

USE OF FEDERAL TROOPS IN CIVIL DISTURBANCES

1892-1968

A THESIS IN  
History

Presented to the Faculty of the University  
of Missouri-Kansas City in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

by  
STEVEN DALE PATTON

B.A., University of Missouri-Kansas City, 1980

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines and evaluates the use of regular army forces in quelling civil disturbances within the United States. The term civil disturbance is defined as excluding Indian wars, western frontier violence and all incidents prior to the passage of the Posse Comitatus Act in 1878, which forbade the use of federal troops as routine civil law enforcers.


The incidents range from the Coeur 'd'Alene Idaho incident to the race riots of 1968 and many are well known to anyone familiar with American history. The major concern of the study was the examination of each incident as a backdrop to the role played by federal military forces in civil disturbance.

To accomplish this goal a record of each incident was presented offering data on the units involved, biographies of some of the military leaders, the level of violence and the fatalities inflicted and sustained by the

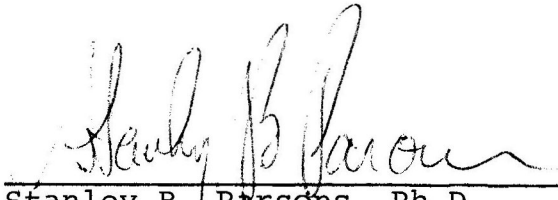
troops. In addition to the examination of the objective data, four of the incidents were reexamined with the goal of exploring the emotional and psychological reactions of different Americans to the commitment of regular military forces to quell domestic disorder. The conclusions arrived at as a result of this study were mixed. An examination of the objective historical record revealed a consistent tendency on the part of the regular military forces to act in a restrained and nonprovocative manner. On the other hand the emotional reactions of various people to the sight of combat ready soldiers enforcing civil law has been at best over-reaction and at worst panic.

This study concludes that the deployment of regular military forces into a domestic civil disturbance usually does not lead to overaction and repression. It also reveals the real danger of such commitment lies in the perceptions of various individuals and groups.

This abstract of 296 words is approved as to form and content.

  
Stanley B. Parsons, Ph.D.  
Department of History

The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, have examined a thesis entitled "Use of Federal Troops in Civil Disturbances 1892-1968," presented by Steven Dale Patton, candidate for the Master of Arts, and hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

In the United States there are two groups who bear arms as an intrinsic part of their duties, one is the policeman, the other is the soldier. The former defends society against the criminal, the other against foreign armies. In many ways they are similar, both wear uniforms, both have rigidly structured chains of command, and most importantly both are entrusted with the use of lethal force. On the other hand, there are many distinct differences between the two groups, especially in democratic countries such as the United States. The most important difference is the way lethal force is used. The police are required to do everything possible to protect human life, including the lives of the people they confront in the line of duty. Killing is justified only when the policemen themselves are directly threatened with death, or innocent civilians are similarly endangered. Conversely, the soldier is expected to kill his enemy at every opportunity, from frontal assaults to ambush and stealth; and he is expected to kill them in large numbers. Ideally, civilians are to be protected; but even the most civilized nations when involved in a life or death struggle seldom

pay attention to such civilized precepts. The policeman is obliged to contest the criminal under the most rigid code of conduct; for the soldiers, it is a fight to the finish with precious little quarter given.

The purposes of this study will be to discover what happens when the soldier is called upon to assume the duties of the civil law enforcement officer. What happens when the soldier trades his bayonet for a billy club and heavy artillery for tear gas? This has happened on relatively few occasions throughout American history; however, the use of federal troops to quell domestic outbreaks of civil disorder is a constant theme throughout United States history. This study will investigate both the actual and perceived nature of the use of the military to enforce civil law in the United States. An examination of all of the incidents of federal military commitments to domestic disorder reveals a reluctance both in and out of government for using the regular army as a domestic police force. There are two main dimensions to this reluctance. One is the objective consequences of deploying men trained for all-out combat to enforce civil law. This would include the effects of the troops on the level of violence, the numbers killed and injured, and the role the troops played in the outcome of the dispute. The second consideration is the emotional and psychological effects upon certain individuals and groups involved in the



disputes. These two considerations, a factual account of each incident and the reactions of those involved, will be the basic concern of this paper.

The exploration of the purely factual consequences of deploying regular troops to quell domestic disturbances will require a detailed historical account of such deployment to determine if an organization, whose duties are to engage mortal enemies on the battlefield, can effectively scale down their operations from warmaking to the role of civil law enforcement. Equally important to the objective consequences of using soldiers as policemen are the subjective emotional reactions of the various groups involved. These reactions have two main dimensions. They are, one, the effect on the strikers or protesters confronting regular soldiers, and two, the public reactions to both the use of troops and the perceived nature of those causing the disturbances.

Through American history, regular troops have been used sparingly but consistently in domestic disturbances. The two most critical considerations are the actual circumstances of the intervention and the effect of military intervention on the perceptions of the rioters, the press, the general public, and the soldiers themselves. The combination of facts and perceptions will help evaluate the effectiveness of men exclusively trained for combat unexpectedly being compelled to adopt the role of a policeman.

There has been a pervasive fear of an excessive martial response when military forces intervene in support of police forces. Hard historical evidence of military aggression to support this pervasive fear of the military is lacking, but there are some examples of military attitudes which would cause anyone interested in civil liberties to hesitate calling on the armed forces. One of the more extreme attitudes towards domestic riot duty was expressed by the famous World War II tank commander, George S. Patton. Shortly after Patton participated in the expulsion of the Bonus Marchers from Washington, D.C., in July of 1932, he wrote a paper entitled "The Use of Federal Troops in Domestic Disturbances." The paper was designed as two lectures to officers, one on the history and training of this type of duty, the other on the tactical aspects of anti-riot operations.<sup>1</sup>

In the first paper Patton dealt with the history and training of domestic operations; in it his views are relatively moderate and conventional. He took the view that domestic duty was something to be avoided, if possible, and praised the army for not engaging in unnecessary violence when such service was unavoidable. In the second paper, however, that dealing with the strategy of quelling domestic disorders, Patton confirmed the worst fear of the civil libertarian. In fact, the distinction between riot and war

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<sup>1</sup>Martin Blumenson, The Patton Papers, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Publishing Company, 1972), 1:893-900.

seemed nonexistent to him. He wrote, "If gas failed to move a mob, open fire. Always fire for effect, that is, to kill." "If you must fire do a good job--a few casualties become martyrs, a large number an abject lesson." Patton even advocated lethal pre-emptive strikes against disturbance leaders. He advised that if it were determined that mob leaders were gathering for a meeting, a night raid should be carried out and that no prisoners should be taken. Patton also felt that outbreaks of domestic disturbances made certain constitutional guarantees irrelevant. He felt that an armed domestic mob resisting federal troops should be classified no differently than a foreign army at war with the United States.

Fortunately, the attitude as expressed by Patton should be looked upon as the exception rather than the rule. Indeed Patton, himself, while assisting in the dispersal of the Bonus Expeditionary Force from Washington, D.C., in 1932, played the role of a tough cop not a soldier who would give no quarter on the battlefield. Despite the lack of any connection between Patton's statements and any objective historical reality, they are important because they help to explain the apprehension surrounding the use of military force to quell civil disorder.

In exploring the role of military participation in domestic disturbances, two main considerations need to be closely examined. The first is the objective reality of

the events, the actual number of troops involved, their commanders, and a review of the nature of the specific incidents, in order to show that military involvement to preserve law and order comprise a significant fact in American history.

The second portion of this study will explore the views of the individuals involved, such as participants in the disturbance, uninvolved bystanders, the press, political leaders, as well as the military itself, in chapter III, four representative incidents involving the use of military power in domestic disturbances in which the perceptions of those involved will be compared with the documented events.

The work that has already been done on this subject include Robin Higham's "Bayonets in the Streets" and two articles in "The Military and American Society," entitled "The Armed Forces and Civil Disorder" by Stephen E. Ambrose and "On the Function of the Military in Civil Disorders" by Martin Blumenson, are illustrative of the type of work that will be presented in this paper. Unique to this study, however, will be a comprehensive record of incidents of regular military commitment into domestic disturbances. It will investigate how frequently federal military power is brought to bear against domestic mobs as well as deal with the social and political aspects of committing regular military forces into domestic disorders.

A study of the objective historical facts, coupled with the perceptions of a cross section of American opinion, will show a consistent pattern throughout the span of American history.

## CHAPTER III

### TOPOLOGY

#### Introduction

A study of the nature and scope of federal military intervention into domestic disturbances entails a detailed description of each of the specific interventions which have occurred.

The events included in this study involve large scale troop movements ordered by the President of the United States and officially transmitted through the regular chain of command to the deployed troops. The study will include a compilation of data about each incident which will be presented in tabular form, as well as a brief narrative description of each incident. The incidents presented fall into three broad categories. These are (1) labor disputes, such as the Pullman Strike of 1894, (2) racial conflicts, such as the Detroit race riot of 1967, (3) political disturbances, such as the expulsion of the Bonus Marchers from Washington, D.C., in 1932. In addition, disputes occurring both in peacetime and times of war will be examined. Throughout the study an attempt will be made to gain insights into the historical pattern of federal military interventions into domestic disturbances. A close examination will be

made of as many individual examples as can be found.

Military interventions into domestic disturbances have been a part of American history from the Revolutionary War to the present. This study will not cover any incidents prior to June 18, 1878, the date of the Posse Comitatus Act, an Act of Congress which made it illegal to summarily employ regular military forces for the purpose of enforcing civil law. Prior to the passage of the Posse Comitatus Act, there were numerous cases of troops being dispatched to quell riots. Episodes such as the Whiskey Rebellion in Pennsylvania in 1794 and the deployment of United States Marines to Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, in December of 1859 to dislodge abolitionist John Brown, represent only two of many episodes prior to 1878. These incidents will not be included because prior to 1878 the army was involved in a number of civil activities such as permanent police duty in the unorganized territories. Following the passage of the Posse Comitatus Act, however, regular troops could only be deployed if two conditions were met. The first was a formal request by the governor of a state, stating that normal civil authority was insufficient to quell civil disturbances within his state. The President then had to determine that, indeed, civil authority had broken down in the state and then formally order the federal troops into the affected area. The movement of troops into Detroit, Michigan, in 1967, and Chicago, Illinois, in 1968, are two

examples of governors requesting federal military interventions. The other exception to the prohibition was a failure of state authorities to secure the civil rights of its citizens. The desegregation crisis in Little Rock, Arkansas, in 1957, and a similar incident in Oxford, Mississippi, in 1962, are two examples of federal military intervention sanctioned solely by the President of the United States and against the wishes of the state's governor.

The object of this portion of the study will be to identify and describe the number and nature of military interventions in domestic disturbances since the passage of the Posse Commitatus Act in 1878.

Coeur 'd' Alene, Idaho Strike--July 15, 1892

This episode involved a strike by miners at Coeur 'd' Alene in Northern Idaho, in which federal troops were committed on July 14, 1892.<sup>1</sup> Prior to federal commitment, the striking miners and company mine guards had fought pitched battles which resulted in fatalities on both sides.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the strikers took some of the managers as hostages. These developments led the Governor, N. B. Wiley,

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<sup>1</sup>"The Idaho War," Sedalia (Missouri) Democrat, 13 July 1892, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup>"Conflict Between Miners and Mine Guards," New York Times, 15 July 1892, p. 1.



Table 1

## Coeur 'd' Alene, Idaho Strike--July 15, 1892

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Units involved:	Companies B, C, D, E, and F of the 14th Infantry, Fort Vancouver, Washington
Number of troops:	200
Principal commanders:	Colonel William Passmore Carlin Born November 24, 1829 Grad. West Point 1850 Served in Sioux War 1856-1857 Served in Mormon War 1858 Served Civil War, Brig. Gen. of Vol. 1861-1865 Returned to Peacetime Army as Major 1866 Promoted Brig. Gen. Reg. Army 1893 Died 1903
Type of disturbance:	Labor, Mine strike
President/Party:	Benjamin Harrison (Republican) Served 1885-1889
Fatalities:	Est. 10-30
Legal justification for commitment:	Request by Idaho Governor N. B. Wiley (Republican)
Other enforcement agencies present:	Idaho State Militia; Mine Company guards deputized; Deputy United States Marshals; Coeur 'd' Alene Deputy Sheriffs
Occurrence in wartime/peacetime:	Peacetime
Resolution:	Strike broken, violence temporarily halted, more strife in 1894 and 1899

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SOURCE: Data obtained from primary sources such as New York Times as well as various secondary sources.

to place Idaho under martial law and for the federal judiciary to place an injunction of restraint upon the miner's union.

On July 15, 1892, regular troops moved into the minefields, quickly gaining control of the situation and effectively stopping and breaking the strike.<sup>3</sup> The basic parameters of this episode of military intervention into domestic affairs follow the same pattern seen throughout this study from local police to the state militia and, finally, the regular army. As applied specifically to federal military interventions into labor disputes, this incident follows the pattern of an almost immediate cessation of violence and a settlement of the strike on management's terms after the intervention of federal troops. The workers were left with the choice of working at the Coeur 'd' Alene mines at a wage determined solely by management or of seeking employment elsewhere.<sup>4</sup>

Nationwide Railroad Strikes--  
July 4 to July 20, 1894

This occurrence involved the most extensive commitment of regular forces to a domestic disturbance ever recorded. The strike also induced the most severe test of

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<sup>3</sup>"Movement of Troops into Minefield," Sedalia (Missouri) Democrat, 15 July 1892, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>"Trouble Over Non Union Men," Sedalia (Missouri) Democrat, 15 July 1892, p. 3.

