

ARTICLE

Cops at War: How World War II Transformed U.S. Policing

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World War II transformed policing in the United States. Many police enlisted in the military during the war, and in turn many veterans joined police forces following the victories of 1945. As wartime labor shortages depleted their ranks, police chiefs turned to new initiatives to strengthen and professionalize their forces, redoubling those efforts as growing fears of crime and internal security threats outlasted the global conflict. This article investigates the rapid growth of the military police, how African Americans responded to changes in policing due to the war, and these wartime experiences' lingering impacts. Based on research in obscure and difficult-to-find police professional literature, and closely examining New York City, it argues that the war's effects on policing did not amount to "militarization" as currently understood, but did inspire more standardized and nationally coordinated approaches to recruitment as well as military-style approaches to discipline, training, and tactical operations.

Soon after the Second World War ended, Federal Bureau of Investigation director J. Edgar Hoover announced that the war had placed law-enforcement agencies on a new footing. "As we look to the future, we should also consolidate our gains," he declared. Before the war, police "had a big job to do," but "a bigger one faces us today." Hoover indicated that the United States would establish no national police force; however, he pronounced the scale of the problems police confronted now to be beyond the limit of any single jurisdiction or "local police agency."¹ The war posed major challenges for police leaders, including deficits of police labor (or "manpower," as it was then called) during and after the war due to police joining the military, new training and mission integration with soldiers and military police, and crime fears attendant to war and demobilization.

As Hoover indicated, addressing the war's challenges transformed policing by creating the capacity and experiences to turn police professionalization—fostering political independence, rigorous training and discipline, and consistent reliance on science and technology—from a

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¹J. Edgar Hoover, "The Reconversion of Law Enforcement," address to International Association of Chiefs of Police, Miami Beach, FL, Dec. 10, 1945, *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* 15, no. 1 (Jan. 1946): 2–7, here 2 [hereafter *FBILEB*]. All issues of *FBILEB* cited in this article can be found on the publication's archive webpage: <https://leb.fbi.gov/file-repository/archives> (accessed Jan. 22, 2021).

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local aspiration into a national mandate.² Before the war, policing remained stubbornly resistant to change, and there were hundreds of local, state, and regional police enclaves. Their distinctiveness eroded after the war. A single, national institutional milieu emerged. The wartime mobility of thousands of officers disrupted the scalar stability and hierarchy of policing. Globally scaled activity produced national cohesion among locally scaled institutional actors. By catapulting police around the globe into war-fighting roles against implacable civilizational foes, war created new imperatives of interagency cooperation among different law enforcement agencies and between the police and the military. Later, the Cold War struggle against the communist enemy revived some of the global and martial self-understandings police had begun adopting during World War II, as well as the imperative of interagency cooperation. In the process, a more nationally scaled identity for police was institutionalized in newly invigorated fraternal and professional organizations; greater standardization of recruitment, training, equipment, and weaponry; and social theories of crime and political theories of subversion demanding new types of policing knowledge and coordination.

The war effort relied on police and changed them in the process. Police became soldiers (and sailors, marines, and airmen) during the war, no longer confined to a beat or a precinct. But even those police who stayed home contended with new threats and challenges as the war changed the job. Personnel shifted from one institution to another, blurring boundaries. Police organizations increasingly cohered during the war, although officials were still separated by rural–urban, North–South, and big city–small town divisions. Working through (effectively) national outfits like the International Association of Chiefs of Police, police leaders pressed upon federal authorities by asking for assistance that transcended these differences, which fostered new national trends in policing. War veterans, in turn, newly joined police forces when they returned home. Police also began traveling overseas in civilian security roles during the war and then after it during the Allied occupations, creating the foundation for U.S. Cold War “internal security” assistance to developing countries, which was meant to prevent communist subversion.³ Efforts to resolve each managerial, “manpower,” and operational challenge increased the national cohesion and standardization of police forces.

Little has been written about how U.S. police became entangled with the war, even amid a growing new literature on U.S. policing.⁴ The two eras of major growth and transformation of police power in the United States occurred before and after the Second World War, each the subject of a relatively discrete historiography on policing, criminalization, and incarceration.⁵

²The standard historical account of changes in twentieth-century policing mentions the war’s role only in passing; Robert M. Fogelson, *Big-City Police* (Cambridge, MA, 1977), 202.

³Marc Becker, *The FBI in Latin America: The Ecuador Files* (Durham, NC, 2017); Jeremy Kuzmarov, *Modernizing Repression: Police Training and Nation-Building in the American Century* (Boston, 2012); Stuart Schrader, *Badges Without Borders: How Global Counterinsurgency Transformed American Policing* (Oakland, CA, 2019); Micol Seigel, *Violence Work: State Power and the Limits of Police* (Durham, NC, 2018).

⁴New historical literature on U.S. policing includes Christopher L. Agee, *The Streets of San Francisco: Policing and the Creation of Cosmopolitan Liberal Politics, 1950–1972* (Chicago, 2014); Simon Balto, *Occupied Territory: Policing Black Chicago from Red Summer to Black Power* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2019); Max Felker-Kantor, *Policing Los Angeles: Race, Resistance, and the Rise of the LAPD* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2018); Schrader, *Badges Without Borders*; Seigel, *Violence Work*; and Carl Suddler, *Presumed Criminal: Black Youth and the Justice System in Postwar New York* (New York, 2019). By comparison, the British, Dutch, and Belgian experiences during the Second World War have received scrutiny. See Clive Emsley, *Exporting British Policing during the Second World War: Policing Soldiers and Civilians* (London, 2017); Cyrille Fijnaut, ed., *The Impact of World War II on Policing in North-West Europe* (Leuven, Belgium, 2004). On policing and empire across the hiatus of the Second World War, see David Anderson and David Killingray, eds., *Policing and Decolonisation: Politics, Nationalism, and the Police, 1917–65* (Manchester, UK, 1992); and Alfred W. McCoy, *Policing America’s Empire: The United States, the Philippines, and the Rise of the Surveillance State* (Madison, WI, 2009).

⁵Generally, I use “postwar” from the perspective of the period during the war, when planners anticipated events after war’s end. On the conceptual problems with “postwar,” see Mary L. Dudziak, *War Time: An Idea, Its History, Its Consequences* (New York, 2012).

A close look at policing during the war, as well as the years immediately before and after it, illustrates transformative through-lines across these two moments, highlighting how historiographic disjuncture can be reinterpreted as a geographic shift.⁶ A major difference in these two periods was scalar: changes that occurred before the war at smaller scales took hold at larger ones later through institution-building and problem-solving attendant to the war. The ways in which police enacted social control of African American people in the context of the global war enriches and expands the robust literature on the war as a signal event that reconfigured Black freedom struggles through rescaling.⁷ Overall, war is a state-building activity, but the state capacities built in the process are not confined to either the battlefield or the military—and the imprint of war is not easily erased. The carceral state, geographer Ruth Wilson Gilmore has argued, was constructed in part through the repurposing of “surplus” state capacities.⁸ This process of repurposing began well before the 1960s or 1970s, when scholars typically believe the carceral state as such to have emerged. Warmaking capacities were turned inward relatively smoothly because they already enrolled domestic, civilian authorities: the police.

