The civilian components had been the center of the army’s attention in the first half of the 1920s as the “new army” envisioned in the National Defense Act of 1920 was being created. By the 1930s, however, this degree of interest was beginning to fade. There were several reasons for this. First, in the 1930s the army’s focus was beginning to shift to the challenges of adapting to the problems and potentialities brought to warfare by the industrial revolution. In addition, the Depression exposed what appeared to be a continued, and possibly growing, lack of governmental and public interest in the concept of the citizen-soldier. At one point, in its cost-cutting zeal, Congress removed from an army appropriations bill virtually all funds to support the civilian components. On the other hand, by the early 1930s, the components had been in existence for over a decade, and most of the problems associated with them had been worked out. Finally, by the early 1930s, the AEF coterie that had dominated the General Staff in the 1920s was passing into retirement. Their experience in the world war had led them to focus on the problems of mobilizing a mass army. The leadership emerging in the 1930s was less interested in mobilization and more concerned with the new and more mobile forms of warfare seemingly made possible by motorized vehicles, ones that seemed to depend more on smaller professional forces than on the large masses of quickly trained amateurs of the world war. But while the civilian components were no longer the center of the army’s attention, they continued to enjoy the growing stability that had begun during the latter half of the 1920s while being shielded from much of the turmoil created by the cost-cutting associated with the Depression.
The Reserve Officer Training Corps

Of all the civilian components, the ROTC was affected the least by the Depression. Outside of a few small funding cuts, it suffered no major damage to its program in the 1930s except for a reduction in the length of summer camp from six to four weeks in 1934, resulting from the massive cut in appropriations made in the spring of 1933. The camps were restored to six weeks the following summer. The army was heartened by the fact that the program continued to grow and basked in the strong support given to it by the administrators of participating colleges and universities, especially those in the land-grant system. On nearly all campuses, ROTC units were popular and well supported. Even in elite private universities, where male-student participation in the program was on a voluntary rather than compulsory basis, there was widespread involvement and strong support for the programs from the administration. At Princeton roughly 30 percent of the students participated, while the alumni at Yale provided the unit with an armory, stables, and a classroom building. Overall, experience with the program gave the army the pleasure of knowing that there was one segment in society that supported the citizen-soldier concept inherent in the National Defense Act and appreciated the role of the army in developing it. As a result, the main concerns with ROTC in this period were limited to modifying the program to meet needs and to respond to critics from other areas of society.

The land-grant colleges and universities were the backbone of ROTC, and their administrations were among its strongest civilian backers. They appreciated the fact that the program meant that the army provided the resources and means to carry out the military-training mission required of them in the Morrill Act. They were also aware that the financial support given to cadets in the advanced course acted as a form of scholarship aid for a substantial number of their students. Finally, many presidents and chancellors shared the idea, still popular among educators at the time, that military training was a valuable addition to the physical and moral development of their students. Therefore, for most of this period, relations between the land-grant schools and the War Department were cordial, and the Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities remained a constant supporter of the ROTC in the lobbies of Congress.

Given the large degree of satisfaction with the program on the campuses and in the army, there were few efforts made to change it. An ongoing problem that continued to be a source of increasing concern in the early 1930s was the
imbalance among the branches. Since each combat branch had its own set of 
ROTC units, with infantry units being less expensive than others and cavalry 
units seen as having more dash, schools tended to host these units in preference 
to the those belonging to the field artillery and coast artillery branches. As a 
result, the production of reserve infantry and cavalry officers exceeded the needs 
of mobilization plans, while a growing deficiency continued to develop in the 
field-and coast-artillery arms. Since the War Department could not change the 
branch designation of units at host institutions and did not have funds to in-
crease enrollments in the artillery units, efforts were made to manipulate quotas 
in enrollments for advanced courses and for summer training in such a way as to 
reduce this imbalance. This tinkering alleviated the disparity but did not end it.

