

PROLOGUE

“A country and government such as ours are worth fighting for, and dying for, if need be.”

General William Tecumseh Sherman
1875

America's Army

The Army and the Birth of the Nation. The American Army was created on June 14, 1775, when the Continental Congress first authorized the muster of troops to serve under its own authority. Those soldiers came from the provincial forces of the colonies, which were at that time laying siege to Boston. From its birth, the American Army has relied on the citizen soldier, exemplified by the militia and the Minutemen who fought the British at Lexington and Concord. Commanded by General George Washington and supported by our French allies, the Continental Army defeated the British at Yorktown and secured the freedoms so eloquently stated in the Declaration of Independence. Thus, the birth of the Army preceded and guaranteed the birth of the Nation.

The Army in Service to the Nation. In the Constitution of the United States, the Founding Fathers provided that Congress shall have power “To raise and support Armies” and to “provide for the common defence.” The army raised for the nation’s defense incorporates two uniquely American ideas: civilian control of the armed forces, and reliance on the citizen soldier. Over the years, the organization and structure of the Army have adapted to each challenge the Nation has faced, but these basic ideas have remain unchanged.

As the Nation grew, the Army defended the frontiers, protecting the nation’s growth. The Army served the domestic needs of the Republic quietly and efficiently, often because it was the only organization with the training,

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“Our people have always counted with complete confidence upon the loyalty, devotion to duty, and professional ability of the Army, and upon its efficiency in coping with problems incident to war, to earthquake, fire, flood, and drought. Its latest accomplishment has demonstrated its value as an agency splendidly trained and organized to meet and solve, upon a moments notice, administrative and organizational problems of nation wide scope and magnitude.”

General of the Army
Douglas MacArthur
1933



CCC road building, 1932

discipline, skills, and resources to do the work. Exploration, harbor development, and improvement of river navigation were among the early civil works services provided by the Army. Other significant contributions over the years included forming the nation's first modern weather service; supervising the building of the Panama Canal; providing the first air mail service; and serving as the executive agency for the Civilian Conservation Corps. These examples of domestic missions, at home and abroad, highlight the Army's long and important record of peacetime service to the Nation.

DEVELOPING INLAND WATERWAYS AND COMMERCE

In 1837 Lieutenant of Engineers Robert E. Lee led a small party to survey the rapids on the Mississippi River above Des Moines, Iowa, for navigation. By late September, the party finished surveying the upper rapids, returned to Saint Louis, and found another project to occupy the winter months. The Missouri and Mississippi ran together a few miles above the town. This confluence created two islands and a sand bar, which threatened to ruin Saint Louis as a river port. After surveying the various features, Lee proposed a plan that would divert the waters of the river so as to wash away one of the islands and the bar that was growing between them. As construction went along and he saw how the river responded, he made some careful changes in design. His first dike produced better results than planned and gave Lee an idea about how to build a second one. The merchants of Saint Louis were thrilled. When the cost of the whole project exceeded what Congress would authorize, local citizens pledged enough money for Lee to finish the project as he proposed it. The completed dikes caused business to boom. In August 1838, with the river tamed, Lee was promoted to captain.

The Army's Fundamental Purpose. The Army's fundamental purpose is to fight and win the Nation's wars by establishing conditions for lasting peace through land force dominance. This dominance is established through integration of the complementary capabilities of all the services. With this fundamental purpose in mind, the framers of the Constitution intended that armies were to be raised to "provide for the common defence" and, together with the

"The real object of having an Army is to provide for war."

Elihu Root
1899

Navy, to “repel invasion.” Throughout the formative years of the Nation, the Army responded—on the frontiers, in the War of 1812, in the War with Mexico—in fulfillment of this role. During the Civil War, the Army was called upon to support another clause of the Constitution, to “suppress insurrection.” As the Nation became a colonial power following the Spanish-American War, the Army was called upon to secure and administer the new territories.

When the United States became a world power in the 20th century, the Army was called upon to defend our national interests and rights on a wider scale that drew us into alliances in regions far removed from our shores. In the combat operations of the World Wars, in Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf, the Army responded to the call to duty and performed that duty well. In the 40-odd years of Cold War, in many locations around the world, the Army performed a deterrent role as part of the containment strategy. In other places, at other times, the Army fulfilled the Nation’s expectations in operations too small to be called “wars,” although no less dangerous. To the soldiers on the ground, Operations URGENT FURY in Grenada and JUST CAUSE in Panama were indistinguishable from the combat operations of their forefathers. Operations PROVIDE COMFORT in Iraq and RESTORE HOPE in Somalia, although peace operations, also proved to be dangerous. However, like those who went before them, American soldiers responded readily in fulfilling the unlimited liability aspect of their contract. Knowing that simply joining the Army demands a willingness to place one’s life at risk, many have still joined and made the ultimate sacrifice.

The Uniqueness of the Army. The realities of modern combat and the employment of modern technologies have not changed the Army’s role. Under Title 10, United States Code, the Army provides to the unified or joint force commander the capacity for land force dominance. This dominance is attained through the application of overwhelming combat power by the world’s best soldiers, who employ the most modern

“I cannot speak too highly of the work of the army in the Philippines. The officers and men have been equal to the best requirements, not only of military service, but of civil administration with which they were charged in all its details from the date of our occupancy in August, 1898.”

Elihu Root
1901



The Comandancia, Operation Just Cause.

technological equipment, and are trained and led according to superior doctrine to accomplish each mission with minimum casualties and collateral damage.



Meeting the Russian Army, 1945

“Then a stranger thought struck me. Namely that it was I who stood on the German Elbe—not a neutral visitor from Mars, but a taxpaying citizen of the U.S.A. without a passport or visa, five thousand miles from home. With me on the levee were fifty more Americans, behind us ten thousand more, and linked to us across half the width of Europe a hundred divisions more.”

Howard K. Smith

While other services may attack the land and structures and peoples upon it, only the Army, by its long-term physical presence, can compel lasting change.



Patrolling the Korean DMZ.