Critics today argue that “police militarization” is a new trend that is distorting policing.⁹ Militarization means the adoption of military uniforms and other gear, weaponry, vehicles, communications and surveillance technologies, and tactical repertoires. The World War II experience, the apex of police–military exchange until that point, did not result in “militarization” in the contemporary meaning of the term. Instead, the war resulted in a greater and more even adoption of professionalism. This professionalization endogenized military-style discipline and training, changing everyday routines and practices, while the military also relied on police

⁶Exemplary recent texts on the earlier period include Beverly Gage, *The Day Wall Street Exploded: A Story of America in Its First Age of Terror* (New York, 2009); Sarah Haley, *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2016); Lisa McGirr, *The War on Alcohol: Prohibition and the Rise of the American State* (New York, 2015); and Khalil Gibran Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America* (Cambridge, MA, 2011). On the later period, see Elizabeth Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* (Cambridge, MA, 2016); Julilly Kohler-Hausmann, *Getting Tough: Welfare and Imprisonment in 1970s America* (Princeton, NJ, 2017); Naomi Murakawa, *The First Civil Right: How Liberals Built Prison America* (New York, 2014); and Heather Ann Thompson, “Why Mass Incarceration Matters: Rethinking Crisis, Decline, and Transformation in Postwar American History,” *Journal of American History* 97, no. 3 (Dec. 2010): 703–34. My thinking on geographic scale has been shaped most thoroughly by Neil Brenner, *New Urban Spaces: Urban Theory and the Scale Question* (New York, 2019).

⁷Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (Mar. 2005): 1233–63; Kevin Kruse and Stephen Tuck, eds., *Fog of War: The Second World War and the Civil Rights Movement* (New York, 2012); Neil R. McMillen, “Fighting for What We Didn’t Have: How Mississippi’s Black Veterans Remember World War II,” in *Remaking Dixie: The Impact of World War II on the American South*, ed. Neil R. McMillen (Jackson, MS, 1997), 93–110; Kimberley Phillips, *War! What Is It Good For? Black Freedom Struggles and the U.S. Military from World War II to Iraq* (Chapel Hill, NC, 2012); Harvard Sitkoff, “Racial Militancy and Interracial Violence in the Second World War,” *Journal of American History* 58, no. 3 (Dec. 1971): 661–81; Penny Von Eschen, “Civil Rights and World War II in a Global Frame,” in *Fog of War: The Second World War and the Civil Rights Movement*, eds. Kevin Kruse and Stephen Tuck (New York, 2012), 172–85.

⁸Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Berkeley, CA, 2007).

⁹Radley Balko, *Rise of the Warrior Cop: The Militarization of America’s Police Forces* (New York, 2013); Jordan T. Camp, *Incarcerating the Crisis: Freedom Struggles and the Rise of the Neoliberal State* (Berkeley, CA, 2016); Jordan T. Camp and Christina Heatherton, eds., *Policing the Planet: Why the Policing Crisis Led to Black Lives Matter* (New York, 2016); Peter B. Kraska, ed., *Militarizing the American Criminal Justice System: The Changing Roles of the Armed Forces and the Police* (Boston, 2001); Peter B. Kraska, “Militarization and Policing—Its Relevance to 21st Century Police,” *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice* 1, no. 4 (2007): 501–13; Schrader, *Badges Without Borders*; Seigel, *Violence Work*; Kristian Williams, *Our Enemies in Blue: Police and Power in America* (Cambridge, MA, 2007).

expertise. By analyzing this key moment in U.S. history, when the terror of war gave way to cautious optimism that then further mingled with deep-seated fears about political ungovernability of vast stretches of the globe, as well as of local streets in U.S. cities and towns, this article shows that U.S. policing transformed through its globalization, which, in turn, rendered police in the United States more cohesive nationally and able to better pursue professionalization initiatives.¹⁰ Later militarization processes, in the contemporary meaning of the term, were built on the foundations the World War II experience provided.

Quantifying and Qualifying Militarization

Firm, comprehensive data on the number of U.S. police who became soldiers during World War II and the number of veterans who became police afterward are difficult to obtain. Even though World War II was the pinnacle of state centralization in U.S. history, policing remained as decentralized institutionally as it had been prior to the war. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) assumed a prominent leadership role in disseminating ideas and best practices concerning law enforcement, which was crucial to amplifying the goal of professionalization. But no Washington-centered agency directed local policing, and data collection in Washington continued to rely on local compliance. The FBI collected crime data, as it had done before the war, and it compiled a study of the depletion of civilian police ranks through military induction, but it was not as complete as its crime data.¹¹ Combining these partial data with the Census Bureau and Department of Labor employment data, a broad trend is visible: from 1940 to 1950, the number of police officers and detectives increased by approximately one-third. In 1940, there were 127,858 employed by governments (as opposed to privately), and in 1950 there were 173,672. By comparison, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard employed only 219,925 people in 1940 (leading to the historical consensus that the United States was underprepared for war).¹² In the year after the United States declared war, the number of police officers decreased from 1.72 per 1,000 to 1.70.¹³ This downward trend continued through 1945 due to the draft and enlistment and the possibility of better wages in war industries and other non-police war work.¹⁴ As a conservative estimate, between 10

¹⁰In my 2019 monograph *Badges Without Borders: How Global Counterinsurgency Transformed American Policing*, I argued that U.S. leadership on a decolonizing globe after 1945 depended on fluid transit across imperial and metropolitan spaces, foreign and domestic policy spheres, and military and civilian bureaucratic domains, with police at the center. This article presents a prequel to that analysis, indicating that some of these processes of blurring boundaries characteristic to the Cold War began earlier, in the lead-up to and during World War II.

¹¹Daniel Kryder, *Divided Arsenal: Race and the American State during World War II* (New York, 2000), 149; "Police Personnel Turnover Ranges from Five to Sixty Per Cent in 53 Cities," *Police Chiefs' News Letter*, Oct. 1943, 1–2 [hereafter PCNL]. The FBI diminished its publication of national crime data at the beginning of the war; J. Edgar Hoover, "Curtailement of FBI Publications," *FBILEB* 11, no. 5 (May–June 1942): 1.

¹²Marshals, constables, bailiffs, and sheriffs were counted separately (an additional 24,431). The overall U.S. population grew by twenty million in the decade from 1940 to 1950, increasing about 15 percent. Department of Commerce, *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940*, "Vol. III: Population, Part 1: United States Summary," Table 58 (Washington, DC, 1943), 79; Department of Commerce, *United States Census of Population: 1950*, "Special Report P-E No. 1B, Occupational Characteristics," Table A (Washington, DC, 1953), 1B-13. A slightly different count of police (130,958) for 1940 appears in Alba M. Edwards and Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940*, "Population: Comparative Occupation Statistics for the United States, 1870 to 1940," Table 2 (Washington, DC, 1943), 56.

¹³"Nation Has Fewer Police Employees," *PCNL*, Apr. 1943, 12; Rebecca B. Rankin, "Nation Has Fewer Police Employees," *Spring 3100* (New York Police Department), June 1943, 23 [hereafter S3100].

¹⁴I draw the term "war work" from Tejasvi Nagaraja, "Soldiers of the American Dream: Midcentury War Work, Jim Crow, and Popular Movements Amidst Global Militarization" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 2017); see also Andrew Friedman, "US Empire, World War 2 and the Racialising of Labour," *Race & Class* 58, no. 4 (Apr.–Jun. 2017): 23–38; and Simeon Man, *Soldiering Through Empire: Race and the Making of the Decolonizing Pacific* (Oakland, CA, 2018).

and 20 percent of police joined the military during the war. Subtracting the seriously injured or killed and adding new recruits, at least 20 percent and possibly as much as one-third of police by the 1950s were veterans of the war or the ensuing occupations.¹⁵

Professional organizations and specialist researchers investigated police employment trends, but they lacked the ability to collect comprehensive data. This article draws heavily on the work of the primary professional organization for police in the period, the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), which began its rise to political prominence after relocating from Chicago to Washington in 1940.¹⁶ The Veterans Administration (VA), which grew dramatically, also operated through a decentralized design. Its archives are extensive but poorly organized and difficult to use. Top-down searches for information are difficult. This article instead works from the bottom up, using data from individual municipalities as well as information passed on to intermediaries, the IACP and the FBI. Not all cities experienced the war in the same way, but “manpower” dislocations occurred in police departments nearly everywhere, though intensities differed. Colonial locales like Hawai‘i and Puerto Rico set trends that were later realized in the mainland United States. For this geographically extensive analysis, this article draws upon a systematic reading, from 1939 through 1949, of the IACP’s primary publication, *Police Chiefs’ News Letter*, renamed *Police Chiefs News* in February 1947, and the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*.¹⁷ This research also relies on contemporaneous scholarly publications aimed at criminologists, lawyers, and law-enforcement professionals, primarily in the *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*. Unlike traditional archival sources concerning the administration and operations of policing, which illustrate highly localized and place-based processes, these insider publications that collected newsworthy bits from distant correspondents illustrate how police themselves both effected and experienced the scalar reconfiguration of the institution.