A major review of the entire ROTC curriculum resulted only in minimal 
final changes, pointing to the overall stability the program had achieved by the 
end of the 1920s and the large degree of satisfaction with it. The major force be-
hind the reexamination of the curriculum came from Charles Summerall in his 
final year as chief of staff. The general was greatly influenced by an article written 
by Dr. Glenn Frank, president of the University of Wisconsin, that was highly 
critical of the ROTC curriculum, claiming that it was mostly basic drill and 
dull. On May 12, 1930, within days of reading this piece, Summerall called on 
the General Staff to conduct a thorough examination of the ROTC curriculum, 
with an eye to reducing routine drill and introducing more instruction that used 
the applicatory methods then being followed at in the special service schools.
Summerall gave this matter high priority and demanded quick action. While the 
staff was initially skeptical as to the need for major changes in the curriculum, 
feeling that outside critics were likely members of “anti-defense groups,” it was 
also aware of criticism within the army that ROTC graduates lacked sufficient 
interest in military matters so that few seriously engaged in their obligations for 
further study as reserve officers. As a result, by the summer of 1931, the focus of 
the reform effort was on inspiring student cadets “with a desire to share in the 
Nation’s defense.” A curricular revision was finally unveiled at the end of De-
cember 1932. But it dealt more with problems of coordination between the pro-
gram and the host institutions than with Summerall’s concerns. Subject matter 
in the program was reorganized so that courses of study more closely resembled 
college courses and were sequenced in a logical progression.

The major problem facing ROTC in this period was attacks on the program 
by pacifist groups. These were strongly reinforced in the 1930s by the growing 
antiwar sentiment and excitement regarding the Disarmament Conference be-
tween 1932 and 1934. All this allowed anti-military groups sufficient prominence
to mount several significant challenges to the program. As in the 1920s, they realized that, although the entire ROTC program was too popular to attack with any hope of success, it had one vulnerable feature—the requirement that participation in the basic course was compulsory for all males. This aspect was unpopular with students and many faculty members and was hard to justify in public. Hence, opponents focused their attention on this issue, lobbying for legislation at state and national levels to end the compulsory feature, agitating public opinion to force educational institutions themselves to drop the requirement, and assisting students’ individual opposition to it.

The War Department, on the other hand, had difficulty in formulating a consistent strategy to deal with these challenges. One major problem was that compulsory participation in the basic course was not supported by any national legislation, being mandated instead by either state legislation or the regulations of the land-grant schools themselves. Moreover, the department was hampered by the fact that no objections had been raised when the University of Wisconsin ended compulsory participation in the basic course in 1923, creating a precedent that haunted the department for the next two decades. As a result, it responded to cases as they arose, fashioning a defense for each issue. Still, by 1937, when the last of these challenges was raised, it had developed a roughly consistent approach.

The first challenge to the compulsory issue came in 1930 with the introduction of a bill by Congressman George Welsh, a Republican from Pennsylvania, that would prohibit schools from making participation in military-training a requirement. The War Department’s response was to allow the land-grant institutions to carry the fight against this legislation while aligning itself in their support and encouraging them by noting that enactment of the Welsh bill could cause the program to withdraw units from many schools. At the same time, Summerall called on the General Staff to develop countermeasures against such attacks. Although no such policy was developed, opposition from the land-grant institutions was sufficient to ensure that the Welsh bill never got out of committee. A similar bill introduced in 1935 also died in committee.

The issue of the basic-course requirement was raised again in 1934, when the Board of Regents at the University of Minnesota voted to make participation optional rather than compulsory. In this case the War Department was embarrassed by the 1923 Wisconsin precedent. It seriously considered withdrawing the three units training at Minnesota but finally decided against it, feeling that the public would see the withdrawal as punitive, which would play into the hands of the ROTC opponents. Instead, a compromise was negotiated in which
only the infantry unit was withdrawn from the school, leaving the field-artillery and coast-artillery units on campus.\textsuperscript{17}