Table 2

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 Nationwide Railroad Strikes--July 4 to July 20, 1894
 

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Units involved:	7th Cavalry, 15th Infantry Companies E and F of the 15th Regiment, Ft. Sheridan, Illinois Companies C and D, 8th Infantry, Fort Robinson, Nebraska Others undetermined
Numbers of troops:	Virtually entire army either alerted or deployed. Est. 11,000 1,936 Chicago specifically
Principal commanders:	Brig. General Nelson A. Miles Born 1839 Served in Civil War, 1861-1865 Served in Indian Wars, 1865-1890 Commanding General of the Army, 1895 Spanish American War, Puerto Rico, 1898 Retired 1903 Died 1925
Type of disturbances:	Labor, Railroad strike
President/Party:	Grover Cleveland (Democrat) Served 1885-1889; 1893-1897
Fatalities:	Est. 50-100 killed: 4 regulars killed; est. 7 killed by regulars
Legal justification for commitment:	Protection of United States Mail from disruption Enforcement of Federal Court injunction
Other law enforce- ment agencies present:	City Police from affected communities Sheriff's Department from affected counties State Militia from affected state U.S. Marshals, Large number of temporary deputies Private Railway Police
Occurrence in war- time/peacetime:	Peacetime
Resolution:	Strike broken

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the doctrine of state's rights vs. federal power since the Civil War. The event began when employees of the Pullman Palace Car Company went out on strike in the summer of 1894. The incident escalated when other major railway unions refused to service their companies' trains if Pullman sleeper cars were attached to them. This resulted in a federal judge in Chicago issuing an injunction against interfering with the trains as they were carriers of the United States mails. On July 4, 1894, President Grover Cleveland ordered federal troops into Chicago, Illinois. He also ordered soldiers to protect trains all across the United States from any sort of interference.<sup>5</sup>

The Governor of Illinois, John Peter Altgeld, who had previously called units of the Illinois militia to quell rioting in Chicago, objected to the federal government's decision to send in regular troops. Altgeld maintained that the Constitution required that a governor of a state had to request federal forces before the government could legally deploy them. In addition, Altgeld objected to the pro-management bias displayed by the federal forces.<sup>6</sup> President Cleveland responded by declaring that, in cases of threats to federal property or the inability of local

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<sup>5</sup>Richard Hofstadter and Michael Wallace, American Violence (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1970; Vintage Books, 1971), pp. 151-156.

<sup>6</sup>"Orders Issues by General Miles," New York Times, 10 July 1894, p. 1.

authorities to quell disturbances, the federal government was entitled to deploy its forces without the concurrence of the state's governors. Ironically, the state's rights argument made by progressive John Peter Altgeld in 1894 would later be used against the use of federal troops to insure civil rights for Blacks in the South in the early 1960s by conservative southern governors.<sup>7</sup>

The actual parameters of this incident are typical of most other incidents of military interventions into domestic disturbance. Unlike most occurrences the regular army both inflicted and suffered numerous fatalities in this episode.<sup>8</sup> The regulars were also judged by the strikers to be the worst of a bad lot, comparing unfavorably with most of the local and state authorities whom they confronted.<sup>9</sup> The contrast between local and federal forces was most pronounced in Chicago, where the state military forces were under the command of pro-labor Governor John Peter Altgeld. The extensive nature of the commitment is also atypical with troops being deployed all over the nation rather than in one general area or community.<sup>10</sup> A slight

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<sup>7</sup>Almont Lindsey, The Pullman Strike (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942; Phoenix Books, 1964), p. 167.

<sup>8</sup>"Bayonets Subdue Rioters," New York Times, 5 July 1894, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup>Hofstadter and Wallace, American Violence, pp. 153-154.

<sup>10</sup>"Shot Down: Federal Troops Fire on a Mob in Chicago," Sedalia (Missouri) Democrat, 13 July 1894, p. 6.

parallel to this phenomenon can be found in the deployment of regulars to Washington, D.C., Chicago, Illinois; and Baltimore, Maryland, in April of 1968. This was effected in the aftermath of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King.

The event showed consistency with other episodes only in its conclusion. As with other examples of regular military interventions into labor disputes, the strikers were decisively defeated. The Pullman strikers could at best return to work completely on management's terms, or, more likely, drift off to join the mass of the unemployed.

Colorado Miners Strike--  
April 29-December 7, 1914

This event involved Federal troops being called in to quell violence between company mine guards, Colorado state militia, and striking mineworkers in southeastern Colorado. Prior to the intervention of the Federal forces on April 29, 1914, a level of conflict more akin to civil war than civil disturbance had held sway in the coal mining areas of Colorado for more than a year and a half. This conflict reached its climax with the infamous Ludlow massacre, in which company mine guards and Colorado guardsmen poured concentrated machine gun and rifle fire into a camp containing striking miners and their families. More than 20 persons, including many women and children, were killed. This incident, coupled with the complete exhaustion of the Colorado

Table 3

## Colorado Miners Strike--April 29-December 7, 1914

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Units involved:	5th Calvary, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas --300 troops 11th Calvary, Ft. Ogalthorpe, Georgia --860 troops 12th Calvary, Ft. Robinson, Nebraska --140 troops
Number of troops:	1,300
Branch of service:	Army
Principal commanders:	Major Willard Ames Holbrook Born Arkansas, Wisconsin, 1860 Grad. West Point 1885, Honor Grad. In Spanish American War Philippines 1898 Philippine insurrection, 1899-1901 Civil Governor of Philippines Prov. Antique Paney Direction of Ft. Leavenworth Sch., 1913-1916 Retired 1924 Major General Died 1932
Type of disturbance:	Labor
President/Party:	Woodrow Wilson (Democrat) Served 1913-1921
Fatalities:	74; regulars killed: none; persons killed by regulars: none
Legal justification for commitment:	Request by Colorado Governor, Elias W. Ammons (Democrat)
Other law enforce- ment agencies present:	Colorado National Guard Private mine guards (deputized)
Occurrence in war- time/peacetime:	Peacetime
Resolution:	Violence stopped; strike called off December 1914

guardsmen, resulted in Governor Elias M. Ammons requesting Federal intervention into the dispute. On April 29, President Woodrow Wilson responded to Ammon's request. On April 30 and 31, three detachments of Federal troops entered Colorado with orders to disarm all parties to the dispute and to replace, not supplement, the Colorado militia. Within days, the Federal forces had disarmed most of the striking mine workers and successfully separated them from the mine guards. Although the Federals did not relieve or disarm all Colorado militiamen, the Federals were viewed for the most part by the striking miners as a neutral impartial force.<sup>11</sup> This was in sharp contrast to the Colorado militia with whom they had been practically at war for more than a year and a half. Indeed, many of the miners gave the regular troops a rousing welcome, apparently concluding that, while they were there to suppress violence, they were not intent on breaking their strike. The regulars remained on duty until December 30, 1914, when the miners called off their strike and the incident came to a close.

This incident is comparable to the Kentucky coal strike of 1921, in which regulars were greeted with trust and cooperation after battling state authorities and company mine guards. The incident is in sharp contrast to the

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<sup>11</sup>"Strikers and Militia Welcome Federal Troops," New York Times, 1 May 1914, p. 1.



Pullman strike incident of 1894, in which the regulars were viewed by the striking railroad men as a strike-breaking force. The various state militias played the role of impartial arbiters, especially the Illinois militia under Governor Altgeld.<sup>12</sup>

Overall, the pattern at Ludlow corresponds with the usual pattern of military intervention into domestic disturbances. This includes a sharp buildup of violence, the deployment of regulars, and afterwards, the rapid containment of the disturbance with little or no violence being offered or received by the regulars.

Washington, D.C., Race Riot--  
July 21-25, 1919

This episode involved a race riot in Washington, D.C., in the summer of 1919. The riot was triggered by reported attacks on white women by black men.<sup>13</sup> These attacks caused large mobs of whites to attack blacks at random. Many of the mobs were heavily leavened with military personnel stationed in the Washington, D.C. area.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Lindsey, The Pullman Strike, pp. 179-200.

<sup>13</sup>"Women Were Attacked, Sixth Case of Negroes Molesting Women in Capital City," Sedalia (Missouri) Democrat, 20 July 1919, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup>"Service Men Beat Negroes in Race Riots at Capital," New York Times, 23 July 1919, p. 1.

Table 4

Washington, D.C., Race Riot--July 21-25, 1919

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Units involved:	Elements of the 11th Cavalry, Fort Myer, Virginia Elements of the 17th Cavalry, Camp Meade
Number of troops:	2,100
Principal commanders:	Major General George Haan Born Crown Point, Indiana, 1863 Grad. West Port, 1889 Served, Spanish American War in Cuba and the Philippines 1898-1901 Grad. Army College, 1905 Served with 32nd Div. WWI, 1918 Commander Washington, D.C., Dist., 1919-1921 Ret. Major General, 1921 Died 1924
Type of disturbance:	Race riot White reaction to alleged Negro assaults upon white women Black reaction to white attacks
President/Party:	Woodrow Wilson (Democrat) Served 1913-1921
Fatalities:	Est. 20-100; 1 regular killed; Est. 1 killed by regulars
Legal justification for commitment:	District of Columbia, No viable law enforcement agency available between District of Columbia Police and regular army. No formal request necessary, Federal District.
Other law enforcement agencies present:	Washington, D.C. Police
Occurrence in war-time/peacetime:	Peacetime Immediate Post-War
Resolution:	Riots quelled

---

The black community in Washington, D.C., responded to these attacks by arming themselves. Carloads of young blacks were soon cruising the streets firing at whites. The first reaction of the United States Government was to order off-duty servicemen out of the District of Columbia area. Removing servicemen from the mobs, however, was not sufficient to quell the disorders. By July 21, 1919, the District of Columbia police had been completely overwhelmed and President Wilson ordered the War Department to deploy troops. By July 25, the riots had subsided and the troops were withdrawn.<sup>15</sup>

The basic pattern of this disturbance is more consistent with other race and labor disputes requiring military intervention in the post-World War I period, than with any overall pattern of intervention into racial conflict. The presence of recently discharged servicemen or active duty servicemen was a consistent theme in nearly all of the incidents requiring the commitment of regular military force during this period. The soldiers involved in the rioting in Washington, D.C., were incarcerated in camps outside the city and were not a part of the force deployed to quell the rioting.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>"Negroes Again Riot in Washington Killing White Man. Baker Puts 2,000 Troops on Duty after Seeing Wilson," New York Times, 23 July 1919, p. 7.

<sup>16</sup>"Capital Kept Calm by Federal Troops," New York Times, 24 July 1919, p. 1.

The unusually rapid resort to regular troops in this incident is typical of other disturbances in the District of Columbia. Events such as the Bonus March of 1932 and the racial upheaval in April of 1968 are examples. Within the federal district tripwires between the Metropolitan police such as Deputy Sheriffs, State Police and until recently, the National Guard are nonexistent. Therefore, regular military force is projected sooner. A study of this occurrence should be considered in relation to other events in 1919 and also in relation to other episodes in the nation's capital.

The riots' rapid termination after the military was committed and the military's rapid departure from the scene after the riots subside is consistent with the entire historical spectrum of federal military interventions into domestic disturbances.

Phillips County, Arkansas, Race Riot--  
September 22-October 2, 1919

This occurrence involved armed conflict between members of a black sharecropper's union and white residents of Phillips County, Arkansas. In early fall of 1919, tensions between white residents of Phillips County, Arkansas, and members of a black sharecropper's union exploded into armed violence which led to fatalities on both sides.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> "Six More Killed in Arkansas Race Riots," New York Times, 3 October 1919, Section G, p. 6.

Table 5

Phillips County, Arkansas, Race Riot--  
September 22-October 2, 1919

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Units involved:	Detachments of the 10th Field Artillery, Camp Pike, Arkansas Elements of 4th, 7th, and 57th Infantry Regiments, Camp Pike, Arkansas Elements of the 3rd Division, Camp Pike, Arkansas
Number of troops:	675
Principal commander:	Colonel Issac Jenks
Type of disturbance:	Race
President/Party:	Woodrow Wilson (Democrat) Served 1913-1921
Fatalities:	24; 1 regular soldier killed; 2 killed by regulars
Legal justification for commitment:	Request by Governor Robert H. Brough (Republican)
Other law enforce- ment agencies present:	Phillips County American Legion Volunteers (deputized) Regular Phillips County Deputy Sheriffs Missouri Pacific Railroad Special Police
Occurrence in war- time/peacetime:	Peacetime Immediate Postwar
Resolution:	Riots quelled. Most rioters arrested, interned in military detention camps (est. 200) scores tried in Arkansas Civil Courts, sentenced to long prison terms in Arkansas State Prisons

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On October 2, Arkansas's Governor Brough requested that President Woodrow Wilson deploy troops. The President granted the request and soon Federal troops had taken up positions in the several small communities in the Phillips County area. In this incident, the regulars both received and meted out lethal violence. One regular soldier was killed and a patrol of army regulars killed two of the embattled black sharecroppers. Within days, the violence had been completely brought under control, with the members of the sharecropper's union destined to face stiff Arkansas justice.<sup>18</sup>

The event is in most respects completely atypical of military intervention into domestic disturbances, especially those involving black-white racial conflict. Unlike interventions into racial conflict such as Little Rock in 1957 and Oxford, Mississippi, in 1962, in which military force was brought to bear on behalf of blacks, the Phillips County occurrence involved regular military force being deployed to protect whites from blacks.

This episode is a part of the pattern of violence which flared up in the bloody summer and fall of 1919. This time period, which is referred to as "Red Summer," included three other episodes of Federal military interventions into

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<sup>18</sup>"Trace Plot to Stir Negroes to Rise. White Leaders Accused," New York Times, 4 October 1919, p. 7.

domestic disturbances. These interventions took place partly because most states had been stripped of their state militias due to World War I, but more importantly, the level of violence in the incredibly bloody year of 1919 had risen to such a high level that deploying regular soldiers fresh from the battlefields of World War I no longer seemed a drastic measure.

Omaha, Nebraska, Race Riot--October 1-3, 1919

This occurrence involved a race riot in the latter part of September in which Will Brown, a black man accused of raping a white woman, was lynched by a white Omaha mob.<sup>19</sup> The lynching was followed by city-wide riots. On September 28, 1919, the whites completely routed the Omaha Police Department, burned the courthouse and the city hall, and even attempted to lynch Omaha's mayor in response to his attempt to prevent Will Brown's murder.<sup>20</sup>

On September 29, Federal troops were dispatched to Omaha from Fort Omaha, Camp Dodge, Camp Funiston, and Camp Grant in response to a request by Governor Samuel R. McKelvie. After all the regulars had arrived, nearly 2,000 were on duty. Military headquarters were established at

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<sup>19</sup>"Lynching and Routing of Omaha's Police Department," New York Times, 29 September 1919, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup>"Negro Hanged by an Infuriated Mob: Attempt Made to Lynch the Mayor in Omaha Riot," Sedalia (Missouri) Demo-  
crat, 29 September 1919, p. 1.