Although New York City stood out in these years for its size, demographic diversity, and economic and strategic importance, the New York Police Department (NYPD) nevertheless experienced the war in representative ways. The city was neither greatly ahead of nor behind the curve in terms of national trends in police reform.¹⁸ The ample documentation by the NYPD in both its official annual reports and its internal newsletter, *Spring 3100*, allows a geographically intensive analysis.¹⁹ Combining this extensive and intensive research affords a perspective on extralocal trends in policing, opening the possibility of recognizing how the war allowed the national or even global as such to come into being as watchwords and contours of police power.

Mixing article styles and prose genres, the police professional literature combined institutional analyses and recommendations with biographic accounts of personal experiences and

¹⁵Combat experience among veterans who became police officers was probably not extensive enough to change the profession as a whole, even if it had long-lasting effects on individual officers; approximately 60 percent of the U.S. military held combat roles during the war, meaning that if up to one-third of police by the 1950s were veterans, only about 20 percent were likely to have experienced combat. Even that estimate is likely high because of the overrepresentation among police of veteran MPs, many of whom never left North America.

¹⁶“An Apology and an Invitation,” *PCNL*, Dec. 1940, 1. The IACP protested that mobilization plans created before the Pearl Harbor attack often left police out; “Editorial Comment,” *PCNL*, Apr. 1941, 8.

¹⁷The professional staff of the IACP edited the *Police Chiefs’ News Letter*, which drew upon contributions from the organization’s members. All members of the association received the publication, as did other law-enforcement and government officials, as well as major libraries. Most of its articles lacked a byline in this period, suggesting that in-house IACP staff typically wrote or rewrote them to represent the IACP’s position. The FBI’s newsletter reproduced speeches by Hoover or other law-enforcement leaders and announcements of national concern, and it regularly included technical forensic lessons, reports on wanted persons (and updates on apprehensions), and career highlights of police around the country. Almost without exception, every issue of these publications during the war included articles or announcements related to police war work.

¹⁸Schrader, *Badges Without Borders*, 73–4.

¹⁹Every current and retired NYPD officer automatically subscribed to *Spring 3100* (also distributed to major libraries and other big-city police departments).

intimate details of relationships among officers. The literature shows that the routines and practices and even affective entailments of everyday policing were conditioned and shaped by the routines and affective dimensions of warmaking. Rather than only a “boomerang” and repatriation of war experience abroad to domestic territory, as scholars have argued occurred in the early twentieth century, World War II also blurred the foreign and domestic, the military and the civilian.²⁰ Police experienced this blurring in tangible ways as revealed by the specialized, insider literature they wrote and read. If police professionalism implies an achieved status, this literature illustrates the lengthy, laborious, and geographically dispersed processes through which this status was achieved.

Solving One “Manpower” Shortage by Causing Another

The war, and preparation for it, turned cops into soldiers. In the absence of any single, consistent federal policy concerning police and the draft, tens of thousands of rank-and-file police enlisted, sometimes against the wishes of their commanding officers.²¹ Thousands more were drafted. The enlistment-to-draft rate among police was 4-to-1 by the end of 1942.²² Overall, 15 percent of the 10 million inductees to the military in the Second World War volunteered, but volunteering did not guarantee any particular priority in military assignment.²³

The draft and self-selected enlistment led to personnel shortages that local, state, and federal programs tried to address. Military labor requirements caused police labor deficits that necessitated technical and procedural efficiencies in police departments that outlasted the war, embodying professionalization. Creative efforts to stem personnel losses reconfigured job expectations and definitions of police service, as did the new responsibilities of the war. Even for officers who did not go to war or join the occupations afterward, the massive mobilization for the war gave police officers a sense that they were integral to the war effort. Everyday activity to maintain order and detect suspicious activities was a life-or-death effort. In practice, police officers who joined the military reflected on how uncannily similar, and yet different, a day’s police work was compared to a day’s war work.²⁴

Ambiguities in policy concerning occupational deferments persisted throughout the war. Many police executives wanted officers to receive automatic deferments. The IACP met with authorities from Washington to obtain clarification of policies and plans, fearing that the possibility of being drafted later because there was no blanket deferment actually encouraged police to enlist earlier.²⁵ Paul V. McNutt, the powerful chair of the War Manpower Commission, claimed that only 5,727 police officers had been drafted by September 1942, less than 6 percent of the total number of police officers in the country. This number was less important, the IACP protested, than the voluntary enlistment of 22,098 by that point, based on expectations of future involuntary induction through the draft.²⁶ In 1943, ninety cities reported an average 11.4 percent deficit in police personnel, with only three at minimum necessary capacity.²⁷ At the

²⁰Julian Go, “The Imperial Origins of American Policing: Militarization and Imperial Feedback in the Early 20th Century,” *American Journal of Sociology* 125, no. 5 (Mar. 2020): 1193–254; Matthew Guariglia, “The American Problem: Race, Empire, and Policing in New York City, 1840–1930” (Ph.D. diss., University of Connecticut, 2019).

²¹The Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 (and Selective Service authorities) did not exempt police from the draft, in part because planners believed civilian police would be crucial for the military police’s expansion.

²²“The Manpower Problem and Law Enforcement Agencies,” *PCNL*, Jan. 1943, 1.

²³James T. Sparrow, *Warfare State: World War II Americans and the Age of Big Government* (New York, 2011), 204.

²⁴Francis J. Quigley, “We’re in the Army Now!” *S3100*, May 1943, 16–7; Andrew T. Darien, *Becoming New York’s Finest: Race, Gender, and the Integration of the NYPD, 1935–1980* (New York, 2013), 26–7.

²⁵“IACP Committee Asks Selective Service Officials for Draft Ruling on Police Service,” *PCNL*, June 1942, 1.

²⁶McNutt’s basis total of police age eighteen to forty-four was 100,294; “The Manpower Problem and Law Enforcement Agencies,” *PCNL*, Jan. 1943, 1.

²⁷Kryder, *Divided Arsenal*, 149.

beginning of 1943, 599 NYPD employees (of 19,823) were in the military, with the number increasing to 937 by February 1944 and 1,033 by April 1945.²⁸ The total from the NYPD who served was 1,341, with twenty-four dying during the war.²⁹ From January 1, 1942, to December 31, 1944, the number of uniformed NYPD officers declined from 17,926 to 15,579, with the bulk of the decrease over the course of 1944.³⁰ NYPD leadership instructed the rank and file to keep “manpower” shortages secret due to security concerns.³¹ Some police agencies faced personnel losses of 25–30 percent that year because their officers were younger on average; this age trend was concentrated in state police agencies, which sometimes had policies mandating recruitment of younger men.³² The highest rate of turnover after December 1941 was 60 percent (in Phoenix, AZ). Thirty-two cities experienced turnover of 20 percent or higher.³³

Police executives possessed almost no practical tools to prevent their officers from enlisting and few tools to prevent them from getting drafted. Internal rules usually dictated that police officers should take a leave of absence for new military employment, under the premise that their police position would be awaiting them upon return.³⁴ Poor performance records did not preclude cops from joining the military. In Arkansas, African American leaders were shocked when a white patrolman under grand jury investigation for killing a Black soldier avoided his scheduled hearing through induction.³⁵

Police executives triaged their personnel problems by denying leaves or honorable discharges, raising the retirement age, cajoling retired or unhealthy officers into returning to duty, lowering hiring standards, and transferring rural officers to urban areas, among other approaches.³⁶ State legislatures relaxed requirements for police officers, lowering physical fitness and educational standards, increasing age limits, and lifting residency requirements, usually with the understanding that temporary hires under these lower standards would be terminated at war’s end.³⁷ The war also increased police responsibilities in investigating security risks and patrol of sensitive locales, preparing for Axis attack or bombardment and facilitating movement of resources. Labor deficits combined with greater responsibilities led to the creation of auxiliary forces and hiring of female officers. Police departments also hired women as clerks, traffic control officers, crossing guards, teletype specialists, and in other roles.³⁸ Military enlistment of young male police meant that officers not previously employed in patrol roles now received patrol assignments. Further, police reserve ranks swelled with men with draft

²⁸Inclusive of civilian employees of the police department and the military; “Serving with Uncle Sam,” *S3100*, Apr. 1943, 20–5; “Serving with Uncle Sam,” *S3100*, Feb. 1944, 3; “Serving with Uncle Sam,” *S3100*, Apr. 1945, 3; William Viertel, “History of the City of New York,” *S3100*, June 1943, 6–8.