The last challenge came in 1937, when the legislature of North Dakota passed a law that prohibited making participation in the basic course compulsory. The War Department found this challenge more difficult since the action had been taken by a state legislature rather than by either of the two land-grant schools in the state, North Dakota University and North Dakota Agricultural College, whose faculties and administrations were strongly in support of the compulsory provision. To remove units from the schools would seem to be punishing loyal institutions for the actions of the legislature. Thus, even though the experience with Minnesota indicated that if participation in the basic course was made optional, enrollment in the advance course would soon drop to a nonviable level, the General Staff decided to keep the units in place on a trial basis, with no further action taken.\textsuperscript{18}

Finally, what is perhaps most surprising is not that some land-grant universities challenged the compulsory basic-course provision in the 1930s, but that so few actually did. Given the high degree of pacifist sentiment that built up in the country during the 1930s and the unpopularity of the requirement among male students, one might have expected a far greater degree of challenge. Indeed, as Michael Neiberg notes, by the mid-1930s, only twenty-one private schools not subject to legislation related to the Morrill Act had eliminated the compulsory basic-course requirement.\textsuperscript{19} The fact that so few land-grant schools had challenged the provision is testimony to the high degree of value these institutions placed on the program.

Overall, despite these challenges and the efforts made to tinker with the structure of the program, the dominating feature of ROTC in the entire 1930s was its stability and continued overall popularity. It was, in many respects, the army’s most successful civilian program. Despite the unrest in the nation at the time, challenges to the program from the outside were minimal and largely confined to Minnesota and the Dakotas. This stability and popularity were due to several factors, including the financial support given by the program to the participating institutions and many of their students. The War Department was also wise in decentralizing the ROTC program and giving host institutions a large degree of influence in developing the units on their campuses. Officers assigned duty in the ROTC were encouraged to be active campus and community citizens; in fact, most were personally popular.\textsuperscript{20} Finally, the nation’s educators at the time were favorable to military training, seeing it as a valuable addition to the programs at their schools and a symbol of prestige.
The National Guard

The chief trend in the development of the National Guard during the entire 1930s was a growing stabilization of the program, allowing for continuous improvement in both performance and satisfaction. Even at the height of the Depression, the chief of the Militia Bureau was able to report: “With the strength of the National Guard remaining practically a fixed quantity in recent years, the continued increase in both armory drill attendance and field training has enabled instruction and training to proceed and advance beyond any previous record. The result is a standard and condition of all-round effectiveness never before attained.” He concluded, “the National Guard finishes the year [1931] in the best condition of its long history.” During much of this time, appropriations limited the Guard to around 190,000 men, nearly all of whom participated in armory drills and summer field training. Attendance at field training was remarkably steady, while turnover among officers tended to diminish during the decade. And while the Depression years provided significant strain and challenge, the morale of the Guard remained high.

The National Guard suffered relatively little from the Depression itself. In 1933 and 1934, allocations to the Guard were cut drastically, and pay reductions ordered for the Regular Army affected the Guard as well. But the Guard was still able to provide the customary forty-eight armory drills and fifteen days of field training a year by drastically curtailing all other expenditures. Further reductions in appropriations in 1933 finally forced it to cut the number of paid drills from forty-eight to thirty-six. The Guard, however, managed to weather this adversity with little damage to its stability. The reduction to thirty-six drills was almost academic, as most units continued to offer forty-eight drills and most guardsmen attended all of them, even if they were only paid for thirty-six. And even drastically reduced appropriations still allowed the Guard to continue to motorize its artillery and modernize the force.

By far the most significant development for the Guard in the 1930s was passage of the National Guard Bill in 1933. The initiative for this legislation was taken five years earlier by the NGA. At the association’s convention in 1926, the NGA called for amending the National Defense Act to grant the Guard federal recognition in peacetime. The Militia Bureau established a committee to study the legal aspects of the proposal, and a final draft bill was sent to Congress, where it sat for five years. Under prodding from the NGA, Congress finally took up the bill and passed it in the spring of 1933, with Roosevelt signing it on June 15. The act essentially gave existing Guard units federal recognition
so that they would be called up for service intact and would be released from service intact. It also officially changed the name of the Militia Bureau to the National Guard Bureau.24