Table 6

Omaha, Nebraska, Race Riot--October 1-3, 1919

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Units involved:	Composite Units drawn from within the 6th Division, Fort Omaha, Nebraska
Number of troops:	1,990
Branch of service:	Army
Principal commander:	General Leonard Wood Born 1860 Grad. Harvard Medical School, 1884 Joined Army Medical Corp., 1884 Served against Apaches, 1885-86 Gave up medicine for active command of troops. Commanded Rough Riders, Cuba Spanish American War 1898. Governor of Cuba 1899-1902. Fought in Philippine insurrection, 1903 Commander of U.S. Forces, Philippines 1906-08. U.S. Army Chief of Staff, 1910-1914. Presidential candidate 1920 Died 1927
Type of disturbance:	Race
President/Party	Woodrow Wilson (Democrat) Served-1913-1921 Born 1856; Died 1924
Fatalities:	Est. 20-30; regulars killed: none; persons killed by regulars: none
Legal justification for commitment:	Requested by Governor of Nebraska, Samuel R. McKelvie (Republican)
Other law enforce- ment agencies present:	Omaha Police Department American Legionnaires (deputized)
Occurrence in war- time/peacetime?	Peacetime Immediate postwar
Resolution:	Riots quelled, members of mobs placed on trial in Nebraska Civil Courts

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the Omaha Central Police Station. Secretary of War Newton T. Baker appointed General Leonard Wood to take command of the troops as well as other enforcement bodies. The soldiers took up positions around the Negro section of Omaha. Eighteen heavy machine guns were trained down adjoining streets. On September 30, Lt. Col. Weust of Fort Omaha issued a proclamation ordering the residents of Omaha, both black and white, to surrender their arms to military and police authorities. The regulars participated in the arrests of hundreds of rioters and suspects concerning the lynching of Will Brown.<sup>21</sup> Many leading figures in the mobs were ex-servicemen who had just returned from the trenches of World War I.<sup>22</sup>

By mid-October, the riots had been quelled, the regulars moved out, and the civilian authorities resumed their normal duties. The occurrence was fairly typical of other events involving the use of the military in race riots. The unique aspect of this particular episode is the absence of Nebraska State Militia forces on the scene prior to Federal intervention and the relatively quick resort to regular troops and the fact that two other disturbances at approximately the same time required the intervention of Federal military

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<sup>21</sup>"General Wood Orders the Arrest of Omaha's Rioters," New York Times, 1 October 1919, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup>Hofstadter and Wallace, American Violence, pp. 164-165.

force. The troops, from General Leonard Wood on down, behaved with impartiality with both black and white and could truly be said to be a neutral force in this disturbance.

Steel Strike, Gary Indiana--  
September/October 4-12, 1919

This episode involved the steel strike in Gary, Indiana, in the fall of 1919. This strike was a part of a nationwide steel strike directed against the United States Steel Company and numerous smaller steel companies. The steel companies refused to bargain and the local authorities in most of the steel towns successfully prevented the steelworkers from enforcing their strike.

In Gary, Indiana, the same basic situation prevailed; however, the intensity of the conflict reached such high proportions that Federal troops were requested by Governor James P. Goodrich of Indiana. On October 4, regular troops moved into the city and were promptly met by strikers freshly discharged from the American Expeditionary Force, dressed identically to the regulars and the Indiana National Guardsmen also on duty.<sup>23</sup> The authorities attempted to counter this situation by making any person in a military uniform liable for arrest if he could not produce papers providing that he was presently on duty with the armed forces.

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<sup>23</sup> "General Wood takes Command in Gary, Has 1,000 Troops," New York Times, 7 October 1919, p. 1.

Table 7

Steel Strike, Gary, Indiana--September/October 4-12, 1919

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Units involved: 1. Composite units drawn up from within 4th Division, Ft. Sheridan, Illinois, 105 officers; 916 enlisted men.  
2. Composite units drawn from within the 6th Division, Fort Omaha, Nebraska, and Fort Sheridan, Illinois; 18 officers, 512 enlisted men.

Number of troops: 1,551

Principal commander: General Leonard Wood  
Born 1860, New Hampshire  
Grad. Harvard Medical School, 1884  
Joined U.S. Army Medical Corp., 1884  
Served against Apaches, 1885-86  
Gave up medicine for active command  
Commanded Rough Riders, Spanish American War, 1898.  
Governor of Cuba, 1894-1902.  
Philippines insurrection, 1903.  
Command of all U.S. Forces in Philippines, 1906-1908.  
Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, 1910-1914.  
Presidential candidate, 1920.  
Philippine Governor, 1921-27.  
Died 1927

Type of disturbance: Labor

President/Party: Woodrow Wilson (Democrat)  
Served 1913-1921

Fatalities: Est. 12-20; regulars killed: none;  
persons killed by regulars: none

Legal justification for commitment: Request by Indiana Governor, James P. Goodrich (Republican)

Other law enforcement agencies present: Indiana National Guard  
Gary, Indiana, Police  
Company guards

Occurrence in war-time/peacetime: Peacetime  
Immediate Postwar

Resolution: Strike broken. Nonunion workers hired.

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The almost comic sight of strikers and soldiers wearing identical uniforms notwithstanding the disturbances were soon brought under control.<sup>24</sup>

The commander of the regular forces in Gary was General Leonard Wood. General Wood who had just compiled a record of impartiality in a savage race riot in Omaha, Nebraska, went out of his way to identify himself with management forces in Gary. In the year following the Gary incident, General Wood was an unsuccessful candidate for President of the United States on the Republican ticket. In the campaign, Wood spoke of his steadfast opposition to radicalism while in command of the regular forces in Gary.<sup>25</sup>

The Gary incident ended with the complete capitulation of the steelworkers all across the nation in late October and early November of 1919.

This incident is comparable to other military interventions into labor disputes in that regular forces were brought into the disturbance after local police, Indiana State Police, and the Indiana National Guard had been committed. The existence of an Indiana militia contrasted with the other immediate post World War I episodes where state military forces were lacking. The role of the regular army as strongly pro-management is consistent with the usual pattern.

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<sup>24</sup>David Broady, Labor in Crises (New York: J. B. Lippincott and Company, 1965), pp. 134-135.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pp. 135-136.

The unique aspects of this episode consist of the use of army intelligence personnel such as Lt. Donald C. Van Buren to gather evidence against some of the strikers. In addition, the situation is unique because of the commander of the troops becoming so personally involved in the dispute. The actions of General Nelson A. Miles in the Pullman strike is comparable.<sup>26</sup> The objective effects of the deployment of the regular military is somewhat vague because strikers were as thoroughly defeated in all other parts of the United States as they were in Gary, Indiana, the only place where regular forces were deployed. Although the army played a significant part in Gary, Indiana, the defeat of the steelworkers' strike as a whole must be credited to local police, company guards, and most of all the steel companies iron-willed determination not to compromise with the strikers.

Coal Strike in Kentucky and West Virginia--  
September 2, 1921

This episode involved a coal strike in West Virginia and Kentucky which evolved into one of the worst episodes of domestic disorder in American history. The strike and confrontation, which climaxed in the summer and fall of 1921, had been preceded by ten years of confrontation with murder,

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<sup>26</sup>"Continue Activity Against Gary Reds," New York Times, 9 October 1919, Section I, p. 2.

Table 8

## Coal Strike in Kentucky and West Virginia--September 2, 1921

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Units involved:	26th Infantry, Ft. Dix, New Jersey 19th Infantry, Camp Sherman, Ohio 40th Infantry, Camp Knox, Kentucky
Number of troops:	4,000
Principle commander:	Brig. General Harry Hill Bandholtz Born Constintine, Michigan, 1864 Grad. West Point, 1890 Served with 7th Division Cuba, Spanish American War, 1898 Served with 2nd Infantry Div., Philippine insurrection, 1901 Governor of Tayabas Province the Philippines, 1902-1903 Assistant Chief Philippine Con- stabulary, 1903 Provost Marshal General, American Forces, Europe, 1918 Diplomatic Mission in Hungary, 1919 Commander District of Washington, D.C., 1919-1925 Died 1925
Type of disturbance:	Labor Union mineworkers on strike
President/Party:	Warren Harding (Republican) Served 1921-1923
Fatalities:	Est. 100-200; regulars killed: none; killed by regulars: none
Legal justification for commitment:	Request by Governor John J. Cornwell (Republican)
Other law enforce- ment agencies present:	Mingo County, West Virginia, Deputy Sheriffs and volunteers Company mine guards, deputized West Virginia and Kentucky State Police Kentucky National Guard. West Virginia had no organized guard.
Occurrence in war- time/peacetime:	Peacetime
Resolution:	Coal strike broken. Miners dispersed. Minimal union activity in Eastern coal mines until mid-1930s.

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arson, sabotage and brutality on both sides. The issue was the right of the miners to belong to a union. Before the episodes were over, thousands of armed miners had organized into squads and companies, with commissary and medical units, marched nearly seventy miles through the mountain wilderness to the relief of fellow unionists in Logan and Mingo counties in West Virginia. At Blair Mountain in West Virginia, they locked in a week-long battle with a defending force of over 2000 hastily recruited sheriffs, deputies, and company mine guards. The two sides dug in and battled each other like two armies representing sovereign states. The stalemate was only broken by the arrival of three infantry battalions and ten army bombers. The opening shots were fired into Sid Hatfield, a Pro-labor police chief of Matawan, West Virginia, by three coal company detectives.<sup>27</sup>

The miners' leader was Frank Keeney, President of United Mine Workers District No. 17, whose jurisdiction covered the coal fields of central and southern area of West Virginia. In 1920, Keeney found himself attempting to both lead and control the miners all across West Virginia, who had been aroused by the murder of Sid Hatfield, as well as reported atrocities committed by

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<sup>27</sup> Cabell Phillips, "The West Virginia Mine War," American Heritage 25 (August 1974): 60.

management controlled sheriffs deputies in Logan, West Virginia. The miners determined to avenge Sid Hatfield's death, to liberate their fellow miners from the Logan deputies and, most significantly, to smash the antiunion monopoly in Logan and Mingo counties.<sup>28</sup>

By Saturday, August 20, 1921, five hundred to six hundred men had congregated in a sullen aimless mob a few miles out of Charleston, West Virginia, and some seventy miles from where Hatfield lay buried and the antiunion deputies held sway. In a few days their number had swelled to between four and five thousand. The group of armed miners soon took on the proportion of an army on the march before the miners, many of whom were World War I veterans, divided loosely into companies based upon the communities from which they came. Armed patrols kept round-the-clock vigils on the roads and mountain trails. A commissary emerged that depleted the food from stores for miles around and a medical unit was set up. In a few days the city of Logan, West Virginia, had dug in for a siege, the miners had seized a freight train and attempted to push ahead of the main body of miners and take Logan by surprise.<sup>29</sup>

These events led Governor John J. Cornwall to telegraph President Warren Harding in Washington, informing him the state was unable to protect itself and needed

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 61, 91.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 90.



federal troops. Secretary of War John W. Weeks dispatched General J. H. Bandholtz, commander of the Washington Military District to West Virginia, for a firsthand reconnaissance report.<sup>30</sup> Bandholtz hurriedly convened a conference with Governor Cornwall and the United Mine Worker leader Keeney. The meeting induced Keeney to meet the advancing miners and persuade them to break off the march. Keeney told the miners that the federal government was impartial and only interested in preserving the peace and not in destroying their Union. The miners heeded Keeney's pleas and began to disperse, and General Bandholtz returned to Washington, D.C., in a warplane piloted by Army Air Corps General Billy Mitchell who had been sent out from Washington to reconnoiter the area by air.<sup>31</sup>

A rumor that women and children were being murdered in Scarples, West Virginia, however, soon had the marchers moving towards Logan again. The area around Logan, known as Blair Mountain, soon became a battlefield as thousands of miners scaled one side of the mountain and dug in, on the other side of the mountain hundreds of deputies and volunteer militia did the same. The battle line extended twenty miles along the ridge of the mountain.

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 92.

The Associated Press declared that the fighting resembled World War I style trench warfare. The seige continued in this manner for at least a week and before either side could obtain a major advantage, the federal government moved in. Governor Cornwall's appeal to Washington drew a stinging rebuke from General Bandholtz, who said that attacks on the miners after Keeney had persuaded them to disperse, had recharged the conflict. Nevertheless, President Harding issued an ultimatum to the strikers, ordering them to disperse. This order was ignored and on September 2, 1921, three infantry and cavalry regiments as well as thirteen DeHaviland Army Air Corps bombers armed with bombs and machine guns, arrived in Logan, West Virginia. Within weeks, the miners had surrendered their weapons to the regulars, who had been deployed up and down the tracks from Logan to Blair mountain. The deputy sheriffs, volunteer militia, and company guards began to lay down their arms and return homeward. One by one the mines reopened and life in the West Virginia coalfields returned to normal. Within two weeks of their deployment, the regulars had returned to their home bases.

This episode is similar to other federal military interventions into labor disputes in that there was a build-up from local forces to state forces and finally to regular military troops. From the viewpoint of most of the miners, the regular troops represented an impartial federal government

while the state and local forces of West Virginia and Mingo Counties were seen as reactionary forces exclusively in the camp of the mine owners. The perception of local forces as pro-management stooges and the federal forces as relatively impartial is similar to the Ludlow, Colorado, incident in 1914. Conversely, the episode in West Virginia shows a completely opposite character than the Pullman strike of 1894, in which the local and state forces were as neutral or even pro-labor and the regular forces under General Nelson A. Miles, being the hirelings of the Pullman Company. The lack of an organized West Virginia National Guard is typical of other post World War I incidents.

The deployment of DeHaviland bomber aircraft is completely unique to the West Virginia conflict, although the aircraft never fired a shot or dropped a bomb, it was the only time in United States history that the air arm of the United States military was deployed against American citizens as a potential weapon. In the Oxford, Mississippi, incident of 1962 and the race riots of 1967-68, aircraft were used, but purely in a reconnaissance capacity.

The troops under General Harry H. Bandholtz must be credited with defusing an extremely volatile situation. On the debit side, however, it must be remembered that the end of the violence in Kentucky and West Virginia also sounded the death knell for the United Mine Workers efforts to organize the coal miners in that area. It would take

Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal legislation over twelve years later to resurrect the United Mine Workers. The pattern of military intervention in industrial strife benefitting capital rather than labor, whether intentional or not, is confirmed in this particular event by the long term consequences of the deployment of the regulars.

Bonus March, Washington, D.C.--  
July 28-July 31, 1932

This occurrence involved a march on Washington, D.C., by veterans of the first World War in order to get an early payment of a veterans bonus bond due to maturity in 1945. Due to the depression, however, the men felt that they could better use the bonus in 1932, rather than waiting until the bonds matured.

