, but even with this, we still see strands of these separate identities interwoven in the greater American identity of today. It is this interweaving which helps to foster the retrospective identity that we see in today's American society.

If we recall, militias were a fundamental institution to forming and creating individual state identity. Most of the 13 colonies had their own militias with some form of identity based on their state political culture. Additionally, we saw examples of the inverse, where instead of states forming militias, militias helped to form states in the case of Vermont and Texas by creating an institution before the state itself was established. State identity was thus reinforced through militia service where individuals served with other individuals from their communities and were regrouped into units that were organized and named by the states from which they

came. Moreover, interactions with the bureaucracy were primarily state-based with much less power and influence emanating from the Federal level.

Regional identities developed out of common cultural traits held by states in particular regions. Originally, the main classification for these regional identities evolved out of the Federal Government's classification of free states and slave states, which for the most part tends to overlap with Northern and Southern states. A lot of the construction of Northern and Southern identity came from antebellum legislation at the Federal level that grouped together states based on their use of slavery, and the Civil War reinforced these regional identities with State-like structures in place, becoming effectively the culminating event for the construction of American regional identity. Both the Confederacy and the Union used their State structures to draft their respective citizens into their militaries, which in turn strengthened regional identities because it compelled individuals to fight for their respective causes. Both drafts are examples of State coercion forcing identity upon individuals. These regional identities lasted well beyond the Civil War with most Northern and Southern states sharing common political and social practices and ideologies. In the end, these regional identities served as a stepping stone between individual state and national identity.

A national identity coalesced out of the turn of the 20th Century when the American State had much more power to shape and mold people's lives directly. The movement westward across the North American continent had ended with most territory being formed into new states. With the State's amalgamation of military power at the Federal level, particularly after the success of the Spanish-American War and through legislation like the Dick Act and the National Defense Act of 1916, the only remaining requirement to consolidate a national identity was a cause, which came during World War I. In spite of the isolationist movement prior to the war,

the public embraced the conflict once war had been declared in 1917. The frenzy to register for the draft and serve created a social coercion, which consolidated the American formation of national identity around a renewed ideal of military service when the nation calls. It is by this time that a viable form of American national consciousness and identity began to exist.

The next form, which was perhaps the pinnacle, of American identity came out of the World War II era when the American State prepared and executed a total war. The American fight against the Japanese and Nazi Germany created an existential crisis which the American public and the U.S. military had to face together. Millions enlisted and over 10 million were drafted to fight. The American industrial based was mobilized as well, and what came out of World War II was an international identity for the American public. This identity was defined the different elements of freedom, democracy, capitalism, and the willingness of all Americans to fight for those values. The State reinforced this identity through the Peacetime Draft, compelling citizens to serve if they were chosen, whether in wartime or peace. This sort of identity still defines the Americans view of themselves today, serving as a centerpiece for narratives on global U.S. dominance.

This leads us to the form of identity that we see today, that of retrospective identity, formed in the decades since Vietnam and in the absence of any sort of mandatory military service. It is best to look at this kind of identity as an amalgamation of elements of prior identities. With the State's role much less in fostering and shaping identity through any sort of mandated service, military or otherwise, the State has allowed for American identity to become what individual Americans interpret it to be, and if anything, this form of identity rests more on the victories of the past than it does on creating something new or durable. What has resulted is a coloration of identity that is a mix of what we have seen in prior regimes. Retrospective

identity allows Americans to simply take elements from the collective past and use them to justify actions of today. Much of this is done through the frame of patriotism and other acts which make the public feel better about the uncertain status of American power today. For instance, if the United States has fought in the past against tyranny and for freedom and democracy, these justifications overlap much easier onto narratives for war than other reasons may.

With American identity being an evolution over time, the one element that is clear from our analysis of it is that the current period has not been an evolutionary step forward in identity creation but rather a step backwards. Using American identity in whatever forms is cheap now since there is little to no cost to the individual, and this retrenchment is correlated with the establishment of the AVF. One by-product is a general sense or need to be at war in order to make the public feel better about the state of American international affairs today. However, that weight of war falls squarely on the shoulders of those who volunteer, not the hundreds of millions of other Americans who do not serve. In wars past, the public was involved through service, thus earning their identity. This is not the case today.

A Short Case for a Renewed Military Draft

There is one possible solution that might help solve the disconnect between the public and the military: bring back the military draft. First, this argument for the draft should be caveated with an acknowledgement that this is likely never to occur, at least not in 21st Century American society as it is. A military draft would create influx of personnel into a military structure that has adapted to the current volunteer requirements in place since 1973. This structure incorporates technology, funding sources, and private enterprise much differently now

than during prior regimes with mandatory service components. Additionally, despite the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan being much longer than other American conflicts, the AVF has managed and succeeded where it needed to in order to achieve strategic objectives. To bring in millions and millions of new draftees would likely create chaos within the ranks, at least in the interim until the military figured out what to do with draftees. Plus, the drawdowns in Afghanistan and Iraq have lowered the operations tempo on the AVF, which has allowed much of the force to readjust and posture towards other threats abroad. As it is now, the AVF is poised to meet the demands of American war as it is today.

However, this project did not seek to solve that problem. The AVF as a military organization does its job and it does it well. The use of a draft in this argument is not intended to win wars or meet the demands of a war machine, but rather to create a common institution where Americans come together and share a common experience. World War II and the and the Peacetime Draft forged a common experience where it became harder to view American political problems individualistically, but easier to view them as a collective problem that society must deal with together. During that period, the American social safety net grew for all Americans, not just veterans. The collective strength of the country was high because of that shared experience. Since the AVF was implemented, we have seen collective political action regress to some extent, and part of it could be that there is no common place for Americans of all stripes and creeds to come together under a common cause. The effects of a military draft are not simply on wars, but they are also domestic as well.