In 1935 the National Guard began enjoying the same increases in appropriations from Congress as the Regular Army so that the second half of the 1930s was seen as a period of constructive growth. In addition to greater overall appropriation, Congress began a program of slowly expanding the size of the Guard. The General Staff had long argued that the minimum strength needed by the Guard to discharge its duties under the National Defense Act was 210,000 men. But since 1930 its size had remained fixed at only 190,000 guardsmen. In 1935 Congress embarked on a plan to increase the size to 210,000 in four yearly incremental expansions of 5,000 men each.25

At the same time, the cooperation between the National Guard and the Regular Army continued to grow. The number of guard officers invited to attend Regular Army schools increased annually, with the intention that there would be one guard officer with Regular Army training in every unit. The Guard also began participating in Regular Army maneuvers in 1936 and 1939.26 All of this resulted in heightened morale in the Guard, evidenced by a rapid improvement in the retention rate among officers.

Organized Reserve

Although the Organized Reserve was, in many regards, the most critical of the four civilian components of the Army of the United States, and even though the Reserve experienced modest growth in numbers and improvement in training during the 1930s, the program was still the least successful and most frustrating of the four. All during the decade, it suffered from a variety of problems, including inadequate appropriations, internal apathy, and even confusion regarding mission and objectives. The response of the War Department and of the reservists themselves entailed a few small measures aimed at doing the best with what was available while taking advantage of opportunities as they came along.

Lurking in the background of all the other problems was some ambiguity as to the mission of the Organized Reserve. Generally, the problem was that the ORC program was meant to fulfill two different objectives that were not entirely complementary. On the one hand, it was stated officially that “the training mission of the Reserves is to maintain in every unit of the Organized Reserves an efficient cadre of officers, . . . which is individually and collectively competent to perform the duties required in mobilizing and training the unit at war
Stability amid Crisis

strength.” At the same time, it was also stated in the army regulations regarding the ORC, “The ultimate objective in training units of the Organized Reserve in time of peace is to provide partially trained units which may be readily expanded to war strength and completely trained in time of emergency.” The question of whether reserve units were to be chiefly concerned with mobilizing and training a conscripted citizen army or were to be contingents of a nearly ready combat force was never resolved in the 1930s, and reforms in training efforts often shifted between one and the other of the two objectives.

The issue of greatest concern to the army regarding the Organized Reserve was numbers. Throughout the interwar period, nearly all thinking regarding the Reserve was dominated by the memory of the 1917 mobilization, which was seen as slow and haphazard. As a result, a great deal of the army’s energy and thought went into the preparation of detailed mobilization plans. The overall scheme developed in the early 1920s called for a mobilized army of fifty-four divisions, nine to be supplied by the Regular Army, eighteen by the National Guard, and twenty-seven by the Organized Reserve. The central problem for the reserve program, therefore, was to ensure that the ORC was large enough to support twenty-seven divisions. The mobilization plan developed in 1928 called for between 180,000 and 190,000 reserve officers. Yet in 1930 there were only a few more than 100,000 officers holding reserve commissions, only 80,000 of whom being carried on the “active assigned” list. The ORC experienced only slow growth so that by 1936 the number of active assigned officers had risen to nearly 92,000. That expansion then accelerated toward the end of the decade when it reached 104,000 reserve officers.

The slowness in this increase was due to a number of factors. One was a large turnover in reserve officers coming out of the ROTC. Many had little interest in the army and did not apply for reappointment after their initial five-year commitment. At the same time, the army was constrained by limited appropriations and personnel shortages so that it was unable to cope with a larger number of officers even if they had been available. Moreover, for most of the 1930s, budgetary constraints limited the number of reservists who could engage in the fourteen days of active-duty training offered each year to around 20,000. As a result, there was concern in the General Staff that any significant expansion of the size of the ORC would lead to further dilution of a training program that was already stretched too thin.