The reaction of President Herbert Hoover was one of flat rejection. Hoover felt that allowing the veterans to prematurely collect their benefits would not be consistent with his policy of economy in government. The Congress, although heavily lobbied by the leaders of the Bonus Expeditionary Force, as the marchers called themselves, decided to support President Hoover and rejected the marchers' demands. The marchers, discouraged by the Congress's failure to support them and the President's refusal to even meet with them, slowly drifted out of town; however, approximately 2000 of the marchers chose to stay on even after they had been warned off by the authorities. This situation

Table 9

Bonus March, Washington, D.C.--July 28-July 31, 1932

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Units involved: 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry,  
Ft. Washington  
2nd Squadron, 3rd Cavalry,  
Ft. Myers, Virginia  
Company B, 1st Tank Regiment,  
Ft. Meade, Maryland  
Infantry Headquarters and Head-  
quarters Company, 16th Brigade

Number of troops: 700

Principal commanders: General Douglas MacArthur  
Born 1880  
Grad. West Point, 1903  
Philippine insurrection, 1903  
Mexican expedition, Assistant to  
Engineer Officer  
Chief of Staff, Rainbow Division, 1918  
Army Chief of Staff, 1930-1935  
Military Advisor to the Philippines,  
1935-41  
Commander Allied Forces, Southwest  
Pacific, 1942, 1945  
Military Occupation Governor of  
Japan, 1945-1950  
United Nations Commander Korea,  
1950-1951  
Relieved of command by President  
Harry S. Truman, 1951  
Died 1964

Major George S. Patton  
Commander of 3rd Cavalry  
Ft. Myers, Virginia

Major Dwight D. Eisenhower  
Accompanied General Douglas MacArthur  
as personal aide. No direct com-  
mand.

Type of disturbance: Political protest  
World War I Veterans occupying vacant  
government buildings

President/Party: Herbert Hoover (Republican)  
Served 1929-1933

Table 9--continued


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Fatalities:	4; regulars killed: none; 2 infants gassed to death by tear gas fired by regular (accidental)
Legal justification for commitment:	To expel Bonus Marchers from Federal property.
Other law enforcement agencies present:	Washington, D.C., Police Department Federal buildings security personnel
Occurrence in war-time/peacetime:	Peacetime
Resolution:	Marchers dispersed. The demands of the marchers were granted by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

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prevailed until July 28, 1932, when President Hoover ordered federal troops, under Army Chief of Staff Douglas MacArthur, to expel the marchers. By July 31, 1932, this action had been accomplished.<sup>32</sup>

This event is fairly consistent with other incidents of military intervention into domestic disturbances, with the escalation from local to federal forces as well as a quick end to the disturbances after military intervention.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup>William Manchester, Glory and the Dream (New York: Little Brown and Co., 1973; Bantam Books, Inc., 1975), p. 4.

<sup>33</sup>Hofstadter and Wallace, American Violence, pp. 361-364.

This episode departs from the usual pattern. The departure is in the classification of the disturbance. Other events described in this study fell into two categories, either race or labor. This is the only exception to the rule. The Bonus Marchers represented neither a struggle between the races nor a struggle between labor and capital. Unique to this event is the close relationship between the deployed regular troops and the disaffected veterans. Throughout this study, one of the prime ingredients has been the dilemma of American soldiers confronting their fellow citizens, as opposed to a foreign army. It was in this episode the soldiers not only confronted their fellow citizens, but their former comrades in arms.

In addition, the manner in which the commander of the troops, Douglas MacArthur, became personally involved in the dispute by denouncing the marchers as communists and even claiming that most of the marchers were not actual veterans of military service is atypical. Only the statements of Brig. General Nelson A. Miles, the commander of the troops in the 1894 Pullman strike, offers any sort of parallel. Unlike other disturbances involving race and labor which had strong historical antecedents due to the cohesiveness of the groups involved, the Bonus March represented no traditional grievance. The marchers came together for this one effort and then disbanded forever.

The issues involved in the event did not represent any particular historical pattern.<sup>34</sup>

Detroit Race Riot--June 22-25, 1943

This event involved the use of federal troops to quell a racial uprising in the summer of 1943. The riot was triggered by a combination of war nerves, racial hatreds and wild rumors, most of which were either exaggerated or completely untrue. In the middle of June 1943, huge crowds of whites and blacks battled each other in response to horrific stories of atrocities whites were committing on blacks and blacks were committing upon whites.<sup>35</sup>

On June 21, 1943, in response to a formal request by Michigan's Governor Harry F. Kelly, President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered 5000 army regulars into Detroit to bolster the Detroit police as well as Michigan's state police and military forces. Within days the regulars had subdued both the white and black mobs, without either inflicting or receiving serious injury. By early July an uneasy calm had returned to the city and the troops were quickly withdrawn.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>"Troops Drive Veterans from Capital," New York Times, 29 July 1932, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup>"23 Dead in Detroit Rioting: Federal Troops Enter City on Orders of Roosevelt," New York Times, 22 June 1943, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup>"Army Patrols End Detroit Rioting Death Toll at 29," New York Times, 23 June 1943, p. 1.



Table 10

Detroit Race Riot--June 22-25, 1943

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Units involved:	701st Military Police Battalion, Fort Custer, Michigan 728th Military Police Battalion, Fort Wayne, Indiana 9th Infantry Regiment of the 2nd Division, Camp McCoy, Michigan
Number of troops:	5,000
Principal commander:	Brigadier General William Gunther Born Carrolton, Kentucky Law Degree, University of Kentucky Grad. West Point, 1905 Legal and Law Enforcement and legal background throughout military service Served in France World War II, 1944 Ret. Maj. Gen. in December 1944 Died 1946
Type of disturbance:	Race Black and white mobs attacking each other and innocent bystanders of both races
President/Party:	Franklin D. Roosevelt (Democrat) Served 1933-1945
Fatalities:	Est. 34; regulars killed: none; persons killed by regulars: none
Legal justification for commitment:	Request by Michigan Governor, Harry F. Kelly (Democrat)
Other law enforce- ment agencies present:	Detroit City Police Michigan State Police Michigan "State Guards" replacement for Federalized National Guard
Occurrence in war- time/peacetime:	Wartime World War II, 1941-1945
Resolution:	Riot suppressed; racial tensions continued.

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The parameters of the Detroit riot in 1943 was very much a trend setter for future involvement of regular troops in racial discord in the United States. The explosion of the violence, the ineffectual response of state and local forces accompanied by numerous casualties, followed by a rapid termination of the disturbances. This pattern of events was evident in the Detroit riot of 1967 as well as the riots in Washington, D.C., Chicago and Baltimore, Maryland, in 1968.<sup>37</sup> In all of these incidents the troops were able to control the disorders with a minimum of bloodshed. This pattern of events was to be repeated in future racial disputes in Detroit 1967 and Chicago and Baltimore, and Washington, D.C., in 1968.<sup>38</sup>

Little Rock, Arkansas--  
Sept 24 to Nov 15, 1957

This event involved enrolling nine black students at previously all-white Central High School. The Supreme Court in 1954 had outlawed school segregation in its Brown vs. Topeka Board of Education decision. This led to the federal judge in Little Rock to order Central High School desegregated. This was to be accomplished by transferring nine preselected black high school students to Central at the beginning of the 1957-58 school term. The city of Little

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<sup>37</sup> Robin Higham, Bayonets in the Streets (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 1969), pp. 39-40.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

## Table 11

Little Rock, Arkansas--September 24 to November 15, 1957

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Units involved: 327th Airborne Battle Group of the  
101st Airborne Division, Ft. Campbell, Kentucky  
Provisional Support Co., Ft. Chaffee, Arkansas  
Headquarters Co., U.S. Army Military District, Arkansas  
163rd Transportation Co., Ft. Sill, Oklahoma  
720th Military Bn., Fort Hood, Texas  
Bath Platoon 1st Qm Br Ft Polk, Louisiana  
53rd and 54th Signal Bn, Ft. Hood, Texas

Number of troops: 1,000

Principal commander: Major General Edwin Anderson Walker  
Born Center Point, Texas, 1909  
Grad. New Mexico Military Institute, 1927  
Grad. West Point, 1931  
Grad. Field Artillery School, 1937  
Served with 3rd Regiment 1st Special Service, Italy, 3rd Army, Germany World War II, 1942-1945  
Grad. Ft. Leavenworth, 1946  
Deputy Chief of Staff, Prisoner of War Affairs, 8th Army, Korea, 1950-53  
Commanded Arkansas Military District, Little Rock, Arkansas, 1957-1959  
Deputy Chief of Staff, 24th Infantry Division, Germany, 1959-1961  
Resigned U.S. Army, 1961  
Lead segregationist opposition to Federal Government, 1962  
Arrested incarcerated Federal Medical Facility, Springfield, Missouri  
Candidate for Governor of Texas, 1962  
Target of assassination attempt by Lee Harvey Oswald, 1963  
President American Eagle Publishing Co., 1968-present  
Conservative author and speaker at present.

Table 11--continued


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Type of disturbance:	Race Opposition to integration at Central High School, Little Rock, Arkansas
President/Party:	Dwight D. Eisenhower (Republican) Served 1953-1961
Fatalities:	None
Legal justification for commitment:	To enforce Federal Court Orders to integrate Central High School, Little Rock, Arkansas. Local state officials refused to abide by court orders.
Other law enforcement agencies present:	U.S. Marshals Little Rock City Police Arkansas State Police Arkansas National Guard, under state control prior to September 24 After September 24, Federalized and operated jointly with regulars until November 15. After November 15, operated alone in Federalized capacity after regulars withdrew, remained on duty until end of 1957-1958 school term at Central High School.
Occurrence in wartime/peacetime:	Peacetime
Resolution:	Central operated under guard of Federal troops and Federalized Arkansas National Guard, 1957-1958 Closed 1958-1959 Reopened 1959 on an integrated basis.

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Rock and the school board that controlled Central agreed to this arrangement.

The Governor of Arkansas, Orvill Faubus, intervened, stating his view that the admittance of the black students would lead to violence. On September 2, 1957, Faubus placed Little Rock under martial law and ordered National Guard groups to surround Central and to forcibly exclude the nine blacks. Guardsmen barred the nine students on September 4. This action placed Faubus and the state of Arkansas in direct confrontation with the federal government. Within the next two weeks, negotiations were undertaken between Governor Faubus and President Dwight D. Eisenhower. The President insisted that Faubus obey the federal courts and withdraw the guardsmen from Central and to otherwise stop interfering with the desegregation of Central. As the negotiations went on, attempts by the federal authorities to enroll the nine students were repeatedly repulsed by Faubus's guardsmen. Concurrent with the confrontation between federal and state authorities, large mobs began gathering around Central.

On September 20, a federal court issued a formal injunction ordering Faubus to stop interfering with the integration of Central. Faubus withdrew the guardsmen the same day; however, the threatening mobs around the school proved to be as effective as the Arkansas National

Guard in keeping the nine black students out of Central. On September 23, 1957, President Eisenhower issued an order federalizing the entire Arkansas National Guard. Later that same day, 1000 federal troops from Fort Campbell, Kentucky, were flown into Little Rock. The troops were quickly conveyed by trucks and jeeps to Central High School. As soon as this maneuver was completed, a van arrived carrying the nine black students. A cordron of regulars marched around the students as they started for the door. With bayonets unsheathed and weapons loaded, they escorted the students into the building where they were assigned classes. Shortly afterwards, a mob, seeing that the nine students had been enrolled, surged forward against the line of regulars deployed around the school. One man was knocked down by a soldier, but otherwise, the soldiers repulsed the mobs without receiving or inflicting injury.<sup>39</sup>

In the days following the enrollment, there was no further direct confrontations between the troops and anyone opposing the integration of Central High. There were some minor incidents with the regulars being charged with sexually molesting the white female students at Central. These charges were investigated and found to be untrue.

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<sup>39</sup>Manchester, Glory and the Dream, pp. 799-810.

The regulars remained on duty for two months with their force gradually being reduced and replaced by federalized Arkansas guardsmen throughout the two-month period. By November 15, the guardsmen had completely taken over and all of the regulars returned to Fort Campbell. The federalized guardsmen remained on or around Central High School the entire 1957-58 school year. At the end of school, the guardsmen were returned to state control and withdrawn from Central. The following year 1958-59, Central was closed. The next year, in September 1959, Central was reopened on an integrated basis without any need for either state or federal troops.<sup>40</sup>

The basic pattern of this occurrence is similar to other military interventions into domestic disturbances, in that there was a progression from state to federal forces in the incident. This episode also was a forerunner of several similar events of federal-state confrontations over civil rights. Two of these confrontations, the occurrence at the University of Mississippi at Oxford and the escort of civil rights marchers from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, required the deployment of federal troops.

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<sup>40</sup>"President Sends Troops to Little Rock. Federalizes Arkansas National Guard. Tells Nation He Acted to end Anarchy," New York Times, 25 September 1957, p. 9.

The abrupt change in mission for the Arkansas National Guard before federalization from opponents of integration to supporters of integration after federalization is almost completely unique to this episode. The University of Mississippi event in 1962 offers a rough parallel with some National Guard units being federalized and deployed jointly with regulars; however, the situation of complete role reversal from civil rights opponents to civil rights enforcers is unique to the Little Rock episode.

This episode is likely the most historically well known of any of the occurrences of federal military interventions into domestic disturbances. The episode attracted not only national attention but world attention as well, with the representatives of many International Press Organizations being represented in Little Rock.

The role of the regular forces in Little Rock as impartial enforcers of law and order is typical of other military interventions into domestic disorders. Their role as enforcers of judicial decrees mandating civil rights is typical of other interventions from 1957-1965 in the south.

The commander of the federal unit in Little Rock, Major General Edwin A. Walker's performance was quite typical, he kept a low profile and carried out his duties without becoming personally involved in the controversy. This impartiality was apparently staged or a drastic change occurred in the general, for some five years later the same



Edwin A. Walker became involved in a similar controversy at the University of Mississippi at Oxford. In this incident, which also involved the use of federal military force, he played a somewhat different role. Walker thrust himself into this controversy as a civilian opponent of integration and the United States Government and most ironically the United States Army. Walker was arrested by soldiers and turned over to United States Marshals where he was taken to the federal medical facility at Springfield, Missouri, for his action. The episode of Edwin A. Walker was completely unique to the Little Rock and Oxford incidents. No other incidents of regular military commitment into domestic disorders of either race or labor offer even a remote parallel.

The Little Rock episode, in totality offers a textbook example of how federal military assistance is to be rendered in a domestic disturbance. By moving quickly and firmly, the regulars were able to enforce federal law and quell disorders without firing a shot or inflicting serious injury.