²⁹“Gone but Not Forgotten,” *S3100*, June 1946, 14–5.

³⁰This decrease excludes officers who took official leave to join the military, but it does include resignations, which may have included officers who took up war work. *NYPD Annual Report 1943*, 3 and *NYPD Annual Report 1944*, 2, Special Collections, Lloyd George Sealy Library, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York, NY.

³¹Emma Schweppe, *The Firemen’s and Patrolmen’s Unions in the City of New York: A Case Study in Public Employee Unions* (New York, 1948), 176.

³²Bruce Smith, “The Great Years of American Police Development,” *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 34, no. 2 (1943): 127–34.

³³“Police Personnel Turnover Ranges from Five to Sixty Per Cent in 53 Cities,” *PCNL*, Oct. 1943, 1–2.

³⁴“Police Rule Prohibits Army, Navy Enlistment,” *New York Times*, Dec. 16, 1941; “Patrolman Faces Charges for Enlisting in Navy,” *New York Times*, Apr. 5, 1942.

³⁵“Police Slayer of Soldier Is Now in Army,” *Chicago Defender*, June 6, 1942, 8; “Jury Frees Cop Slayer of Soldier,” *Chicago Defender*, June 20, 1942, 1.

³⁶“Selective Service Issue Remains Unclarified,” *PCNL*, Nov.–Dec. 1942, 2; “Operating a Police Department with Limited Personnel,” *PCNL*, July–Aug.–Sept. 1943, 9.

³⁷Rebecca B. Rankin, “The Printed Page,” *S3100*, Dec. 1943, 22.

³⁸“More Women Join for Police Work,” *New York Times*, Jan. 17, 1942; “Utilization of Police Womanpower,” *PCNL*, Dec. 1943, 13.

deferments, and thousands in coastal areas became air-raid wardens, working with police. Some police forces hired personnel under special dispensations, outside civil-service guarantees of pension benefits and other protections, which was often the only route to police duty for African Americans. Civilian volunteers armed with batons supplemented the NYPD; city leaders were far more likely to allow white women and Black men and women to join these volunteer groups than to become police.³⁹ Even as some of these practices persisted after the war, the triage efforts also helped codify the terms of professionalization, providing examples of what it did not look like.

Labor shortages intersected with ongoing reform and nascent professionalization efforts, and sometimes strengthened them, creating an opening to overhaul police ranks. Common characteristics of police departments in preceding decades were technological backwardness, scanty training and educational requirements for officers, political control by local parties and bosses, corruption and graft, and white racial homogeneity, as well as open membership in a range of outside fraternities including the Ku Klux Klan. During the war, scattered efforts at police professionalization that had already begun in the 1920s started to bear fruit, slowly proving that reform did not weaken police power, though it did introduce more job regulations and bureaucratic requirements. For instance, Kansas City began a comprehensive municipal police reform effort in 1939. The force fired many corrupt officers. By 1943, almost 60 percent of the city's police personnel had been hired after 1939. Reconfiguration of the force on a more professionalized footing continued during the war. Because hiring was difficult, it necessarily meant finding ways to use the minimum personnel necessary and to increase efficiency, leading to new patrol methods (including elimination of foot patrol in favor of motorized patrol), lean command ranks, and increased average salary, among other fixes that long outlasted the war.⁴⁰ Personnel losses colored all professional discussions of law enforcement during the war. They got the blame for crime and traffic problems. And they spurred police to plan earnestly and thoroughly for both the postwar demobilization and overseas occupations, including by maintaining a commitment to labor-saving technologies and techniques.

Martial Missions for Police

Preparation for the war before December 1941 had four major effects, which intensified once war began. First, preparation expanded the range of concerns of police by highlighting new-found "internal security" risks. Second, it justified requests for increased expenditures on policing. Third, it helped integrate agencies operating at different scales into a more seamless whole, particularly in internal security operations. Fourth, preparation gave police a sense that they were already engaged in warfighting against a declared enemy. In September 1939, President Roosevelt enlarged the FBI and directed it to cooperate with local police forces regarding the risks the war in Europe entailed, which historians see as the official catalyst for the FBI to become an intelligence agency.⁴¹

The FBI and other police agencies began cooperating in new ways. Though affirming that no national police force would emerge, Hoover maintained primacy in these relationships. The FBI created a Law Enforcement Officers Mobilization Plan that "automatically recruits the thousands of police officers who have always constituted the peacetime army of the land and which is now an active, vigilant, alert army safeguarding the internal security of our

³⁹"Appoints War Emergency Police," *PCNL*, Mar. 1944, 11; "Departments Feel Manpower Pinch," *PCNL*, Feb. 1944, 3-4; Darien, *Becoming New York's Finest*, 31.

⁴⁰J. M. Leonard and H. C. Cornuelle, *A Study of the Kansas City Police Department* (Kansas City, MO, 1943).

⁴¹Jennifer Luff, "Covert and Overt Operations: Interwar Political Policing in the United States and the United Kingdom," *American Historical Review* 122, no. 3 (Jun. 2017): 727-57; Frank J. Donner, *The Age of Surveillance: The Aims and Methods of America's Political Intelligence System* (New York, 1981), 57-9; "European War Causes Special Action by American Police Departments," *PCNL*, Sept. 1939, 3.

Nation.” Officers signed pledges to safeguard internal security under this plan, which meant helping to apprehend “enemy aliens.”⁴² Hoover reported that local police helped the FBI apprehend 478 German aliens, 81 Italian aliens, and 1,212 Japanese aliens in the day after the Pearl Harbor attack.⁴³ The IACP sought a role for local police in registering aliens, but the FBI and Attorney General declined to confer that responsibility on police in 1940. In early 1942, when the FBI initiated a re-registration drive, police contributed by helping to distribute the requisite forms.⁴⁴ The FBI held hundreds of conferences on national defense, including in Hawai‘i, Alaska, and Puerto Rico, attended by more than 7,000 police executives in 1940 and more than 8,000 in the first quarter of 1941. The FBI designed these conferences to train local police on how to funnel complaints and intelligence to the Bureau and to engage in security investigations.⁴⁵ FBI officials studied how British police authorities were dealing with war-related labor shortages, and the IACP helped circulate Hoover’s recommendations on everything from personnel management to traffic to air-raid preparation.⁴⁶ Hoover and Fiorello La Guardia, as director of the U.S. Office of Civilian Defense, collaborated on developing two-day courses on civil defense for police executives and sheriffs offered in over 50 cities in autumn 1941, supplemented by six-day general courses offered in over 260 cities in early 1942, as well as by FBI-run war traffic schools.⁴⁷ The IACP also assisted the War Department, helping to develop new procedures and training to facilitate safe movement of resources across the country.⁴⁸ Both individually and organizationally, police became entangled with the war effort even before the United States declared war. In effect, this entanglement nationalized repertoires and training that had previously been more unevenly distributed.