Along with limited numbers, the other major issue with the ORC program was training. The overall concern here was that this program was inadequate to produce officers who would be nearly ready to fill wartime leadership positions.
For one thing, it was thought to be too skimpy. While reserve officers in the armies of most major military powers were given a full year of initial training supplemented by up to a month of annual training, the U.S. training program through the ROTC was calculated to be the equivalent to only four months of initial training supplemented by two weeks of active-duty training received, at best, once every three years. Most of the army’s attention in this regard was given to the two weeks of active-duty training. The fact that, for most of the 1930s, appropriations restricted training to only 20,000 reserve officers meant that it was available to less than one-fourth of those on the active assigned lists. Limited funding, however, was not the only problem. Many reserve officers proved reluctant to give up two weeks of vacation time to take training. Thus, there were actually so few officers applying for active-duty training that a large number of those were able to take it every year while many others never received any training at all. This situation was compounded by the fact that in the 1930s the character of the ORC began to change. Veterans of the world war, who had dominated the program in the 1920s, were now leaving, and the corps began filling instead with graduates of the ROTC program. By 1931, these graduates became the largest single cohort in the ORC. Since none of these men had had any combat experience, the need to give them some form of active-duty training seemed imperative.

There was also concern with the inactive training in the program. In some cases, this was conducted using conferences and other forms of classes sponsored by reserve units and carried out, whenever possible, by the Regular Army officer assigned to support the unit. But the heart of the army’s inactive-training efforts was made up of extension-school courses taken on a correspondence basis. The army had given great attention to developing and refining these courses in the 1920s. The assignments were submitted to and corrected by the regular officer assigned to the reserve officer’s unit. Nevertheless, participation in the program was limited for most years in the 1930s to around 45,000 of the 80,000 reserve officers on the active assigned list. There was, in addition to this limited participation, also considerable concern that, while the correspondence courses gave an officer some understanding about the theoretical and technical aspects of his craft, they offered no training in leadership or administration, considered to be the most important skills needed by an officer, nor any opportunity to apply the principals learned. As one officer observed, “A recent tour of duty with the C.M.T.C. at which junior officers were expected to be able to carry on the responsibilities of their grade, proved clearly that officers educated solely by book learning were useless when troops were to be handled.”
Behind all this was a problem of apathy or lack of interest on the part of a large portion of the reserve officers enrolled. Many joined the ROTC programs in college for reasons other than an interest in military affairs, and a significant number of them graduated without having developed that interest. Also, those who did aspire to become military officers often found little in the inactive-training program to sustain that interest. They rarely saw their fellow officers and rarely engaged in any activities that could generate or sustain motivation. Correspondence courses seemed dull, and chances for active-duty training were remote even if one had the time or interest to attend. Eventually, reserve officers’ interest in military matters faded as they became absorbed in their civilian occupations, their families, and their communities. This lack of interest was seen not only in the low level of participation in extension courses but also in high attrition rates, with the majority of officers who accepted the five-year reserve appointment that came with commissioning in the ROTC program either failing to qualify for or even seek reappointment.  

These problems seemed so intractable that no major effort was made in the War Department in the 1930s to overcome them. Instead, especially in the first half of the decade, it tinkered with the program where possible to make small gains and sought to take advantage of any opportunity that came along to enhance reserve training. The result was a gradual improvement, with the numbers enrolled increasing slowly and the numbers engaged in extension courses rising as well. At the same time, this somewhat opportunistic approach to the problem also contributed to a continued lack of focus and coherence in the overall program. The first significant reform had come earlier, in 1928, in the effort to clear “deadwood” out of the ORC. In 1930 the rules regarding promotion were tightened further to require the satisfactory completion of all extension-course work appropriate to the new grade. In addition, the candidate had to demonstrate both knowledge and military abilities by passing examinations and practical tests. Further, reserve officers were sent an outline of the military knowledge they were expected to master for promotion. The following year each one was sent a copy of the field manual appropriate for his branch. One short-term result of this was a dramatic rise in the number of officers enrolled in extension-course work.

