

Voluntary Service—Possible?

By Fred S. Hoffman
AP Military Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The question of whether the United States should return to an all-volunteer armed force is caught in cross-currents of argument over race, military influence, patriotism and cost.

Some people oppose the draft because they feel it bears unfairly on blacks.

At the same time, others oppose an all-volunteer force on grounds it would be largely black — their theory being that poor Negroes would be more attracted by the higher pay than would whites who can get better civilian jobs.

President Nixon's special commission weighed the pros and cons for nearly a year before recommending last Saturday the draft, except for emergency standby machinery, be allowed to die next year and that it be replaced by an all-volunteer force.

It stated its belief that the United States could raise and maintain armed forces totalling about 2.5 million men in peacetime without the draft, chiefly by boosting the pay of first-term servicemen and some other improvements in military life.

Past studies have reached the conclusion that it would cost possibly as much as \$17 billion a year more to assure armed forces of that size.

The last time the U.S. government attempted to get along without the draft was a 15-month period in 1947 and 1948.

In those days, the United States had a military force of about 1.5 million—about one million fewer than the Nixon commission's target.

However, there were about 50 million fewer Americans in the total population, and the Nixon commission is counting on the growing supply of youths for the necessary volunteers into today's bigger force.

The commission pointed out that more than half of the present force of 3.3 million men are volunteers. But critics reply that many of these volunteers sign up in the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps—which make little or no use of the draft—to avoid being drafted into the Army.

In his presidential campaign in 1968, Nixon came out for the all-volunteer force and said that "in terms of morale, efficiency and effectiveness, a volunteer armed force would assuredly be a better armed force."

His commission said: "A return to an all-volunteer force will strengthen our freedoms, remove an inequity now imposed on the expression of the patriotism that never has been lacking among our youth, promote the efficiency of the armed forces, and enhance their dignity."

In other arguments for the

all-volunteer force, the commission said:

—“Men who are forced to serve in the military at artificially low pay are actually paying a form of tax which subsidizes those in the society who do not serve.”

—The draft “has been a costly, inequitable and divisive procedure for recruiting men for the armed force.”

—“It has weakened the political fabric of our society and impaired the delicate web of shared values that alone enables a free society to exist.”

More than five years ago, Gen. Earle G. Wheeler, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Congress he would be against a volunteer professional army because “the U.S. Army always has been closely identified with the broad base of population, and I like it that way.”

There is no indication that Wheeler has changed his mind.

In its 211-page report, the presidential commission listed some of the major objections to the all-volunteer force, and answered those objections.

Here are some of those objections, and the commission's replies.

1. Higher pay for voluntary force will be especially appealing to Negroes who have relatively poor civilian opportunities.

Answer: “The frequently heard claim that a volunteer force will be all black or all this or all that, simply has no basis in fact. Our research indicates the composition of the armed forces will not be fundamentally changed by ending conscription . . .”

2. “The presence of draftees in a mixed force guards against the growth of a separate military ethos which could pose a threat to civilian authority, our freedom, and our democratic institutions.”

Answer: “Historically, voluntary service and freedom have gone hand in hand . . . In either a mixed or volunteer force, the attitudes of the officer corps are

the preponderant factor in the psychology of the military; and with or without the draft, professional officers are recruited voluntarily from a variety of regional and socio-economic backgrounds.”

3. An all-volunteer force “will undermine patriotism by weakening the traditional belief that each citizen has a moral responsibility to serve his country.”

Answer: “Compelling service through a draft undermines respect for government by forcing an individual to serve when and in the manner the government decides, regardless of his own values and talents.”

4. An all-volunteer force “would stimulate foreign military adventures, foster an irresponsible foreign policy, and lessen civilian concern about the use of military forces.”

Answer: “. . . To the extent that there is pressure to seek military solutions to foreign policy problems, such pressure already exists and will not be affected by ending conscription. The volunteer force will have the same professional leadership as the present mixed force . . .”

5. An all-volunteer force “will lack the flexibility to expand rapidly in times of sudden crisis.”

Answer: “Military preparedness depends on forces in being, not on the ability to draft untrained men . . . The commission has recommended to standby draft which can be put into effect promptly if circumstances require mobilization of large numbers of men.”

U. S. military authorities and the presidential commission staff both studied closely the experience of Great Britain in shifting to an all-volunteer force.

“British officials have said that the fully volunteer force is more productive than a mixed force because of lower turnover and the superior performance of more experienced servicemen,” the commission report said.



EARLE MAR-70



Pausing for a moment to look over their new offices in the MSC, the recently expanded staff of Beverley Braley Tours and Travel are: Director of Student travel Mr. Ed Rogers; Domestic travel consultants, Mrs. Mabelle Amis and Mrs. Rita Cooksey; International travel and tours consultant Mrs. Sigrid Carter; Assistant Director of Student travel; and Manager, Jack Owens.

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Hillel Club will meet at 7:30 p.m. in Hillel House.

Aggie Wives Bridge Club will meet at 7:30 p.m. in the MSC.

The Port Arthur Hometown Club will meet at 8 p.m. in Room 110 Military Science.

The Aggie Christian Fellowship will meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 304 Physics. The program will be "The Normal Christian Life," a three week series on Romans 5-8, led by Don Geiger from Houston.

THURSDAY
DeWitt-Lavaca Hometown Club will meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 203 Academic. The meeting is for election of officers and

making of plans for the Easter Party.

San Angelo-West Texas Hometown Club will meet at 7:30 p.m. in Room 2D Memorial Student Center.

American Legion Post No. 159 and its auxiliary will have a dinner meeting at 7 p.m. in the Legion Hall. Members are asked to bring a covered dish; meat will be furnished by the Legion.

TUESDAY
Dr. E. J. Dyksterhuis will speak on "Some Opinions on Man's Role in the Planetary Ecosystem" at 7:30 p.m. in the Architecture Auditorium. The program is sponsored by the Forum for Environmental Studies.

The Battalion

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