War mobilization changed the composition of police forces, and it also changed the police mission. Police officers came to see their jobs differently, and other jobs became more police-like. Guards at key industrial sites often received new forms of instruction in security, and many received new authority or were sworn in as special police officers. Organizations like the IACP helped disseminate industrial security recommendations nationally to operators of vital infrastructure, meant to inform their security staff of new procedures.⁴⁹ Some police left their positions to become war industry guards, a generally easier job that often paid more. Leading police expert Lou Smyth lamented that guards now “lost the human contacts of the police job” while “guarding wilderness along a fence.”⁵⁰ Police helped organize dimouts/blackouts, and they shared their experiences with counterparts in other cities. The IACP focused its 1941 annual meeting on civil defense issues, highlighting coordination with the FBI, War Department (particularly the Quartermaster Corps and Military Intelligence Division), and Office of Production Management.⁵¹ After the

⁴²“FBI Enlists 150,000 as Security ‘Army,’” *New York Times*, May 23, 1941.

⁴³J. Edgar Hoover, “Alien Enemy Control,” *Iowa Law Review* 29, no. 3 (1944): 396–408, here 402. In South America, a secret FBI counterintelligence mission helped deport or expel 4,924 “aliens”; see “Cooperation Stressed in International Relations Report,” *FBILEB* 15, no. 2 (Feb. 1946): 15–7.

⁴⁴“FBI Field Offices to Have Data on Registered Alien Enemies,” *PCNL*, Jan.–Feb. 1942, 1.

⁴⁵“FBI Mobilization for National Defense Secures Results,” *PCNL*, May 1941, 2.

⁴⁶“Police Duties in Emergencies,” *PCNL*, June 1941, 1–2; J. Edgar Hoover, “Police Procedures in Wartime Emergency,” *PCNL*, July 1941, 2–3. The FBI published a 44-page manual for police executives titled *War Duty Suggestions for Police* early in 1942.

⁴⁷“The IACP, the FBI and National Defense,” *PCNL*, Aug.–Sept. 1941, 4–5; “OCD Enlists FBI Aid for Training Police in Civilian Defense,” *PCNL*, Oct. 1941, 4; J. Edgar Hoover, “Police Study Civil Defense,” *PCNL*, Mar. 1942, 9; J. Edgar Hoover, “Introduction: Auxiliary Police,” and “The Present Task of Law Enforcement,” *FBILEB* 11, no. 7 (Sept.–Oct. 1942): 2–7.

⁴⁸“Commends Safety Division for Aid to War Department” *PCNL*, June 1941, 3; “Police Responsibilities in Planning for Military Troop and Motor Convoys,” *PCNL*, Oct. 1941, 2; “War Traffic Control Program Drafted by IACP,” *PCNL*, Jan.–Feb. 1942, 2–4.

⁴⁹“Instruction for Plant Guards and Emergency Reserves,” *PCNL*, June 1941, 3.

⁵⁰Lou Smyth, “War and Post-War Police Problems: Personnel Losses,” *PCNL*, June 1943, 6–8.

⁵¹Detailed in *PCNL*, Aug.–Sept. 1941.

Pearl Harbor attack, the IACP redoubled its efforts to collaborate with relevant federal agencies and to urge best practices for both defense against attack and facilitating mobilization. Individually and institutionally, police engaged in war work with alacrity.

Policing, Racism, and War

The war both heightened racial conflict and oppression and threatened to overturn white supremacy. As the United States went to war against the Axis regimes, and relied on African Americans to do so, the illegitimacy of Jim Crow became more obvious to many white Americans. The number of African Americans in the military exploded, rising from 3,600 before the war to 1.2 million by war's end. To quote Cedric J. Robinson, World War II was a "colander, draining the tangled social and political protocols of the racial order in America," as it clarified how much effort the United States as a whole could marshal to defeat a racist power in Europe, and how needed African Americans were. But at home police remained committed to upholding white supremacy, creating a barrier between the two victories of the "Double V" campaign promoted by the *Pittsburgh Courier*: over the Axis powers abroad and racial despotism at home, including lynchings, police abuse, and other outrages.⁵²

Racial integration of police, which had been episodic and sectional, became more systematic and national due to the war, including with the creation of African American military police units. The military police's responsibilities included protecting and disciplining soldiers, however, which allowed white MPs to overpolice and underprotect Black service members. Even before U.S. entry into the war, Black leaders advocated increasing the ranks of Black MPs because white military and civilian police treated Black soldiers so poorly.⁵³ White civilian police harassed, arrested, and even killed Black soldiers with alarming frequency before and during the war.⁵⁴ White MPs often refused to protect Black servicemen off base, while enforcing Jim Crow segregation and at times engaging in racist violence.⁵⁵ They sometimes allowed transiting German prisoners of war access to segregated public facilities, while blocking Black soldiers from them.⁵⁶ White MPs and civilian police looked the other way during the 1943 "Zoot Suit" riots in Los Angeles, as white sailors and soldiers rampaged through the city, attacking Mexican and African American youth.⁵⁷

In numerous cases, Black soldiers fought back. Some engaged in gun battles with white MPs who allowed, facilitated, or took part in racist harassment and violence.⁵⁸ These incidents prompted modest efforts to address racial inequality in the military, along with concerted

⁵²Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Movements in America* (New York, 1997), 129. Some Black radicals advocated a "Triple V" campaign, meaning a further victory over imperialism, whereby African Americans would also be united in the freedom fight against European colonial rule in Africa and Asia; Von Eschen, "Civil Rights and World War II in a Global Frame." C. L. R. James, for his part, argued in 1939 that there was a single V for Black people, with Chamberlain, Hitler, Hirohito, and Roosevelt all as their enemy. J. R. Johnson, "Negroes and the War—I," *Socialist Appeal* III, no. 66 (Sept. 6, 1939): 3.

⁵³"Military Police Brutality Will Be Probed by U.S.," *Baltimore Afro-American*, Apr. 19, 1941, 8 [hereafter BAA]; "Hastie Sees Wider Use of Colored MP," BAA, Sept. 27, 1941, 1; Euclid L. Taylor, "Protests M.P. Brutality," BAA, Sept. 6, 1941, 4; Kryder, *Divided Arsenal*, 69, 143.

⁵⁴Neil A. Wynn, *The African American Experience during World War II* (New York, 2010); Gary R. Mormino, "GI Joe Meets Jim Crow: Racial Violence and Reform in World War II Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 73, no. 1 (1994): 23–42; "Army Can Protect Soldiers from Civilian Violence—Why Doesn't It?," BAA, Nov. 27, 1943, 24.

⁵⁵For instance, see "A Protector of Democracy Asks Some Protection," *Chicago Defender*, Aug. 23, 1941, 1; "Military Police," *Chicago Defender*, Sept. 6, 1941, 14; and John H. Thompson, "Texas Police Insult, Arrest Race Soldiers," *Chicago Defender*, Feb. 14, 1942, 1.

⁵⁶Matthias Reiss, "Solidarity among 'Fellow Sufferers': African Americans and German Prisoners of War in the United States during World War II," *Journal of African American History* 98, no. 4 (Fall 2013): 531–61.