Shortly after MacArthur became chief of staff, the General Staff engaged in a serious reconsideration of existing reserve-officer training policies. In the summer of 1931, the Operations and Training Division proposed a new approach. It pointed out that, while the long-held ideal for active-duty training for reserve officers was one period of training every three years, appropriations would not allow this. Therefore, the staff suggested a new scheme for training that “would
be based upon a system of priority in which money and energy would be expended on reserve officers in direct proportion to the urgency of their employment in war and in inverse proportion to the degree in which their peacetime occupation prepares them for war-time duties.” Although MacArthur did not accept the scheme, he still liked its emphasis on expanding the combat readiness of those reserve units that would be involved in the first phases of mobilization. Therefore, he asked the Operations and Training Division staff to consider a training scheme that “would provide for placing all critical reserve units with commanders and key officers on active duty training every year with as much of their personnel as possible.”

The division responded with a modified version of its original proposal. Although MacArthur also failed to accept this revision, subsequent policy changes continued to focus on the training of reserve units that would be among the first mobilized and involved in combat. While the ideal that every reserve officer should get active-duty training once every three years continued to be the stated backbone of the War Department’s reserve-officer training program, actual policies increasingly favored combat units.

The War Department also sought to upgrade training at reserve units while reducing dependence on thinly stretched regular officers by sending more reserve officers to the army’s special service schools. Toward the end of 1930, Brigadier General Edward L. King, who headed the Operations and Training Division, suggested a program aimed at sending enough reservists to such schools to provide, over time, for one school-trained officer with each major unit of the Organized Reserve. He pointed out that, due to falling prices, the costs of sending 20,000 reserve officers to active-duty training for fourteen days had decreased to the point that the savings could be used to pay for the increased numbers sent to the schools. After some discussion, the expansion was approved in 1932.

Finally, as an additional alternative to the two-week summer training program during the 1930s, the Organized Reserve took over the training at the CMTCs as well as the administration of many of the CCC camps. This was controversial, based on fears that it would lead to a serious diminution in both the camp experience and the prestige of the program. It was tried, therefore, in the late 1930s on an experimental basis, with only a few reserve units involved. While the initial experiments did show that there was a diminution in the quality of the camps, most of the problems were ironed out in the next few years. At the same time, reserve units involved were enthusiastic about the experience, feeling that it provided valuable training in the skills that would be needed in any early mobilization and training of a citizen army, a view shared in the War Department.
Surprisingly, the ORC benefited little from the somewhat greater attention given the army after 1935. The secretary of war continued to ask dutifully each year for funds to increase to 30,000 the number of officers provided active-duty training, which would allow them to receive training once every three years, but he did so with little enthusiasm and with seemingly little hope of receiving any kind of approval. Nor did the program change much in these years. Combat units involved in the earliest phases of mobilization and new ROTC graduates continued to be favored for active-duty training as were reserve officers who were actively pursuing inactive training. The emphasis on practical training was continued as well.

The one exception to this was the Thomason Act, which passed Congress in 1936 and provided funds for giving one thousand reserve officers a year of active-duty training, after which fifty would receive commissions in the Regular Army. Developing a training program for these officers provided a significant problem for the army, since nearly all the Thomason Act reserve officers were recent ROTC graduates. The plan included an intense schooling program complemented by assignment to units of the Regular Army. After a year’s experience, this training plan was modified to give the reserve officers less time in school and more practical experience with troops. The program proved popular. As Edward Coffman notes, the extra pay was an incentive during Depression years that brought highly talented officers into the program. Steven Barry points out that the provision to give the top fifty Thomason Act reserve officers regular commissions brought into the army some of the highest-quality reserve officers available.