University of Mississippi (Oxford)--  
October 1, 1962-July 31, 1963

This event involved federal soldiers deployed at the University of Mississippi at Oxford to protect James Meredith, a black twenty-nine year old Air Force veteran, as ne enrolled there as the first black at that deep south

Table 12

University of Mississippi (Oxford)--  
 October 1, 1962-July 31, 1963

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Units involved:	503rd Military Police Battalion, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina 716th Military Police Battalion, Ft. Dix, New Jersey 720th Military Police Battalion, Ft. Hood, Texas 31st Helicopter Co., Jacksonville, North Carolina 2nd Battle Group of the 23rd In- fantry Regiment, Ft. Benning, Georgia Elements of 101st Airborne Division, Ft. Campbell, Kentucky Elements of 82nd Airborne Division, Ft. Bragg, North Carolina
Number of troops:	3,000 Total number at any one time. Actual total number undetermined.
Principal commander:	Brigadier General Billingslea 1st Commander (with numerous other commanders assigned throughout the year).
Type of disturbance:	Race
Fatalities:	2; killed by regulars: none; regulars killed: none; 20 severely injured
Legal justification for commitment:	Refusal of State officials and in- ability of other Federal authori- ties to adequately protect James Meredith, a black man who was registering at the University of Mississippi under order of Federal Courts.
Other law enforce- ment agencies present:	Oxford City Police County Sheriff's Department Mississippi State Police Mississippi National Guard, Federalized

Table 12--continued


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Other law enforcement agencies present: (continued)	United States Marshals, United States Deputy Marshals United States Bureau of Prisons Corrections Officers, Deputized United States Immigration Officers, Deputized
Occurrence in war-time/peacetime:	Peacetime
Resolution:	James Meredith successfully enrolled at the University of Mississippi. Some soldiers on duty throughout school year, 1962-1963. Force gradually reduced throughout school year. By November 9, 1962, only 500 U.S. soldiers remained.

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University. Over 3000 federal troops were deployed and thousands more held in ready reserve. Prior to the commitment of regular forces on October 2, 1962, a large force of deputy United States Marshals had been committed both to enroll Meredith at the University and to protect him from the segregationist mobs surrounding Oxford.<sup>41</sup> The Marshals were successful with the first part of their mission, Meredith was after considerable resistance from Mississippi State Officials registered at Oxford. With the second portion of their mission, the protection of Meredith, the Marshals were almost completely overwhelmed. Only the

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<sup>41</sup>Manchester, Glory and the Dream, pp. 944-951.

arrival of thousands of federal troops and federalized Mississippi National Guardsman prevented the mobs from annihilating the Marshals and getting to Meredith. The regulars and guardsmen, after a fierce struggle, succeeded in driving back the mobs. After the initial struggle, all parties settled into an uneasy calm. This situation remained throughout the 1962-1963 school years.<sup>42</sup>

During this period, Meredith was subjected to numerous episodes of petty harassment. On the night of 29-30 of October, Private Dominick A. Niglia of Company B, 716th Military Police Battalion, while on guard duty, fired a warning shot after a cherry bomb was thrown at him from one of the dormitory windows. These incidents notwithstanding, the Army was able to gradually reduce the number of soldiers deployed at the University until at noon Oxford time 24 July 1963, almost a year after their initial deployment, the regular military force at Oxford was completely withdrawn. On the 18th of August 1963, James Meredith graduated from the University of Mississippi bringing the incident to a close.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Sterling Slappery and Marion Trihisho, "I Saw It Happen in Oxford," U.S. News and World Report, 15 October 1962, pp. 43-52.

<sup>43</sup> United States Department of Defense, Department of the Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, Role of the Army in the 1962-1963 Oxford Mississippi Incident, by Paul J. Schieps (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1965), pp. 128-131.

This occurrence was a part of a pattern of federal military intervention in the South on behalf of civil rights. The intervention in Little Rock five years earlier and in Alabama two years later represents similar episodes.

The phenomenon unique to this particular incident was the length of time the troops were deployed at Oxford. From October 2, 1962, until July 24, 1963, the University of Mississippi was under federal military occupation. The long term nature of this occupation resulted in the rotation of units in and out of Oxford every three months. Rotation of this nature was completely unique to the Oxford incident.

During the crisis, the soldiers arrested a man who ironically had commanded federal troops involved in a similar event five years ago. He was Major General Edwin A. Walker, commander of the troops deployed to integrate Central High School in September 1957. The incident is more than titillating irony; it shows how important the attitudes of military personnel assigned to domestic riot duty is. General Walker seemed flawless in carrying out his orders at Little Rock. He was commended by civil rights groups involved in Little Rock, yet his true sympathies were with the segregationists he was opposing.<sup>44</sup> It is not

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<sup>44</sup>"Walker Facing 4 Federal Counts," New York Times, 2 October 1962, p. 1.

unlikely that many of the soldiers deployed at Oxford had segregationist views; it is most certain that most of the federalized Mississippi National Guardsmen held such views. However, military discipline seemed to both maintain restraint on the actions of the troops and to keep any latent racial hostility in check.<sup>45</sup>

This occurrence is also marked by the phenomenon of using the army as an absolute last resort. In no other incident in this study was a stronger effort made by the National government to avoid the deployment of regular military force. John Kennedy mobilized vast numbers of federal civilian law enforcement personnel to send to Oxford, even resorting to sending corrections officers from federal penitentiaries, all in an effort to forestall the deployment of federal troops into the crisis. This reluctance to deploy troops on the part of President Kennedy was largely based on Kennedy's historical knowledge of the Civil War and Reconstruction and the psychological effect on Southerners seeing military forces marching against them again.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>"Edwin A. Walker Little Rock and Oxford," U.S. News and World Report, 15 October 1962, p. 42.

<sup>46</sup>Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Robert Kennedy and His Times, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1978), 1:332.

Escort of Marchers to Montgomery,  
Alabama--1965

This episode involved the escort in late March of 1965 of thousands of civil rights marchers from Selma, Alabama, to Montgomery, Alabama's capital, due to possible threats to the marchers' safety. President Lyndon B. Johnson federalized approximately 1,000 Alabama National Guardsmen. He sent an additional 1,012 Federal troops to bolster the federalized Guardsmen.<sup>47</sup>

The regulars and the federalized Guardsmen operated jointly, under the same commander. The commander was a Southern-born and bred federalized Alabama Guardsman, Henry V. Graham. Graham, as a state Guardsman, had been involved in the protection of the freedom riders in 1961 and the desegregation controversy at the University of Alabama.

It is unusual for a National Guard officer, even one in a federalized capacity, to be put in direct over-all command of regular troops in incidents like this, however Graham's reputation for fairness in the two previous occurrences commended him to the Kennedy/Johnson administration.<sup>48</sup> The escort of the marchers proceeded without serious problems. On March 19, the marchers arrived at

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<sup>47</sup> "Johnston Calls Up Troops Alabama March on Today," New York Times, 21 March 1965, p. 1.

<sup>48</sup> "Background of General Henry V. Graham," New York Times, 21 March 1965, p. 1.

Table 13

## Escort of Marchers to Montgomery, Alabama--1965

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Units involved:	503rd Military Police Battalion, Fort Bragg, North Carolina--492 men 720th Military Police Battalion, Fort Hood, Texas--490 men Headquarters Company, Second Division, Fort Benning, Georgia--30 men Federalized National Guard not included
Number of troops:	1,012
Principal commanders:	Brig. General Henry V. Graham, Federalized National Guard Officer Commanded Federalized Guard and regulars.  Brig. General John M. Wright, Regular Army, Second in Command.
Type of disturbance:	Race Federal-state conflict
President/Party:	Lyndon B. Johnson (Democrat) Served 1963-1968
Fatalities:	None
Legal justification for commitment:	Request by Governor George C. Wallace for Federal assistance.
Other law enforce- ment agencies present:	1900 Federalized Alabama National Guardsmen. Undetermined number of Alabama State Police 100 FBI Agents 75 to 100 Deputy U.S. Marshals
Occurrence in war- time/peacetime:	Wartime Vietnam Conflict 1964-1972
Resolution:	Marchers successfully escorted to Montgomery

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Montgomery, held a rally on the steps of the state capitol, and then slowly dispersed. Shortly thereafter, the federalized Guardsmen were returned to state control and the regulars returned to their normal duties. During their deployment, neither the regulars nor the federalized Guardsmen used force of any kind.<sup>49</sup>

Detroit Race Riot--July 22-  
August 1, 1967

This event involved racial disturbances in Detroit, Michigan, in the summer of 1967. During the long hot summer of 1967, racial unrest exploded in dozens of cities. In many of those cities, National Guard forces were ordered in by the state's governor to suppress the violence. In one city, however, the military force of a state proved ineffectual. That city was Detroit, Michigan, a city with a long history of racially motivated conflict. Indeed, it had been Detroit that was the scene of an earlier race riot that also had caused the deployment of federal troops, some twenty-four years earlier. By July 22, 1967, the riots, which had been touched off by a police raid on an illegal drinking and gambling establishment, had caused the city of Detroit and the state of Michigan to amass a force of some 20,000 City

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<sup>49</sup>U.S., Department of Defense, Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, Army Operational and Intelligence Activities in Civil Disturbances Since 1957, by Paul J. Scheips and Karl E. Cocke. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1974), pp. 57-58.

Table 14

Detroit Race Riot--July 22-August 1, 1967

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Units involved:	17th Aviation Co. (Air Mobile), Ft. Riley, Kansas Elements of the 82nd Airborne Div., Ft. Bragg, North Carolina 327th Airborne Battle Group of the 101st Airborne Division, Ft. Campbell, Kentucky
Number of troops:	4,700 Federal Troops
Principal commander:	Lt. General John L. Throckmorton
Type of disturbance:	Race
President/Party:	Lyndon Baines Johnson (Democrat) Served 1963-1968
Fatalities:	43; regulars killed: none; killed by regulars: 1
Legal justification for commitment:	Request by Michigan Governor, George Romney, Republican
Other law enforce- ment agencies present:	Detroit City Police County Sheriffs Department Michigan State Police Michigan National Guard (Federalized)
Occurrence in war- time/peacetime:	Wartime Vietnam War, 1964-1972
Resolution:	Riot suppressed.

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Police, Highway Patrol, and National Guardsmen to stem the disorder. When these forces were found wanting, the Governor of Michigan formally requested regular troops from President Lyndon B. Johnson. Johnson hesitated while his advisors debated whether or not regulars really needed to be deployed. On July 23 the argument was resolved in the affirmative and some 3000 regulars were deployed.<sup>50</sup>

The unrest thereafter began to subside and by early August had more or less dissipated, allowing the regular troops to withdraw. The basic pattern of this event is quite typical of other military interventions into racial upheavals. The slow buildup from city to state police forces, then to the National Guard, and finally the regulars is quite typical of almost all such incidents.<sup>51</sup>

The most striking element in this conflict was the open differences between the regular officer in command of both the regulars and the National Guard troops which had been federalized on July 23, and the highest ranking Michigan National Guard officer present at the riots. Although the guard officer, Brigadier General Simmons, was under the command of the regular officer, Lt. General John L. Throckmorton, he openly disagreed with the measured moderate policies of General Throckmorton. General

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., pp. 62-63.

<sup>51</sup> "Tanks in Detroit," New York Times, 25 July 1967, p. 1.

Simmons<sup>52</sup> testifying before a house committee investigating the disturbances, felt the prohibition of lethal force except in defense of human life gave license to the rioters to loot at will.<sup>53</sup>

Although conflict between the Army and National Guard is present in many of the other occurrences examined, one must look to the 1894 Pullman strike and the conflict between the Illinois Militia and the regular army or the 1914 Ludlow event with the conflict between the regulars and the Colorado Militia to find any sort of parallel to this episode.

#### Race Riots, April 7-17, 1968

These episodes involved three riots in Washington, D.C., Chicago, Illinois, and Baltimore, Maryland, occurring simultaneously. All three events were triggered by the assassination of civil rights leader, Martin Luther King. King's assassination triggered scores of other racial disturbances across the nation, and while serious, they did not require the deployment of Federal troops.

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<sup>52</sup>"Order Federal Units Into Detroit Rioting On Standby to Aid in Quelling Upset," Sedalia (Missouri) Democrat, 24 July 1967, p. 1.

<sup>53</sup>"Looting Burning New Guerrilla War," U.S. News and World Report, 7 August 1967, p. 23.

Table 15

Washington, D.C., Race Riot--April 7-17, 1968

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Units involved:	Third Infantry Regiment, Fort Meyer, Virginia--700 troops Sixth Armored Cavalry, Fort Meade, Maryland--2,200 troops Marine Corp. School Battalion, Quantico, Virginia--700 troops 91st Engineer Battalion, Fort Belvoir, Virginia--700 troops First Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, North Carolina--2,000 troops 716th Transportation Battalion, Fort Eustus, Virginia--600 troops 554th Support and Service Battalion, Fort Lee, Virginia--700 troops 503rd Military Police Battalion, Fort Bragg, North Carolina-- undetermined
Number of troops:	12,900
Principal commander:	General Ralph E. Haines, Army Vice-Chief of Staff
Type of disturbance:	Race Reaction to assassination of Martin Luther King
President/Party:	Lyndon B. Johnson (Democrat) Served 1963-1969
Fatalities:	Est. 20-30; regulars killed: none; killed by regulars: none
Legal justification for commitment:	Protection of Federal property and officials in capitol. No formal request necessary as District of Columbia under Federal control.
Other law enforce- ment agencies present:	Washington, D.C., Police Federal Security Personnel from General Services Administration and various Federal agencies. Washington, D.C., National Guard

Table 15--continued


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Occurrence in war-time/peacetime:	Wartime Vietnam War, 1964-1973
Resolution:	Riot suppressed. Numerous Governmental programs set up to assist minorities.

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Table 16

Chicago, Illinois, Race Riot--April 7-17, 1968

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Units involved:	Composite Brigade of the First Armored Division, Ft. Hood, Texas Composite Brigade of the 5th Mechanized Division, Ft. Carson, Colorado
Number of troops:	5,000
Principal commander:	Lt. General George R. Mather
Type of disturbance:	Race Reaction to assassination of Martin Luther King
President/Party:	Lyndon B. Johnson (Democrat) Served 1963-1969
Fatalities:	Est. 8; regulars killed: none; persons killed by regulars: none.
Legal justification for commitment:	Request by Illinois Lt. Governor James H. Shipiro (Democrat)
Other law enforcement agencies present:	Chicago City Police Cook County Sheriff's Department Illinois State Police Illinois National Guard
Occurrence in war-time/peacetime:	Wartime Vietnam War, 1964-1973
Resolution:	Riot quelled. Numerous governmental programs set up to aid minorities.