⁵⁷Sitkoff, "Racial Militancy and Interracial Violence," 671.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 668.

efforts to create some Black-led and -manned military police brigades and later to ship Black units abroad.⁵⁹ But at home commanders often posted these Black MPs near brothels and taverns in Black neighborhoods and ordered them to watch over furloughed Black soldiers.⁶⁰ Black military police units often were armed only with batons, while white counterparts carried pistols. White civilian police occasionally inserted themselves into military law enforcement situations, usurping the authority of Black MPs and threatening Black soldiers.⁶¹ Many Black observers saw integrating the military police as the only way to assure the safety of Black soldiers, most of whom faced greater threats from white police and MPs than from enemy forces. Symbolizing this urgency, heavyweight champion Joe Louis requested a transfer from cavalry to military police.⁶² Racist discrimination, abuse, and attacks also propelled new organizational tactics, including walkouts and sit-ins among African American soldiers, which were forerunners of the direct action that spread across the South over a decade later and that were organized, for instance, by the Congress of Racial Equality, which formed in 1942 amid these tensions.⁶³

During the war, a new form of political militancy emerged among ordinary Black people, as among Black soldiers. In August 1943, for instance, Harlemites fought back after rumors spread of a racist police murder of a Black military police officer, Robert Bandy, who was shot by a white NYPD officer but not seriously wounded. This uprising followed two years of aggressive police presence in Harlem, prodded by white voters' fears of rising crime after a pair of homicides a month before the Pearl Harbor attack. Black editors analyzed this often-violent policing with reference to Nazi war tactics, using terms like "Blitzkrieg." Thurgood Marshall excoriated the "Gestapo in Detroit" after the massive June 1943 white riot there.⁶⁴ Once the 1943 uprising began, Harlemites welcomed a group of Black MPs brought in to restore order; white MPs, in contrast, were the target of further protests.⁶⁵ The uprising prefigured the uproarious urban political protests of the 1960s, defined by self-defense against racist police violence and economic degradation.⁶⁶ Robert C. Weaver, later the first African American Cabinet member, blamed the Harlem uprising on the discrimination experienced by Black servicemen, which fueled wider Black political militancy.⁶⁷

To several police experts, Black political militancy also threatened to shine a spotlight on racism in the United States that might encourage dark-skinned people across the globe to sympathize with the African American plight and even support the Soviet Union. Although

⁵⁹"It Took a Fatal Riot to Get These," *BAA*, Nov. 22, 1941, 5; "World War Officers Wanted for New M.P. Battalions," *BAA*, Apr. 25, 1942, 2; "6 M.P. Groups Authorized by U.S. War Dept.," *Chicago Defender*, Mar. 7, 1942, 6; Kryder, *Divided Arsenal*, 168–207.

⁶⁰For instance, see "You Can Tell the Non-Com M.P.'s, They Are in the Front Row," *BAA*, Feb. 7, 1942, 5; "Patrol Newark's 3rd Ward," *BAA*, Aug. 22, 1942, 5; and "Army Wants U.S. to Go After M.P. Killer," *BAA*, Nov. 28, 1942, 1.

⁶¹"Civilian Policemen Usurp MP's Functions in Fla," *BAA*, Aug. 19, 1944, 7.

⁶²"Joe Louis Seeks MP Post," *BAA*, July 10, 1943, 18.

⁶³Wynn, *African American Experience*, 49; Rod Bush, *We Are Not What We Seem: Black Nationalism and Class Struggle in the American Century* (New York, 1999), 152.

⁶⁴Shannon King, "A Murder in Central Park: Racial Violence and the Crime Wave in New York during the 1930s and 1940s," in *The Strange Careers of the Jim Crow North: Segregation and Struggle Outside of the South*, eds. Brian Purnell and Jeanne Theoharis (New York, 2019), 43–66; Thurgood Marshall, "The Gestapo in Detroit," *Crisis* 50, no. 8 (Aug. 1943): 232–3, 246–7. Such motifs were common: editors of Baltimore's *Afro-American* referred to Virginia State Police, after the arrest of an inebriated Black man in November 1942, as "expert in the Hitler method of police brutality"; "A Good Lesson for Hitler in Police Brutality," *BAA*, Dec. 5, 1942, 24.

⁶⁵Darien, *Becoming New York's Finest*, 31.

⁶⁶Suddler, *Presumed Criminal*; Joe R. Feagin and Harlan Hahn, *Ghetto Revolts: The Politics of Violence in American Cities* (New York, 1973), 89–90.

⁶⁷Kryder, *Divided Arsenal*, 149. J. Edgar Hoover attributed the 1943 unrest in Detroit to a combination of the population changes war industry growth caused there and the simultaneous depletion of police manpower.

militant protest was not the primary tactic of African American politics during the war, confrontational tactics garnered the most attention from police leaders with an increasingly global outlook, who recognized that as the war transformed the global racial covenant, police overseas would become the “first line of defense” against anticolonial and nationalist movements demanding freedom and independence. U.S. police experience with Black militancy at home came to provide lessons that were crucial to convey overseas.⁶⁸

Commingling Military and Police Power

During the war, police described their task as consistent, if not coterminous, with the military's. War work, it turned out, also required hefty ideological labor. For instance, the April 1943 cover of the NYPD's *Spring 3100* depicted a line-up of the leaders of Germany, Italy, and Japan, handcuffed and chained together. The magazine's editors declared, “We of the Department are rigidly aware of the importance of our job in the war against tyranny—a war destined to end only when the Mad Dogs of Evil are consumed in the avenging flames of their own hypocrisy and greed.”⁶⁹ Police also answered the call monetarily. In 1943, NYPD loan drives raised enough money to pay for two B-17 Flying Fortress bombers and 69 fighters, all of which were emblazoned with NYPD inscriptions. Among the names of the fighters were “Blue Coat Special,” “Sky Cop,” “Tough Guy,” “Night Stick,” “Law and Order,” “Homicide Squad,” and “Plainclothesman.”⁷⁰

The war effort demanded cooperation between the police and the military, even beyond the mainland United States. Police trained military members during the war, for instance. In 1945, marines visited Honolulu for training in criminal investigation and other police procedures before transferring to bases on South Pacific islands. Here one imperial space provided a jumping-off point for another, with commingled police and military tasks. The emerging empire of bases across the Pacific that would be the legacy of the war required a new security apparatus. Although the military police officially were charged with maintaining order on these installations, the rapid growth of bases outstripped the Provost Marshal's ability to staff the requisite positions. Urban police assisted in the intermediary zone of Hawai'i. Since 1931, MPs had shared a building with the municipal police in Honolulu, but by 1945, standard-duty marines were learning from the police.⁷¹ The city stood out for the amount of U.S. military activity there, as well as for high rates of traffic accidents that were a product of traffic problems caused by the military buildup.⁷² After December 1941, the Honolulu municipal budget for police more than doubled.⁷³ Wartime experience conferred important lessons in interagency coordination.⁷⁴

Hawai'i also stood out because it was both a U.S. territory and under martial law from December 1941 until October 1944, which authorities justified by highlighting its large ethnic Japanese population and its strategic location.⁷⁵ During the war, Honolulu cops offered unique

⁶⁸Sitkoff, “Racial Militancy and Interracial Violence”; Schrader, *Badges Without Borders*, ch. 1.

⁶⁹“Editorially Speaking,” *S3100*, Mar. 1943, 1.

⁷⁰“Two Letters Which Speak for Themselves,” *S3100*, July 1943, 4–5; “The Third War Loan Drive,” *S3100*, Nov. 1943, 1. The funds for the fighters mostly came from outside the NYPD but were donated in its name (\$4.575 million); individual members of the department offered \$357,524.

⁷¹“Honolulu Police Train Marines,” *PCNL*, Jan. 1945, 2; “Honolulu Police Featured in ‘Leatherneck,’” *PCNL*, Apr. 1945, 3.

⁷²“Honolulu Seeks Increased Personnel,” *PCNL*, Feb. 1941, 2.

⁷³W. A. Gabrielson, “A Police Department Under Fire,” *PCNL*, Apr.–May 1942, 6–8.

⁷⁴Gerald Horne, *Fighting in Paradise: Labor Unions, Racism, and Communists in the Making of Modern Hawaii* (Honolulu, HI, 2011), 40; Harry N. Scheiber and Jane L. Scheiber, *Bayonets in Paradise: Martial Law in Hawai'i during World War II* (Honolulu, HI, 2016), 74–5.