Additionally, in the early 21st Century, the U.S. military remains the guardian institution of American identity. The public looks to the military as a point of pride for the entire nation. Other generations prior have sacrificed for the country, and that sacrifice continues today, but

only for those who serve. Most Americans today will never experience military life, so they are mere bystanders in the military experience, but they take pride in the actions of the military without sacrificing. This honoring of servicemembers and their sacrifice allows the public to simply be complacent in their responsibilities for the wars. It allows them to not face the country's wars while simultaneously taking pride. The political consequences of war are not felt, shared, or thought about. A draft would rectify this almost immediately.

Finally, one cannot help but consider the counterfactual case of the state of American war would be today if there were a draft over the past two decades. It is hard to imagine that the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan would have lasted as long as they did. The social discord that ended Vietnam may have reverberated during the 2000s, and that discord could have truncated both of these conflicts. Parents would have been forced to send sons and daughters off to war that they did not fully understand. It is hard to say whether they would have accepted that sacrifice, given that their generation never had to serve and the experience of their parents' and grandparents' generations were forced upon them anew. The reaction to the wars would probably have been stiffer and more resounding rather than the general ignorance and malaise about the conflicts that we see today. One could also say that a draft may have changed the dynamics of the American military structure during these conflicts. With a practically limitless amount of personnel, servicemembers may have had to serve only one deployment and the privatization of certain military functions may have been stunted. The wars of the 21st Century certainly would have been different if a draft had been implemented.

Much of this is conjecture, but nonetheless, there is one certainty with a military draft: the political cost of going to war becomes much heavier. When the whole or large part of a society has to carry the burden of war, the State must react to meet the demands of the greater

society because of their sacrifice. If the State goes to war and drafts its citizens to fight, that sacrifice must create clear results, and it forces the State to achieve those results as quickly as possible. Afghanistan and Iraq have shown that with an AVF, there is much less political cost to going to and staying at war. Americans not involved in the war, who are not forced to confront the wars fought in their name, can simply check out. That abdication of responsibility is an individual decision for each person, but it is one made with a collective guilt upon the whole of society. A draft puts a political cost on the public for war, and therein lies its true merit.

Areas for Future Research and Concluding Remarks

This project set about to connect the American identity to military service, a connection that most would agree exists in some form. However, we sought to explore how both military service and identity have changed over time. For almost 200 years of American history from the Revolution to Vietnam, the State had some mechanism for compelling individual citizens into military service, whether through militias or drafts. Since 1973, however, that system has not existed, and what we have now at this point is almost five decades without that expectation from the public. The State has managed and found ways of maintaining its military power through volunteers, but also with a heavy reliance on private enterprise which has supplemented the AVF. In spite of most Americans today never serving in the military, the demand for military power remains. Whether it has grown or not is up to the individual to interpret, but the State has not shied away from using that power.

This study has opened up quite a few areas that could be further researched both beyond and within the scope of this project. The five decades of the AVF means we have a wealth of data points that can be analyzed for how the public interacts with the military. If we recall, one of the

largest gaps in civil-military relations is that direct public-military dynamic since most civil-military relations studies focus on how the civilian authorities control the military. This project only shows some of the general trends in public-military relations vis-à-vis the military draft and militias. Exploring this further would be worthy academic endeavor. On a separate note, one could consider the structure of the regimes presented in this study as an opportunity to investigate further the structure of the U.S. military over time. The broad changes from the militia system to the AVF lend themselves to limitless avenues of analysis both within a particular regime or across regimes. The general scope of this study could allow for more avenues of exploration, particularly within certain elements of each regime, such as how executive or legislative actions helped to create military structures, like the National Guard or other military institutions.

As for identity, there are also quite a few avenues of study available. With each regime corresponding to a particular identity, a further analysis of each particular identity within a regime may create more nuances or opportunities for comparison across regimes. For example, the modern-day reminiscence of the militia regime in terms of creating modern-day illegal militias and the obsessive nature concerning the Second Amendment is likely closely linked to formations of American identity created today about the past. These manifestations might yield explanations for why this connection remains strong today. Along with that, delving further into patriotism and how that manifests within the population would also expose some of the other political elements in play here with how the public treats the military to this day and how that affects the construction of American identity. Overall, there are plenty of further avenues of study beyond this particular project.

In closing, we will finish with a few thoughts on the current and future state of American war. At the time of writing, the war in Afghanistan seems to be drawing a close. After two decades of warfare, the longest war in American history seems to be ending, although that could change depending on the political decisions that are made. This possible end to such a long conflict can be seen as a positive step towards peace or simply the precipice of the next stage in the conflict, similar to how the 2011 pullout in Iraq did not definitively end American involvement in Iraq. Afghanistan's claim to the title of longest American conflict is unlikely to be challenged in the foreseeable future. The United States does not seem poised to launch another major conflict, although, once again, that could change. Whatever occurs, whether the American State fights another major conflict, remains relatively nimble and engages in conflicts across the world with a smaller footprint, or disengages with the world completely, what will endure are the precedents set by both Iraq and Afghanistan and its use of the AVF. The American political class will not burden the American public with the personal consequences of war. No American citizen will have to serve in a conflict for which they do not willingly volunteer, and the AVF is not going anywhere. The consequences of all future American wars will be borne by the select few who choose to serve, and the public will simply be expected to support the military and the conflicts, even tacitly.

American war will not end with Afghanistan. The U.S. military will remain engaged in smaller conflicts around the world, but the next big conflict will come. That conflict will involve a public even further removed from American war. The question remains what role will it play in that war, or better yet, after the example set by the public's involvement in Afghanistan, will that public even care?

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