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Table 17

Baltimore, Maryland, Race Riot--April 7-17, 1968

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Units involved:	Composite units drawn from within the 18th Airborne Division
Number of troops:	1,900
Principal commander:	Lt. General Robert H. York
Type of disturbance:	Race Reaction to murder of Martin Luther King
President/Party:	Lyndon B. Johnson (Democrat) Served 1963-1969
Fatalities:	Regulars killed: none; persons killed by regulars: none
Legal justification for commitment:	Request from Maryland Governor, Spiro T. Agnew (Republican), Future Vice-President under Richard M. Nixon.
Other law enforce- ment agencies present:	Baltimore City Police Maryland State Police Maryland National Guard
Occurrence in war- time/peacetime:	Wartime Vietnam War, 1964-1973
Resolution:	Riots suppressed; numerous govern- mental programs to assist minorities.

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The most dramatic and dangerous dispute occurred in Washington, D.C., where 12,900 soldiers were deployed.<sup>54</sup> This was a greater number than any other episode of military intervention into domestic affairs in American history. In Chicago<sup>55</sup> and Baltimore,<sup>56</sup> smaller numbers of regulars in concert with huge numbers of National Guardsmen and local authorities were brought in. Within a week after the deployment of regulars, the disturbances had largely been brought under control.

These occurrences were typical of other instances of military interventions into domestic disturbances of a racial nature, in that there was a progression from local and state police forces to state military forces, and finally, the deployment of regular troops. A somewhat faster progression took place in the case of Washington, D.C., which lacked the resources of a state to call upon. The unique aspects of this episode consisted of the extremely large number of soldiers deployed, especially into Washington, D.C. In addition, there was deployments of regulars into three cities simultaneously. The only other

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<sup>54</sup>"Army Troops in Capital as Negroes Riot," New York Times, 6 April 1968, p. 1.

<sup>55</sup>"5,000 Troops are Flown to Chicago for Riot Duty," New York Times, 8 April 1968, p. 1.

<sup>56</sup>"U.S. Troops Sent to Baltimore," New York Times, 8 April 1968, p. 1.



episode of military intervention which had the same basic parameters as the '68 riots, was the Pullman Railroad Strike of 1894, in which large numbers of troops were deployed at numerous points throughout the nation.

The plans formulated in response to any future riots represented the most radical departure from the established pattern of these episodes. It was determined that any future outbreak of racial disorder would prompt the immediate deployment of regular troops. This was in direct contrast to the regular army's usual position of being the enforcement body of absolute last resort. The decision was made that the army was to be the secondary force behind the local police bypassing state forces. This decision was followed by several brigades of Federal troops being pre-selected and given special riot training. The ramifications of these measures must be left to speculation because the future outbreaks that the U.S. government prepared for, never materialized. Indeed, the 1968 disturbances were the last time up to the present day that regular troops were called out in the United States to quell domestic incidents of any kind. Excluding the use of troops to protect the Pentagon and other Federal property during anti-war demonstrations in 1969 and 1970, the 1968 riots represent the closing chapter in this study, for now.

Table 18

## Summary of Data

Incident	Type of Incident	Party of President	Number of Fatalities	Commander of Troops	Wartime Peacetime Post War	State of Economy
Coeur'd'Alene Idaho July 14, 1892	Labor	Republican	10+	Col. William Passmore Carlin	P	Depression
Pullman Strike July 4, 1894	Labor	Democrat	10+	Brig. Gen. Nelson A. Miles	P	Depression
Urbana, Ohio 1897	Labor	Republican	No info.	No info.	P	Depression
Ft. Smith, Ark. Nov. 3, 1914	Labor	Democrat	No info.	No info.	P	Normal
Ludlow Coal Strike April 29, 1914	Labor	Democrat	10+	Major Willard Ames Holbrook	P	Normal
Washington, D.C. July 21, 1919	Race	Democrat	10+	Major Gen. George Haan	PW	Prosperous
Phillips County Arkansas Sept. 22, 1919	Race	Democrat	10+	Col. Isaac Genks	PW	Prosperous
Omaha, Neb. Oct. 1, 1919	Race	Democrat	10+	Gen. Leonard Wood	PW	Prosperous
Steel Strike Gary Indiana Oct. 1, 1919	Labor	Democrat	10+	Gen. Leonard Wood	PQ	Prosperous

Table 18--continued

Incident	Type of Incident	Party of President	Number of Fatalities	Commander of Troops	Wartime Peacetime Post War	State of Economy
West Virginia Coal Strike Sept 2, 1921	Labor	Republican	10+	Brig. Gen. Harry Hill Bandholtz	P	Prosperous
Bonus March Washington, D.C. July 28, 1932	Political Social	Republican	1-10	Douglas MacArthur General	P	Depression
Detroit Race Riot June 21, 1943	Race	Democrat	10+	Brig. Gen. William Gunther	W	Prosperous
Little Rock Arkansas Sept 22, 1957	Race	Republican	0	Maj. Gen. Edward A. Walker	P	Normal
Oxford Mississippi Oct 1, 1962	Race	Democrat	2	Brig. Gen. Billingslea	P	Prosperous
Escort of Marches from Birmingham to Montgomery Ala, April 1965	Race	Democrat	0	Brig. Gen. Henry V. Graham	P	Prosperous
Detroit Race Riot July 23, 1967	Race	Democrat	10+	Lt. Gen. Throckmorton	W	Prosperous
Washington, D.C. April 15, 1968	Race	Democrat	10+	Gen. Ralph E. Haines	W	Prosperous
Chicago, Ill. April 15, 1968	Race	Democrat	8	Lt. Gen. George R. Mather	W	Prosperous

Table 18--continued

Incident	Type of Incident	Party of President	Number of Fatalities	Commander of Troops	Wartime Peacetime Post War	State of Economy
Baltimore, Maryland April 15, 1968	Race	Democrat	No info.	Lt. Gen. Robert H. York	W	Prosperous

## Numeric Data Summary

Number of Incidents	Type of Incident	Party of President	Fatalities Inflicted by Regulars	Fatalities Inflicted Upon Regulars	Wartime Peacetime Post War	State of Economy		
19	Labor Race Other	6 12 1	Republican Democrat	5 14	5 3	W - 5 P - 10 PW- 4	Depression Normal Prosperous	4 3 12

## CHAPTER III

### A SUBJECTIVE ANALYSIS

In a study of the use of military force in domestic disturbances, a subjective view is also important. To judge the consequences of committing regular military force to domestic disturbances, it is important to determine how the soldiers were perceived by the people with whom they came into contact--bystanders, supporters of established order, as well as participants in the disturbances. As these incidents are explored, it is important to keep in mind that what people thought happened is as important as what actually took place. Many people believe that the arrival of regular federal soldiers at the scene of a disturbance creates a completely different situation than before they arrived. This belief exists even though the troops may be relatively passive compared to other law enforcement bodies, such as local police, sheriffs, and state militia present at the scene. It appears that many people view the introduction of federal troops as an escalation, potentially leading to a higher level of violence, perhaps even a threat of a civil war. One notable example of this phenomenon was the Pullman Railroad Strike in July of 1894, in which members of the American Railway Union

led by Eugene V. Debs struck the Pullman Palace Car Company. This strike was in response to George Pullman's reduction of wages to his employees. The railway unions joined the strike and soon the situation had escalated into a nationwide strike that affected all the nation's major rail companies. President Grover Cleveland dispatched Federal Marshals to protect United States mail trains from obstruction.

This action resulted in considerable violence and not a few fatalities.<sup>1</sup> The Marshals were unable to contain the strikers and President Cleveland, on July 4, 1894, committed Federal troops to the disturbance.<sup>2</sup>

The deployment of the regulars elicited the following response from Eugene Debs:

The first shot fired by Federal soldiers at the mobs here, will be the signal for a civil war. I believe this as firmly as I believe in the ultimate success of our course. Bloodshed will follow and 10% will be arrayed against the other 90%. And I would not care to be arrayed against the laboring people in the contest or find myself outside the ranks of labor when the struggle ended. I do not say this as an alarmist, but calmly and thoughtfully.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Almont Lindsey, The Pullman Strike (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942; Phoenix Books, 1964), p. 167.

<sup>2</sup>"Bayonets Subdue Rioters," New York Times, 5 July 1894, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Lindsey, The Pullman Strike, p. 175.

Another example of fear of the military was the effort by the Federal government to enroll James Meredith, a would-be student at the University of Mississippi. Meredith's admission was blocked by the state of Mississippi and mobs of people opposed to Meredith's admission to the University threatened his life.<sup>4</sup>

To deal with this situation, President Kennedy dispatched U.S. Marshalls, deputized Federal corrections officers, immigration agents, and even forest rangers. Attorney General, Robert Kennedy, expressed extreme reluctance to dispatch Federal troops, feeling that might trigger a "second civil war." It should be remembered that when Kennedy expressed these concerns, the marshals and other civilian federal authorities were already at the scene heavily armed and were as capable as the Army at commencing hostilities on a large scale. Why then so high a degree of concern over introducing another body of armed force to the area? The answer would seem to be in the Attorney General's perception of the way people would react to military involvement. The military was seen, and rightly so, as a force to contend with foreign armies on the battlefield. Any introduction of such a force into a domestic civil disturbance would automatically transform

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<sup>4</sup>"Debs Wildly Talks Civil War," New York Times, 5 July 1894, p. 2.

it into a war. Although this view was inconsistent with reality, the presence of military force has not transformed domestic riots into civil wars, indeed the military has acted with more restraint than have other enforcement bodies in almost every instance they were used.

With these factors considered, it is necessary to attempt to ascertain the perceptions of parties involved in the four episodes utilizing the use of military force. The four incidents of the use of regular action-ready troops to contain outbreaks of civil disorder will be examined to shed some light on what happens when American soldiers go into action against American citizens.

#### Pullman Strike

The intervention of Federal troops into the Pullman Strike was in many ways atypical of military intervention in domestic disturbances. Unlike most disturbances, it was not confined to one city, but occurred nationwide. Consequently, it was impossible to deploy select units. Virtually the entire standing army of the United States was either deployed or on a standby alert. Federal troops battled the strikers in Los Angeles, California; Chicago, Illinois; and at many other locations.<sup>5</sup> In addition, unlike most such encounters, the confrontation between the

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<sup>5</sup>"Worse and Worse," Sedalia (Missouri) Democrat, 5 July 1894, p. 1.



regular soldiers turned lethal and there were a number of fatalities on both sides.

On July 12, 1894, in California, four U.S. soldiers were killed when a train they were guarding was derailed by strikers.<sup>6</sup> In Chicago, on July 8th, seven strikers were killed by regulars when they fired into a crowd that threatened to burn a train the soldiers were guarding.

Many officers of the U.S. Army were extremely hostile to Debs, his union, and the strike. Brigadier General Nelson A. Miles, a veteran of the Civil War and nearly forty years of Indian fighting, was in direct command of the regular forces deployed in Chicago and reflected strong antagonism toward the American Railway Union. In helping to suppress the strike, he did so with the firm conviction that he was helping break the backbone of a force directly opposed to the government.<sup>7</sup> Although martial law was never formally declared, Miles publicly declared that he and his troops would behave as though martial law had been officially proclaimed, and would treat anyone who disobeyed his edicts as public enemies.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>"Train Wrecked by Strikers," New York Times, 5 July 1894, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup>"Orders Issued by General Miles," New York Times, 10 July 1894, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup>"In Effect Means Martial Law," New York Times, 10 July 1894, p. 1.

Numerous other military officers commented that the United States Government and the American Railway Union were in a state of war.<sup>9</sup> The attitude of the striking railroad workers towards the Army was a mirror reflection of the Army's attitude towards them. Eugene Debs' statement about the first shots fired by regular soldiers being the signal for civil war being the most notable. On July 5, 1894, strikers in California threatened guerrilla warfare against U.S. troops.<sup>10</sup> This threat was supported by numerous small scale attacks on trains guarded by U.S. soldiers. These attacks resulted in fatalities among both strikers and soldiers.

The martial attitude of the belligerents in the struggle was more than matched by that shown by the contemporary press. Numerous editorial opinions on the pages of the nation's leading newspapers would have led one to believe that civil war had already broken out. The Chicago Tribune on July 3 declared that the struggle had attained the dignity of an insurrection and that it was dictator Debs versus the Federal Government. The Tribune called upon the President to raise an army of a million volunteers to crush the rebellion if the presently constituted U.S.

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<sup>9</sup>"Altgelds Second Message," New York Times, July 7, 1894, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup>"The Strikers Hold California," New York Times, 9 July 1894, Section I, p. 1.

military and Federal and local civil authorities could not do the job. The New York World, on July 9, asserted that the strike had already reached the proportions of a rebellion. The Washington Post, on July 7, carried the following headlines, "Chicago at the Mercy of the Incendiary Torch."<sup>11</sup>

The attitude of local authorities varied widely but on the whole they had a much milder view toward the strike than did the Federal Government. Illinois Governor Peter Altgeld opposed the dispatching of Federal soldiers saying the situation was within the competence of the Illinois state militia.<sup>12</sup>

Numerous other state officials objected to Federal military intervention in the strike. Texas Governor J. S. Hogg wired President Cleveland on July 11 that his state was competent to maintain law and order and no Federal intervention was required.<sup>13</sup> The ambivalent feeling of many local officials and the charge that some local officials did not use sufficient force to deal with the strikers in their state drew the lines of conflict even more starkly than ever between the United States Government and the American Railway Union.

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<sup>11</sup>Lindsey, The Pullman Strike, p. 191.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 262.

Whatever one chooses to call the Pullman strike-- labor troubles, riot, revolution or civil war--there is one fact that is immune from controversy. That is the outcome of the struggle. Within fifteen days after Federal troops were committed, the strike had been broken and the strikers either returned to the Pullman Company to work at whatever wage George Pullman consented to pay them or they drifted off to seek other employment. Eugene V. Debs was facing a Federal indictment for insurrection and was later sentenced to a six-month prison sentence.

Did the commitment of regular military force to this controversy have any particular effect on events that other enforcement organizations did not have? Beyond doubt, it was the regular army that broke the strike. The local authorities were unable or unwilling to bring sufficient force to bear to quell the strikers. The civilian authorities, mainly United States Marshals and Deputy Marshals, were certainly willing enough, but lacked the cohesiveness and discipline to bring the strike to a halt.<sup>14</sup> However, it can be argued that the Army's most profound effect on the dispute was not to be found in what the troops did, but rather in the reaction of those involved and those who witnessed the event. The sight of soldiers on the march, artillery pieces being placed, and the clattering hoofs of

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 169-175.

cavalry reminds one of preparation for war. Therefore, in the minds of newspaper editors, the strikers, and the soldiers themselves, a strike, a dispute between labor and capital is transformed into a civil war. This theme, regardless of the type of dispute involved or the attitude of the military itself is a common denominator in most Federal military interventions in domestic disturbances.