⁷⁵Scheiber and Scheiber, *Bayonets in Paradise*. Upon declaration of martial law, due to a shortage of MPs, civilian police in Maui became “ex-officio” military police, with the chief designated Acting Provost Marshal; George Larsen, Jr., “Maui Police and the War,” *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 33, no. 5 (1943): 410–5.

lessons for visiting marines: “Thoroughly trained, smartly uniformed, intelligent and courteous, Honolulu police play an important part in the Pacific war. From them Marines have learned a lot about racial tolerance and international amity needed for the peace to come.”⁷⁶ But tolerance braided together with suspicion, and to apply lessons drawn from a situation of martial law meant applying lessons from a state of emergency. Further, Hawai‘i, particularly Honolulu, exhibited a combustible mix of labor and communist activism, Jim Crow-style segregation of African Americans, and racism against both native Hawaiian and ethnic Japanese and Filipino denizens.⁷⁷ John A. Burns, who later represented Hawai‘i in Congress and became the state’s governor, oversaw a wartime espionage unit of the Honolulu police department and a “Police Contact Group” designed to act as a liaison between the ethnic Japanese community and police and security agencies. Intended overtly to disseminate information to a population suspicious of the police, the Police Contact Group also gathered intelligence. The Honolulu police created its espionage unit at the request of the FBI, which operated alongside the Military Intelligence Division, the Office of Naval Intelligence, and the Provost Marshal’s office on the archipelago.⁷⁸ Well into the 1950s, white officers predominated in the ranks of police on some Hawaiian islands, especially among the higher ranks, though the population was majority non-white.⁷⁹

The military police were at the center of many racial clashes in part because the force grew rapidly beginning in 1941. In September, the Military Police Corps became a permanent branch of the Army, and its duties became official the day the United States declared war in December. In 1941, there were 2,000 MPs. Over the course of the war, the number increased 100-fold to 200,000.⁸⁰ By November 1942, the required number of commissioned officers in the military police had been met, and eligible police were dissuaded from applying.⁸¹ Of the 530 military police units activated during World War II, 379 remained within the United States. A great portion of their duty was to ride trains to safeguard troop movements.⁸² The Provost Marshal General inaugurated a new training school for military police in December 1941, and its first class of 215 officers graduated in March 1942.⁸³ The school graduated over 10,000 officer students, 3,340 officer candidates, and 5,000 enlisted specialists by August 1945.⁸⁴ The school focused on intelligence and internal security, but it also emphasized traffic control and military law. Among its early instructors were leading former civilian police, including Franklin M. Kreml, who directed training at Northwestern University Traffic Institute, and Russell A. Snook, who over the next couple of decades played an instrumental role in connecting domestic and foreign police through the IACP.⁸⁵ Additionally, military police replacement training centers opened. These trained 42,000 students. Of the 9,476 sent to two centers, Forts Riley and Custer, all were white.⁸⁶

⁷⁶“Honolulu Police Featured in ‘Leatherneck,’” 3.

⁷⁷Beth Bailey and David Farber, “The ‘Double-V’ Campaign in World War II Hawaii: African Americans, Racial Ideology, and Federal Power,” *Journal of Social History* 26, no. 4 (Summer 1993): 817–43.

⁷⁸Scheiber and Scheiber, *Bayonets in Paradise*, 22–9.

⁷⁹Horne, *Fighting in Paradise*, 11.

⁸⁰Robert K. Wright, Jr., *Military Police* (Washington, DC, 1992), 9–11.

⁸¹“Applications for Commissions in MP Exceed Demands,” *PCNL*, Nov.–Dec. 1942, 3.

⁸²Homer L. Calkin, “Military Police Replacements in World War II,” *Social Science* 27, no. 1 (1952): 17–22; B. M. Bryan, “Crossed Pistols,” *The Military Engineer* 39, no. 264 (1947): 371–4.

⁸³“Provost Marshal General’s School Graduates First Class,” *PCNL*, Apr.–May 1942, 2; Paschal C. Longaker, “Significance of the Provost Marshal General’s Schools,” *PCNL*, Oct. 1945, 8, 10.

⁸⁴Bryan, “Crossed Pistols.”

⁸⁵See Russell A. Snook, “American Police Enjoy Rare Privilege,” *PCNL*, June 1946, 24, 26, 28; “Your Stake in World Affairs,” *The Police Chief*, Nov. 1961, 16, 18; “World Peace Through Law Enforcement,” *The Police Chief*, Aug. 1962, 14, 16, 18.

⁸⁶Bryan, “Crossed Pistols”; Calkin, “Military Police Replacements.”

Before the military police school's creation, civilian police helped train military police. Unusually, an Afro-Puerto Rican "judo" expert affiliated with the Georgia state police taught martial arts and bayonet techniques to marines and military police in North Carolina.⁸⁷ More typically, New York state police trained MPs in traffic management.⁸⁸ Even during the war, insufficient personnel for training military police led to reliance on civilian police, such as in Chicago and Baltimore, where, upon an IACP recommendation, MPs shadowed their civilian counterparts to learn traffic control. This shadowing practice continued after the war, particularly in criminal investigative training.⁸⁹ In key locations for war production, as well as on highways, MPs augmented civilian police in traffic control.⁹⁰ MPs also conducted loyalty investigations, maintained fingerprint databases, and handled prisoners of war (around 3.3 million, with over 400,000 held in the United States). In occupied areas overseas, responsibility for law enforcement fell to MPs and "security police" constabulary brigades until local civilian capacities could be established.⁹¹

A large number of MPs themselves were civilian police before induction, but new duties meant extensive travels.⁹² Former civilian law enforcement officers often gained priority for assignment to the military police. Civilian police were thus overrepresented among pre-induction occupations for military police. In 1942, 4.6 percent of new replacement military police had been civilian police. By March 1944, that number rose to 16.6 percent at Fort Custer.⁹³ During the war, police noticed that many of their colleagues were now in the military. *Spring 3100* reprinted numerous postcards that NYPD officers sent back home from their war-time deployments across the globe from "somewhere in Italy" to "somewhere in the jungles of New Guinea" to "somewhere 'out.'"⁹⁴ The latter correspondent reported that the NYPD newsletter was interesting to "buddies here, many of them ex-policemen from all over the country." "Out," it turned out, resembled "in." The undifferentiated outside could become inside through the coming together of police officers from around the country, who came to understand themselves as a collective subject in this process. From Trinidad, one patrolman from the 68th Precinct reported that "training I'd received in the Police Academy," in New York City, was "invaluable in my present post, and not a small part of the lessons learned was included in my basic training as an M.P."⁹⁵ From England, patrolman Edward Hilton reported that many of his fellow soldiers were "ex-policeman, ex-sheriffs, etc.," and his responsibilities in criminal investigations overseas were similar to those of a detective in the NYPD. Hilton noted that he ran into several NYPD members overseas, and "the majority are in M.P. units."⁹⁶ NYPD officers also joined a secret program for training 2,100 thoroughly screened anti-Nazi German prisoners of war who would "learn the true value of democracy" and be assigned roles in civil administration and policing at war's end back in Germany.⁹⁷

⁸⁷"Colored Expert Teaches Judo to Marine Police," *BAA*, May 29, 1943, 23.

⁸⁸"New York State Police Assist in Training Military Police," *PCNL*, June 1941, 3.

⁸⁹"M.P.'s Help Direct Traffic," *PCNL*, Apr. 1943, 4; Paul M. Hart, "Texas Law Enforcement Agencies Help Train Army Investigators," *PCNL*, Mar. 1946, 6.

⁹⁰"M.P.'s Assist Buffalo Traffic Police," *PCNL*, Feb. 1943, 3; "MP's Work With State Police," *PCNL*, Aug. 1944, 18.

⁹¹Bryan, "Crossed Pistols"; J. V. Dillon, "Military Police Functions," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 33, no. 5 (1943): 372–80; David Brion Davis, "World War II and Memory," *Journal of American History* 77, no. 2 (1990): 580–7.

⁹²Pelham D. Glassford, "Personnel for Post-War Police Forces," *PCNL*, Oct. 1943, 7.

⁹³Other occupations approaching these levels of representation among military police were far more common service workers or operatives; Calkin, "Military Police Replacements."