Yet while the Thomason Act injected some life into it, during the 1930s, the Organized Reserve had hardly developed into the organization called for in the National Defense Act of 1920. It was neither the size expected nor led by officers with anywhere near the training needed. In fact, the overall training level of the Reserve probably deteriorated, as veterans of the world war were increasingly replaced by green ROTC graduates with no combat experience and only minimal experience with troops. In the spring of 1940, an officer despairingly described what he considered to be a typical reserve unit:

This particular regiment has 104 officers. To start with it is short 2 field officers and 6 captains. Twenty seven have never had active duty, although it has been available; 21 have had one 2-week tour and 16 have had two tours. . . . Four lieutenants are 46 years of age or older. One officer is not eligible for active duty because he is drawing disability compensation as a World War veteran. Six had World War experience of one kind or
another. Forty-four are studying an Extension Course. Twenty-one first lieutenants are over time in grade, i.e. have not done the courses required for promotion. Seventy-eight are R.O.T.C. graduates, four are graduates of the C.M.T.C.\textsuperscript{52}

It is doubtful that this is what Colonel Palmer had in mind in 1920.

Citizens’ Military Training Camps

The CMTC had never been much more than an auxiliary program in the army. It had been created after the failure to include provisions for universal military training in the National Defense Act of 1920 in the hope of popularizing military training and to produce a few reserve officers and men trained to become NCOs in time of war. While the program was moderately popular in the 1920s, it never created the hoped-for groundswell of support for military training. By the beginning of the 1930s, the army had started to lose interest in it. Despite its increased popularity, the CMTC was somewhat neglected all during that decade.\textsuperscript{53} The program was nearly cut from the budget entirely in 1934, being rescued only by Congress. In several other years it was not even mentioned in the annual reports of the secretary of war and the chief of staff, nor was it improved in any significant way. The only major change was the policy of turning over a significant portion of the training responsibilities in the camps to reserve officers, a policy designed to improve training in the Organized Reserve at the expense of the quality of training offered by the CMTCs.

The only issue of any significance facing the program in the 1930s was the matter of race, which had already surfaced in the 1920s. As was the case in the late 1920s the demands were initiated by African American leaders of local organizations, especially the American Legion, with the strong support of local African American congressmen. As before, the main objective of the army in addressing the issue was to avoid controversy. The overall approach, again as in the 1920s, was to give the appearance of fairness by following a policy of offering separate-but-equal camps. This policy was reiterated in 1930 by Assistant Secretary of War Frederick Payne: “The policy of the War Department as promulgated authorizes corps area commanders to establish a colored Citizens Military Training Camp in their respective areas; firstly, when applications are received from qualified and eligible colored applicants in a sufficient number to warrant the holding of such a camp; secondly, when sufficient funds and suitable personnel are available for training.”\textsuperscript{54}
There were significant problems, however, in following this policy that led to strains between the War Department, which generally favored holding as many camps as possible, and corps-area commanders and other unit commanders where these camps might be held. The officers there were wary of the sympathies and prejudices of local citizens as well as the impossibility of asking units of white soldiers to service camps made up of African Americans, which was responsible for the phrase “suitable personnel” in Payne’s statement of policy. In most cases the opposition of local officers was sufficient to block holding a camp. But there were a few instances when CMTCs were held. In 1931 an organizer in Saint Louis, with support from three congressmen, requested a camp be held in his area. Although he was unable to recruit the minimum number of applicants needed to justify the camp, the General Staff indicated to the local corps-area commander that the minimum be regarded as “only a guide,” and the camp was held.\(^55\) In 1936 a CMTC was held at Fort Meyer, Virginia, after local opposition was overruled by the assistant chief of staff for the Operations and Training Division.\(^56\) Finally, a highly successful camp was held on the West Coast in 1938 despite concerns of the corps-area commander regarding possible local opposition.\(^57\)

Overall, this was not a serious problem for the army. There were only eight documented efforts to open CMTCs to African Americans in the 1930s. A few of these had the support of one or more members of Congress but little else in the way of political backing. But its reemergence was a harbinger of what was to come during and after World War II regarding race and the army. Otherwise, it was a sign of the success of the CMTC program’s efforts to convince Americans that military training was good for their sons. The uncomfortable difficulties arose when African Americans understood and accepted this and sought these benefits for their youth as well.