### Bonus March

In the desperate summer of 1932, Washington, D.C., resembled the besieged capitol of a nation at war. Since May, some 25,000 nearly penniless World War I veterans had been camped with their wives and children in District parks, dumps, abandoned warehouses and empty stores. The veterans had come to ask their government for relief from the Great Depression, then approaching the end of its third year. They especially wanted immediate payment of the soldiers' "bonus" that had been authorized by the Adjusted Compensation Act of 1924 but would not be paid until 1945. If the veterans could have their cash in 1932, each man would receive about \$500, enough to help make it through the depression. Headline writers had christened the veterans the "Bonus Army," and the "Bonus Marchers." The veterans called themselves the Bonus Expeditionary Force.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>William Manchester, Glory and the Dream (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 1974; Bantam, Inc., 1975), p. 4.

In the latter part of July 1932, an incident occurred which required U.S. soldiers not only to confront their fellow citizens but men who formerly had been soldiers themselves. The events that led to the confrontation was basically a series of abject failures for the Bonus Marchers. President Herbert Hoover threatened to veto any "bonus" bill as inflationary and the Congress was in no mood to challenge him. Most of the marchers accepted the fact that they would be getting no assistance from the United States government and gradually drifted out of town. However, some 2,000 of the marchers elected to remain in Washington, D.C., and continue to press their demands on the government. The U.S. government became highly agitated over the remaining bonus marchers and ordered the District police to expel them from all public buildings. The Commissioner of the District police, a retired army brigadier, General Peham E. Glassford, was reluctant to comply. However, Glassford himself, was under a cloud for allowing the marchers to occupy the buildings in the first place.<sup>16</sup> President Hoover, however, had no ambivalent feelings toward the marchers. He wanted them out even if he had to call out the army. On July 28, 1932, that was exactly what he did.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 1-10.

<sup>17</sup>Sedalia (Missouri) Democrat, 28 July 1932, p. 1.

July 28 began with a clash between Glassford's District police in which a Bonus Marcher was shot dead. William Hrusha, another marcher wounded, died later. When President Hoover heard of the clash with the strikers, he ordered Secretary of War, Patrick J. Hurley, to use Federal troops to expel them from federal buildings. Hurley immediately passed the order along to Army Chief of Staff, Douglas MacArthur, and MacArthur immediately prepared to take command of the troops detailed to route the marchers.

In late afternoon of July 28, infantrymen from Ft. Washington, cavalrymen under the command of Major George S. Patton from Ft. Myer, Virginia, and a tank regiment from Ft. Meade, Maryland took positions in Washington.<sup>18</sup>

MacArthur, in full battle dress and accompanied by his personal aide, Major Dwight D. Eisenhower, ordered the cavalrymen supported by the infantry and the tanks to clear out the marchers. The cavalrymen attacked the marchers, striking them with the flat of their swords. In addition, tear gas was fired into the ranks of the Bonus Marchers. Slowly, they were driven back towards their main camp on the Anacostia flats. Although MacArthur had been ordered by President Hoover not to pursue the marchers into their main camp, he ordered his troops to destroy the camp. By

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<sup>18</sup>"Troops Drive Veterans from Capital," New York Times, 29 July 1932, p. 1.

midnight of July 28, the marchers had been routed, their camps burned, and the marchers, themselves, completely scattered. The Army remained on duty until July 31, 1932, and then returned to their normal duties.

The principal commanders of the troops that scattered the bonus marchers were destined to become the principal commanders of World War II. Chief of Staff, Douglas MacArthur, would lead American forces to victory against Japan and would rule that country in occupation for five years, and then be fired by President Harry S. Truman for defying civilian authority while commanding United Nations forces in Korea. The cavalry commander, George S. Patton, would become a legendary figure in World War II. Dwight D. Eisenhower, MacArthur's obscure aide, would become Supreme Allied Commander over the entire European theater in World War II, and would later become President of the United States.

The personal attitude of these men reflected the conservative view of those in and out of government. General MacArthur stated that had President Hoover waited another forty-eight hours to order the marchers evicted, American institutions would have been in grave danger. MacArthur was so determined to break the Bonus March that he exceeded President Hoover's orders. Although explicitly restricted to expelling the marchers from Washington, D.C.,



proper and not molesting them in their main camp on the Anacostia flats, MacArthur ordered his troops to rout the marchers from that camp.<sup>19</sup>

The attitude of Major George S. Patton towards the marchers was basically the same as that of MacArthur. In fact, one of the men who was beaten and gassed by Patton's troopers had been Patton's orderly during World War I and had actually saved Patton's life during that war. When Patton was informed of this, his attitude was the man, along with the other marchers, had gotten what they deserved.<sup>20</sup>

Major Dwight Eisenhower, while basically sharing the same conservative values as MacArthur and Patton, was very unhappy about his participation in the suppression of the marchers, even though as MacArthur's personal aide, he held no direct command. As MacArthur's aide he felt that MacArthur's taking personal command of the troops was unseemly, feeling his commander should not get himself involved in a street brawl. Eisenhower had such strong feelings that it took a direct order from MacArthur to get Eisenhower to accompany him and another direct order to get Eisenhower into uniform.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Manchester, Glory and the Dream, p. 15.

<sup>20</sup>Martin Blumenson, The Patton Papers, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Publishing Company, 1972), 1:893-900.

<sup>21</sup>Manchester, Glory and the Dream, pp. 12-13.

The veterans, despite the hostility of the Federal government to their cause, assumed that the Army, from General MacArthur on down, supported the demands of their comrades. In fact, they were so convinced of this that on the afternoon of July 28, when the troops were marching towards them, they assumed it was a dress parade in their honor. Once disabused of that notion, many gave up the idea of receiving a hearing from the government.<sup>22</sup> However, since the Bonus Marchers did not represent a permanently cohesive force in American political life, it would be difficult to ascertain what, if any, permanent effect their dissolution had on American history.

The reactions of those not directly involved varied widely. Most of America's major newspapers, just as in the case of the Pullman Strike, bitterly condemned the Bonus Marchers.

The New York Herald Tribune stated that any criticism of the police and the Army is unjustified. Whether these men are really communists or not is really immaterial, they are agitators. The Washington Evening Star demanded to know why the marchers had been allowed to come to Washington, D.C., in the first place. The Boston Herald declared the people have had enough of holdups by the

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<sup>22</sup>"Hoover Orders Eviction," New York Times, 29 July 1932, p. 1.

undeserving. The New York Times described the veterans as "ordinary trespassers," whose "insubordination" had led to a violent outbreak, almost amounting to insurrection. The sight of tanks and cavalrymen on the streets of the nation's capital convinced many that civil war was in the air.<sup>23</sup>

The unique nature of the Bonus March incident was in the conflict between soldiers and ex-soldiers. In most other incidents involving the intervention of military force, it was to quell a labor or racial conflict. In this situation, the antigovernment antagonists were a group who came together one time for a single issue and then, after being repulsed, melted away forever.<sup>24</sup>

The similarity the Bonus incident shares with other incidents of military involvement in domestic disorders is again in the perceptions of the observers and participants in the incident. Many newspaper editors and other opinion makers became convinced in that hot month of July in 1932, that the United States was on the verge of full scale insurrection, not so much at the sight of the ragged Bonus Army, but at the sight of government troops mobilized against them. Many of the soldiers, especially the higher

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<sup>23</sup>"Nationwide Press Comment on Expulsion of the Veterans from the Capitol," New York Times, 30 July 1932, Sec. I, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup>Manchester, Glory and the Dream, pp. 18-19.

officers, had the same attitude held by George S. Patton; namely, the view that there was no distinction between an armed mob arrayed against him and his troops and a foreign enemy.<sup>25</sup>

The marchers themselves were more profoundly disillusioned with their government after the army had moved against them. Even though earlier the District of Columbia police department had killed two men, William Hruska and Eric Carlson, the subjective views of people observing and participating in this disturbance is profoundly different from the reality of the situation. The reality of this situation is that a group of jobless veterans of the First World War were expelled by an enforcement body which happened to be the United States Army. The veterans dispersed and never were heard from again. The expulsion of the marchers from Washington, D.C., did not represent civil war, insurrection, or even a particularly threatening riot; but the sight of bayonets in the streets convinced many that war was indeed reality.

#### Detroit 1943

In the grim summer of 1943, when American military personnel were engaged in a life and death struggle with the German desert fox, Erwin Rommel, in North Africa, U.S.

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<sup>25</sup>Blumenson, The Patton Papers, 1:900.

Marines were moping up the last vestige of Japanese resistance on Guadalcanal. Somewhere between those two points, another body of American soldiers were on the march, not to engage the Japanese Empire or the Third Reich, but to quell an outbreak of violence by black and white American rioters. This incident took place in one of America's largest cities, Detroit, Michigan.

On June 20, 1943, a minor scuffle between a group of black and white youths blossomed into one of America's worst race riots. Soon, arrested rioters were streaming into Detroit Police Headquarters. Military Police, who had an office in the building, realized that a major race riot had broken out. This led to a conference between military and Detroit authorities on the advisability of deploying troops.<sup>26</sup> A number of military police units in the Detroit area were immediately put on alert, after higher level conferences were held between Detroit Mayor, Edward J. Jeffries, Jr., Michigan Governor Harry F. Kelly and top Army military police officials. Early on the morning of June 21st, 1943, two battalions of military police moved into Detroit. In full combat gear, they cruised the streets in jeeps, scout cars and trucks. Their orders: "Load your guns and don't take anything from anybody."<sup>27</sup> By June 22 over 5,000

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 901.

<sup>27</sup>Sedalia (Missouri) Democrat, 22 June 1943, p. 1.

Federal troops were patrolling the streets in concert with the Detroit police. The arrival of the regulars had an immediate restraining effect on the riot. Detroit police reported that the situation improved markedly within 30 minutes of the arrival of the troops. At 2:00 a.m., June 23rd, Brig. General William Gunther of the Sixth Service Command, in charge of the troops deployed, reported no further serious trouble. Gunther said his troops had not been fired upon and the troops had not fired on anyone. Within a few days the incident was over and the soldiers had returned to their normal duties. The riot left thirty-four dead, none of whom were killed by the Army.<sup>28</sup>

Unlike the Pullman strike and the Bonus March, the military entered the Detroit incident without any noticeable bias. They broke up both black and white gangs and never became the direct target of any violence or any particularly harsh criticism from any quarter. Many of the soldiers were familiar with law enforcement procedures because most of them were military policemen.<sup>29</sup>

The attitude of the rioters is somewhat more difficult to quantify because, unlike the Pullman strikers or the Bonus Marchers, the rioters had no clearly defined

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

goals or objectives. However, as previously stated, there was no direct attack from either the whites or the blacks upon the deployed soldiers. Aside from inevitable cat-calls and verbal abuse, the soldiers were looked upon as impartial referees. This, in spite of the fact that in the initial stages of the riot, both black and white off duty servicemen had been involved in the disturbances.

The reactions of observers of the incidents varied, much of the usual hue and cry after incidents like the Detroit riot was muted because of a concern that too much publicity concerning the riot would give the axis powers grist for their propaganda mill. Most of the major newspapers simply decried the violence in general without pointing the finger at any particular group. The fact that Detroit was the United States' most important war production center made the incident there all the more acute.

The unique aspect of this incident of the use of Federal troops in a domestic disturbance is the lack of publicity. Consequentially, perhaps, one finds the least controversy between opinion and fact. The fact was that Detroit was a tension-filled, wartime city with blacks and whites competing for jobs. Under the circumstances, some sort of civil strife was almost inevitable. Most major newspapers and other opinion makers accepted this at face value. A few politicians did not; one of them was Texas

Congressman, Martin Dies, who insisted that America's foreign enemies were fomenting a full scale insurrection. Most people accepted the riot for what it was--an unplanned explosion of emotion and frustration.

The Detroit riot conforms to the general pattern of military commitment in domestic disturbances in that the nature of governmental coercion escalated from the Detroit city police to the county sheriffs, Michigan State Police, and the Michigan State Guards (the regular Michigan National Guard having been Federalized and overseas for wartime service). Only after these forces had been fully deployed and found wanting, did Michigan Governor, Harry F. Kelly, formally petition President Franklin D. Roosevelt for Federal troops. The troops arrived and the riot immediately abated. The soldiers departed without suffering or inflicting any casualties. This represents the usual pattern in this type of incident.

#### Detroit, 1967

During the long hot summer of 1967, race riots exploded all across America. In New York City, Chicago, Illinois, Nevada, and New Jersey, thousands of National Guardsmen had to be deployed to supplement the police departments in those cities. Only in Detroit, Michigan, in the month of July, did a crisis reach a point where regular Federal troops had to be introduced. Before the troops arrived, the



authorities had at their disposal some 8,000 Michigan National Guardsmen as well as approximately 5,000 Detroit police, sheriffs, deputies, and Michigan State Police. When these forces proved inadequate, Governor George Romney formally requested Federal troops from President Lyndon B. Johnson.<sup>30</sup>

On July 23, 1967, some 5,000 Federal troops took up positions in Detroit in areas where the regulars had jurisdiction. Violent incidents immediately began to decline. The riot lasted ten days before Federal troops withdrew and fifteen days before there was a complete return to civil authority. The death toll in the riot was estimated at forty-three.<sup>31</sup> Action by Federal troops accounted for one of those forty-three fatalities. That incident resulted in the accidental shooting of a nineteen year old boy by a Federal paratrooper.<sup>32</sup> During the ten day deployment of the troops, they expended some five hundred and one rounds of ammunition, a far smaller amount than other law enforcement bodies. By August 2, the regulars were moving out of Detroit as the city returned to normal.

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<sup>30</sup>"Is Civil War Next," U.S. News and World Report, July 31, 1967, p. 30.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

The attitude of the army in Detroit was one of impartiality. More than 20 percent of the Federal soldiers were black, and there was no feeling among the higher echelon officers that they were engaged in a war.<sup>33</sup>

Lt. General John L. Throckmorton of the task force from Detroit ordered all soldiers under his command, including Federalized guardsmen, to unload their weapons and not to reload them unless specifically ordered to do so by a commissioned officer. Throckmorton and other federal commanders repeatedly stressed the need for restrained action on the part of his men.<sup>34</sup> Throckmorton's ideas brought him into conflict with Brig. General Simmons, commander of the Michigan National Guardsmen deployed in Detroit. Simmons felt that the forces in Detroit should have taken a harder line against the rioters and said so in subsequent Congressional hearings.<sup>35</sup>

Despite the serious nature of the disturbances in Detroit, the Federal military establishment did not, as had some military commanders in past disturbances, come to the conclusion that the Detroit riots were the opening battle

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<sup>33</sup> Charles P. Stone, "The Lessons of Detroit," in Bayonets in the Streets, ed. Robin Higham (Lawrence: The University Press of Kansas, 1969), p. 193.

