Can the United States Get 500,000 Volunteers?: An Affirmative Answer ... 
By EDMUND FRANCIS HACKETT, Captain of Infantry, U.S.A. 
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which lends color to such a possibility either. Facts no less remarkable than those themselves back it up, and it was these facts, in all probability, which convinced the Secretary of War that the facts, or recruiting for the army in time of peace should be comparatively easy.

The first of these important facts is the general policy that now gaver the army. Compared with that of pre-war years, this policy is of immense significance, even more important than the fact that the pay of the recruit is now doubt what it was before the war.

Reduced to simple phrakology, it is a guarantee to all recruits that "square pegs will not be thrust into round holes." During the war thousands of men in service, officers and enlisted men alike, found themselves misplaced—doing the thing for which by training and taste they were the least fitted.

Acting upon the, lessons learned from war experience, the army in effect now says to all men to whom the service might appeal: "Choose your branch of the service. If you are ambitious and wish training in any particular trade, choose the branch that teaches that trade. Your future is up to you; but we guarantee you a square deal."

In that one change of policy the army has set up for itself something of the beneficial results of which already are incalculable. The old feeling that the army was a more machine—detached, mysterious, bloodless—is beginning to change. The old misconception of functions in peace—the feeling that it did nothing but mark time and wait for another war—th at, too, seems destined to die utterly. The conviction that there are opportunities in the army for bright and ambitious young men was inevitable, once it was discovered that, under the army's new policy, vocational training and training practically assured to all who wanted it.

And the belief that the army is destined to change greatly in the future—to become perhaps the nation's greatest training school, a "university in uniform," was accessible only to men of character and high ambition—that is slowly beginning to take shape. It is testable, and on these proofs, doubtless, Mr. Baker has his convictions about army volunteers now and of the future.

First in importance as proof are the recruiting figures already referred to. To any one examining the facts set forth above, they must speak volumes. Next in importance, even more significant than the figures, is the attitude of the press, the country over. The press has already shown that it considers the army's newest offer to recruit as news—unusual news. Not merely the sort of news that is "played up" absolutely one day, to be dismally the next, but as a "running story"—one in which the element of continuity assures it protracted treatment. For nearly four months now, recruiting news has received such treatment in the press, the direct result being columns of editorial opinion, amusing in their unanimity of viewpoint as to the merits of the army's offer and its significance to the nation.

Literally, millions of dollars' worth of free publicity, which has covered every State in the union, has already heralded recognition by the country's press of the constructive value of the army's recruitment policy; and apparently it is only a beginning.

The type of recruit now entering the army is more proof of Mr. Baker's contention—proof of the highest kind. Character, pre-eminently superior to any enlisted herebefore in this country, is daily becoming more and more an outstanding feature of the army's recruiting campaign. Character even is indicated in the figures of the rejections. Conservatively estimates already place rejections during the last three months at from 125 to 150 per cent, more than acceptance figures. Character, above all, stamps the majority of men who thus far have been accepted. Three months ago it was cur relatively accepted as a fact that overseas veterans would not re-enlist, now or ever. On June 14 General March, in his weekly, interview, alluded not only to the fact that 92,048 recruits had enlisted up to the 1st of April--92,048 per cent. of that total were re-enlistments.

This fact is unquestionably one of the strongest proofs of the policy for character unquestionably stamps the great majority of the veterans who have re-enlisted as the result of the present policy for more fighting—they've had quite enough of that, they declare—but, failing to find what they think they desire in the form of opportunity in civil life, they are going in for the very concrete opportunity the army now has to offer.

Incidentally, it may be stated as a fact that the army in offering such men education and vocational training, along with pay and "keep" for a one or three-year course—whichever they choose—is doing more to solve the problem of the discharged soldier practically—in the way the latter would have it solved—than any or all other agencies now operating toward that end.

As to what is actually meant by "character" in relation to the army, the following is a fair example. It is a voluntary evidence given by a young man enlisted duratively in the past. Twenty-two years old, he was morning up to the Saturday night preceding his enlistment the sum of weekly. Physically fit, provident and ambitious, his aim was to go to a technical school to prepare to become an architect. Unable to do so because of the expense, he was beginning to despair when he read an advertisement about opportunity open to ambitious young men in Uncle Sam's new peace army. In the Construction Division he read that there were chances to learn practical construction work and to gain a knowledge of its allied trades. Suddenly it dawned upon him that with such a basic training realization of his great future, and without the hesitation he immediately asserted his position as draftsmen and his enlistment was handled as a private contract in the Construction Division of the army.

This instance, typical of the hundreds already tabulated by the recruiting service, and indicative of the type of men now enlisting, cannot be accepted as other than a strong light on the whole army problem, and its relation to the future. As so without hesitation he immediately re-enlisted his position as draftsmen and his enlistment was handled as a private contract in the Construction Division of the army.

Secretary Baker was unquestionably right.

Revolving for the army on such a basis is certain to prove more and more easy. Half a million volunteers can be procured in time of peace and with scarcely more effort than would be needed to get 100,000. Nor is half million volunteers in one year's time the dream it seems to be.

The New York Times, July 6, 1919

Field Cooking: A Typical Scene Where Men of the U. S. Army Are Encamped.

Air Service Photo.

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