<sup>34</sup> "A Soldier's Soldier: John Lathrop Throckmorton," New York Times, 26 July 1967, Sec. I., p. 18.

<sup>35</sup> "City at the Blazing Heart of a Nation in Disorder," Life, July 7, 1967, pp. 19-23.

of a second American civil war. According to Time magazine, the Federal paratroopers, some 40 percent of them Vietnam veterans and 20 percent of them Negroes, displayed excellent fire discipline and did an excellent job.<sup>36</sup>

The attitude of the rioters toward the Federal soldiers, like the earlier Detroit disturbance in 1943, is difficult to quantify due to the lack of cohesiveness and defined objectives among the rioters. However, some alleged snipers, who were interviewed after having been arrested, declared a reluctance to fire on the Federal soldiers because of the presence of blacks in that force, in contrast to the mostly white police and National Guard. While this type of evidence is anything but conclusive, it is true that far fewer incidents of violence were directed toward the regular troops than was directed toward the police and National Guard.<sup>37</sup>

The reactions of many uninvolved bystanders to the disturbances were, perhaps, the strongest to many people, especially political leaders. The sight of Federal troops on duty on the streets proved to many that America was entering an era of guerilla warfare if not a full scale civil war. Representative Edward Aber, of Louisiana,

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<sup>36</sup>"Riot Control: Hold the Street and Seize the High Ground," Time Magazine, 4 August 1967, pp. 16-17.

<sup>37</sup>"An American Tragedy, Detroit," Newsweek Magazine, 7 August 1967, p. 20.

accused Throckmorton of endangering the lives of the troops under his command and allowing rioters to run wild. He also issued a rhetorical demand that people stop referring to the disturbances in Detroit as the Detroit riot but, instead, as the Detroit war. A number of the Congressmen on the investigating committee took the same line. Many newspapers and magazines spoke rhetorically of civil war in America between black and white. It is clear that the sight of battle-hardened Vietnam veterans patrolling the streets of Detroit convinced many that white and black had declared war upon each other. The unique aspects of this disturbance are to be found, not so much in the riot, but in the era in which they took place. The 1960s was a period of anti-war demonstrations, rejections of traditional values as well as race riots. All of these factors convinced many that America was on the verge of self-destruction. The sight of Federal soldiers on the march, not to war but to riot, was only one more phenomenon to prove just that. Objectively, the Detroit riot, like its predecessor in 1943, was an emotional outburst by people who felt they had little to lose by defying authority.

The riot, itself, is fairly consistent with the general pattern of military intervention in domestic disturbances with enforcement escalated from the Detroit police to the Michigan State Police to the Michigan National Guard, and finally commitment of regular troops in response to a

formal request by Michigan Governor George Romney to President Johnson.

### Conclusion

The examination of these four incidents of military intervention into domestic disturbances suggest that the true significance of using the military in domestic law enforcement is not in the actual fact, objectively, that riots broke out, the troops arrived, the riots stopped either because of the overwhelming power of the Federal military establishment or the weariness of the rioters. American soldiers in a riot are just another enforcement body, policemen in a different uniform. They may possess more powerful weapons and be more disciplined than other enforcement bodies present, but they are not really different; their function is the same, to bring the disturbance under control. The significance is subject to what people think is happening, rather than what is happening. When Eugene Debs saw regular troops marching against his American Railway Union, he saw the class struggle revealed in the flash of every bayonet.

The homeless, hopeless Bonus Marchers saw the death of any hope of justice from their government, not from the District of Columbia police who killed two of their comrades but, instead, from Major Patton's cavalrymen who pushed them out of town without severely injuring any of them.

Congressman Aber saw civil war in the streets of Detroit because tanks were rolling in those streets even though the riot only lasted ten days. The risk of committing soldiers to riot is not what they will do even at their worst. Soldiers committed to riot duty have never been the most repressive enforcement body on the scene. The danger lies in large numbers of people, some of them quite influential, coming to the conclusion that a race riot or a labor dispute that temporarily gets beyond the control of civil authorities and the militia is a war. If enough people believe this and act accordingly, illusion may become fact and the real line between riot and war may actually be crossed.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

In this study a historical record of federal military intervention into domestic disturbances has been examined. In addition, four incidents were examined with emphasis on the reactions of the people involved as well as the press and the general public. The long historical record of troop commitments on behalf of domestic law and order reveals a consistent pattern of events surrounding the use of federal troops. From the Pullman strike to the race riots of 1968, one finds a similar pattern of connecting threads. Despite the fact that General Miles' troops marched to riot on horseback in July of 1894 and General Throckmorton's soldiers moved into Detroit in tanks, trucks and armored personnel carriers, similarities are evident. These similarities include the basic progression of events involving the use of regular military force, the low number of casualties taken and inflicted by the regulars in nearly all the events, the long term results of the commitment of federal forces to stateside disputes, the characteristics of the officers designated to command the forces, and finally the reactions of various parties in and out of the disputes. In this concluding chapter, these similarities or

consistencies between the interventions and the events surrounding them are reexamined with the goal of tying together some overall conclusions about the objective and subjective consequences of using soldiers as policemen.

The gradual buildup of civil violence over a period of weeks climaxed by the deployment of regular troops, quickly followed by a rapid decline of the violence, is the most consistent pattern in this study with almost no exceptions. Some examples:

In the summer of 1894, violence between the Pullman strikers and numerous federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies had been worsening for weeks. On July 4th federal troops were deployed and less than ten days later the disturbances were at an end.

In the spring of 1914, violence flared in southeastern Colorado between striking miners and the Colorado militia, mine owners, and other local authorities. For months the battle flared, escalating to the status of a mini civil war. On April 29 regular army troops were deployed within a few days the violence had been brought under control.

A similar situation obtained in the coal fields of West Virginia in which the summer of 1921 brought conflict between miners and volunteer West Virginia militia, mine detectives, as well as deputy sheriffs. This conflict, like the Pullman strike and the Colorado mine strike, reached



the proportions of a military campaign. On September 2, 1921, regular troops were brought in and within weeks both sides had disbanded and the incident was over.

This pattern of events is evident in the Bonus March of 1932, the race riot of 1943 and 1967 in Detroit, as well as racially motivated riots in Washington, D.C., Chicago, and Baltimore, Maryland. In all of these disturbances the commitment of regular troops had been preceded by escalating violence and was followed by a quick termination of the violence. The casualties taken and inflicted by regular forces in nearly all of the incidents is incredibly low. In the 1914 Ludlow, Colorado, episode, the 1921 West Virginia episode, the 1943 Detroit racial explosion, as well as the 1957 Little Rock episode no casualties were either received or inflicted by the regular troops.

The most glaring exception to this is the Pullman strike of 1894 in which at least four regulars were killed in California and at least seven strikers were slain by regular soldiers in Chicago, Illinois. The Pullman strike notwithstanding, it can be said as a rule that regular troops are less likely to offer or be offered lethal violence.

The long term results of the commitment of regular troops to labor disputes is less clearcut. In virtually every labor dispute that regular troops were deployed, the

aims of business to operate in a union-free environment prevailed and efforts by workers to sustain a strike or win recognition of their union meant abject defeat. In some cases, such as the 1914 Ludlow Colorado incident and the West Virginia strike, this defeat was due to the intrinsic strength of the business interests and the intense hostility of local and state authorities. In the Pullman strike and the Gary, Indiana, steel strike of 1919, however, the regular military forces were overtly pro-management with General Nelson A. Miles of the Pullman strike and General Leonard Wood becoming personally involved in the disputes. Even in instances where the regular forces were overtly pro-business, it can in no way be stated definitively that the regular forces played an intrinsic role in defeating the aspirations of the workers. Because very few union organization drives or strikes succeeded with or without the presence of regular troops prior to the pro-labor legislation of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal.

In the area of racial conflict, the regular forces in virtually every instance represented a neutral force. In the 1919 Omaha, Nebraska, race riot, the 1957 Little Rock intervention, and the 1962 crisis at the University of Mississippi at Oxford, federal troops were deployed to either protect blacks from mob violence or to enforce civil rights legislation and judicial decrees concerning school desegregation.

In the 1943 race riots, as well as the disturbances in the late 1960s, federal military forces were deployed to disperse black rioters; however, unlike the labor disputes, soldiers never took a position of maintaining the status quo in race relations.

The characteristics of the commanding officers of the troops deployed were surprisingly similar. Men selected to command troops deployed in domestic disturbances were usually high ranking officers even when the number of soldiers deployed were relatively few. For instance the expulsion of the Bonus Marchers from Washington, D.C., in 1932, only involved 750 soldiers; nevertheless, they were personally commanded by Army Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur. Additionally, commanding officers tended to possess experience in some sort of civil administration. The commanding officer of the troops deployed to West Virginia in 1921, General J. H. Bandholtz, had experience in organizing a constabulary in the Philippines and also had been a civil Governor of a Philippines province. General Leonard Wood, who commanded troops in both the Omaha, Nebraska, race riots and the Gary, Indiana, steel strike in 1919, was a civil Governor of the Philippines for many years before and after 1919. Wood was also a candidate for President of the United States in 1920.

The degree to which commanders become personally involved in the disputes when they were called upon to suppress depended upon whether the disturbances were labor

strife or racial conflict. In the case of labor disputes, it was quite common for commanders to inject themselves into the disputes. General Miles of the Pullman strike considered himself a defender of capitalism and the rights to private property not merely a temporary policeman whose mission was to restore order.

General Leonard Wood considered himself in a life or death struggle with communism in Gary, Indiana, not a preserver of the peace.

In disturbances involving racial disharmony, the record of the commanders is largely one of impartiality. In nearly all cases of federal military intervention into race riots, the commanders have remained completely neutral throughout the dispute. General Leonard Wood was an unbiased supporter of public order in the Omaha, Nebraska, race riot. The same man who, only a few weeks later, was such an unbridled partisan of business in the Gary, Indiana, steel strike of October 1919. Lt. General Throckmorton, commander of the troops deployed to Detroit, Michigan, in July of 1967, was concerned only with the restoration of public order not in maintaining the status quo in race relations.

The one striking exception to this was the unique case of Major General Edwin A. Walker. General Walker, while commanding the 101st Airborne Division at the desegregation crisis at Little Rock's Central High School

in September of 1957, maintained the tradition of enforcing the law without becoming personally involved in the dispute. Five years later, however, Walker appeared in a similar controversy as a civilian which also involved federal troops. This episode also involved a crisis involving desegregation this time at the University of Mississippi at Oxford. By this time Walker had become such a staunch segregationist that he journeyed to Oxford and became involved in the disturbances against the desegregation of the University. He was arrested by regular soldiers, turned over to United States Marshals, and flown to the Federal medical facility at Springfield, Missouri.

The most negative and dangerous aspect of the commitment of regular military forces to a domestic disturbance is the reaction of the participants in the disturbances, political leaders, the press, and the public at large. The people involved in the disputes may conclude at the sight of combat-ready army troops marching against them that the United States Government has declared war on them. The statement by Eugene V. Debs in the Pullman strike of 1894 that "the flash of every bayonet reveals the class struggle" illustrates this.

On the other extreme the press, politicians, and the general public may conclude from the sight of regular troops marching in the streets that full scale revolution has broken out and consequently will support draconian

measures to retain the status quo.

The admonishment from the House Armed Forces Chairman Edward Aber of Louisiana to Lt. General Throckmorton to "let's stop calling it a civil disturbance and call it what it is, a civil war," in the aftermath of the 1967 Detroit race riot, is a good example of a potential over-reaction to a domestic disturbance involving federal troops.

The final question that this study must answer is the same as the first. Can the American military establishment be used as a temporary police force to quell domestic civil disorders, without crossing the line between civil disorder and civil war? Can men trained for all-out combat suddenly take up the role of policemen? Can they make an intellectual and practical distinction between a domestic mob and a foreign military force?

This question must be answered with two distinct and inconsistent realities. One reality is the objective historical reality, the other subjective opinion. One reality answers yes, the other maybe. An examination of the historical record reveals a consistent pattern. In most of the interventions, the military did not engage in excessive force. Indeed, in many of the incidents, the regular military was the most restrained enforcement body present. A fairly definitive statement can be made that the American military is capable of striking with the flat of the sword rather than the point and edge. An angry mob

is not transformed into a foreign military force in the eyes of most military men deployed to domestic disturbances. The exceptions to this rule, such as Major George S. Patton at the 1932 Bonus March or Brigadier General Nelson A. Miles at the 1894 Pullman strike, are exceptions only notable for their infrequency.

The other reality that makes up the answer to the basic question posed by this study is the reaction of various groups in society to the commitment of regular military forces into domestic disturbances. The answer to this part of the question is considerably more threatening and dangerous than is the objective part. An examination of the reaction of the press, political figures, participants in the disturbances, and the general public reveals a consistent pattern of at best overreaction, and at worst panic. The belief that the deployment of regular federal military power against domestic disturbers of the peace as tantamount to a declaration of full scale civil war is a constant theme throughout the long historical record which has been studied.

Many of the major United States newspapers in the summer of 1894 were making literal comparisons between the Pullman strike and the Civil War. During the early 1960s when the United States Government was employing regular military troops to enforce school desegregation in the south, many southern governors also offered a strong

analogy to the Civil War. In the late 1960s federal troops were sent to Detroit, Michigan, in 1967 and to Washington, D.C.; Chicago, Illinois; and Baltimore, Maryland, the following year. During this period, many observers compared the riots to the guerrilla warfare being waged in Vietnam.

The conclusion of this study is that in a democratic country few people expect the regular military to be employed as a civil police force, not political leaders or the press, the general public, and perhaps most significantly the military itself. In many countries, there is little if any distinction between the military and the police. Even in some democracies, such as France, the military police "gendarmes" force performs the dual role of civil law enforcer in rural areas and a police force enforcing military law within the French military.

The use of regular military force in domestic disturbances is something to be avoided. For it represents a failure of civil society, because it looks like war and because seeing soldiers enforcing civil laws is something a democratic society should not get used to. Nevertheless, the record compiled by the armed forces itself is a surprisingly comforting one. They have proven that they know the difference between mobs and armies, brickbats and grenades. In short, fellow citizens from mortal enemies.



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