⁹⁴"Somewhere in Italy"; "Somewhere in New Guinea"; and "Somewhere 'Out,'" *S3100*, Apr. 1944, 9.

⁹⁵"Trinidad B.W.I.," *S3100*, Apr. 1944, 9.

⁹⁶"Somewhere in England," *S3100*, June 1944, 7.

⁹⁷"Teaching German Prisoners of War the True Value of Democracy," *S3100*, Nov. 1945, 11.

Postwar Personnel Problems

Police experts believed the end of the war would cause three major problems. First, police labor deficits would continue, complicated by the need to rapidly employ returning veterans and to decide whether police who had gone to war could return to police employment seamlessly. Returning veterans took advantage of new opportunities for more skilled, experienced, and educated recruits to enter the police force through civil-service examinations, bypassing and undermining older patronage networks. Second, the war's end would cause many logistical headaches due the movement of millions of people across the country, which labor deficits would make difficult to resolve. Even more important, the war's end would precipitate a crime wave, according to some police leaders. Placing returned veterans into police employment became a means to solve two problems: the labor deficits the war had created in police forces and the threat of crime or political unrest. For police leaders, managing these threats required greater numbers of officers, while they saw reducing the numbers of battle-scarred unemployed men as a way to prevent political instability, unrest, and violence. During the war, as police departments wrestled with ongoing personnel depletion and engaged in planning remedies, police leaders nationally began to plan for managing the war's end, including dedicating several sessions to the topic at the fiftieth IACP annual meeting in 1943.⁹⁸ The war's conclusion turned soldiers into cops while also deepening the collaborative relationship between police and military agencies in terms of training and technology. Professionalizing reforms became stickier.

There was no uniform national policy on hiring new officers after the war. Even before war's end, budget-constrained police departments could not always afford to rehire those who had left and already returned, or the large percentage of veterans among applicants that began to emerge.⁹⁹ In the final years of the war, social scientists with the publishing firm Crowell-Collier studied how 1,073 municipalities with populations over 10,000 were preparing for demobilization. They found that 57.4 percent of responding municipalities either had ongoing operations to aid veterans, had plans for operations in place, or were engaged in creating plans for future operations. The greatest amount of assistance requested concerned postwar employment. In Newton, Massachusetts, researchers found that of 2,844 servicemen survey respondents, fifty-nine wanted to become police officers after the war (of 27 possible professions). Airplane pilot was the most desired profession, chosen by 152 respondents.¹⁰⁰ Looking toward the peace, Lou Smyth urged that police "who have been taken into the fighting force must be discharged and sent back to their rightful places in the army of the home front."¹⁰¹ Hoover urged returning marines to join law enforcement, where, though compensation was not high, "men of courage, honesty and persistence" would receive the reward of "satisfaction" in public service.¹⁰² More generally, Hoover urged police executives to avoid "false economy" by continuing to hire and expand their rosters.¹⁰³

Fears of crime and the need to attend to novel threats led to innovative solutions to labor deficits, particularly after the gigantic strike wave of 1946 and the onset of the Cold War. One common change was to award a preference to new applications from veterans, though in most cases, veterans outnumbered non-veterans among applicants more than nine to

⁹⁸"Law Enforcement's Post-War Problems," *PCNL*, July–Aug.–Sept. 1943, 11–2; "Post-War Planning for Police Departments," *PCNL*, Nov. 1944, 1–2.

⁹⁹"Departments Feel Manpower Pinch," 3–4.

¹⁰⁰Herman S. Hettinger, "What Home Towns Are Doing for Their Veterans: Progress Report on the Present Status of Community Veterans Programs" (n.p., n.d. [1945]); 800.04 Corres. 1946 Aug.–Dec.; Class 800, Veterans; Administration Policy and General Administration Files, Entry A1-55, box 24, RG 15, Records of the Veterans Administration, National Archives and Records Administration I, Washington, DC.

¹⁰¹Smyth, "War and Post-War Police Problems," 6–8.

¹⁰²J. Edgar Hoover, "The Country's Opportunity," *FBILEB* 15, no. 3 (Mar. 1946): 30.

¹⁰³J. Edgar Hoover, "To All Law Enforcement Officials," *FBILEB* 16, no. 4 (Apr. 1947): 1.

one.¹⁰⁴ The New York state legislature passed new laws in 1944 and 1945 assuring that veterans would be given preference in hiring and promotion, lasting until 1950. Cops who had not gone to war grumbled that they hoped to get drafted because it seemed the only way to be promoted.¹⁰⁵ In 1946, Denver added points to entrance examination scores of those who presented service records, making it more likely they would ultimately be hired, though veterans' scores were distributed normally.¹⁰⁶ Whether the positions of individual police who had joined the military would remain open to them upon return was a local decision. In Arkansas, authorities determined that civilian police officers who had become soldiers and subsequently returned to civilian status could return to a reasonably equal rank and position in the police force, with a six-month probationary period.¹⁰⁷ Because some men had spent the prime of their lives overseas, they lobbied mightily for civil-service age restrictions to be lifted. Men who while overseas had aged out of qualification for positions in Washington, DC, were able to avoid restrictions on return through a special dispensation under the terms of the 1944 Veterans' Preference Act. This legislation did not cover state and municipal agencies, but many nevertheless followed suit.¹⁰⁸ Raised age limits for new applicants remained in effect for at least a decade in many places. Some highly qualified returning veterans who sought police executive positions placed job-seeking ads proclaiming both prewar and martial experience as assets.¹⁰⁹

New York City faced its greatest police labor shortages in 1945, but within a year, it had markedly alleviated them. In 1944, the NYPD appointed only fifty-five new police officers, while 1,552 retired. The next year, another 730 retired. The NYPD appointed 372, but the overall size of the force shrank to its smallest size of the war years, at 15,068 by year's end.¹¹⁰ By January 1946, the number of NYPD officers still serving in the military was 546 (plus another 44 civilian NYPD employees).¹¹¹ Mayor William O'Dwyer raised the age limit for new police among veterans who applied, and he advocated recruitment of veterans who were skilled marksmen. By the fall of 1946, the NYPD had appointed 2,000 new police officers, all of them recently discharged veterans. O'Dwyer advised these new officers that "police procedure ... is in a sense different from that employed in the nation's armed services," because policing required discretion. The mayor observed that "good judgment" was necessary because "no superior officer could give to his men a specific order that would cover every specific contingency likely to confront them in its execution."¹¹² New training and retraining became a focus of police experts as they envisioned reconstituted and robust police forces after the war. Police and military experts (and some who were both) repeatedly argued that military service nevertheless made for better police.¹¹³ But the discretion at the core of policing that O'Dwyer highlighted would never be eradicated, even by the influence of military experience.

Police organizations and the military collaborated in planning for the war's end. Experts concurred that the country had poorly managed demobilization after World War I, and police leaders wanted to avoid replicating these mistakes.¹¹⁴ The Provost Marshal General and a number of police executives from around the country organized conferences on demobilization that

¹⁰⁴Thomas M. Frost, "Selection Methods for Police Recruits," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 46, no. 1 (1955): 135–45.

¹⁰⁵Schwepe, *Firemen's and Patrolmen's Unions*, 200–1.

¹⁰⁶Raymond A. Kimball, "The Civil Service Selection of Policemen in Denver, Colorado," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 37, no. 4 (1947): 333–45.

¹⁰⁷"Veteran's Claim to Police Job Upheld," *PCNL*, Mar. 1946, 4.

¹⁰⁸"War Veterans Are Exempt from Police Age Limits, Civil Service Says," *PCNL*, Oct. 1945, 3.

¹⁰⁹"Positions Wanted," *PCNL*, Sept. 1945 and Nov. 1946.

¹¹⁰"Other Interesting Items and Figures," *S3100*, July 1946, 2.

¹¹¹"Serving With Uncle Sam," *S3100*, Jan. 1946, 3.

¹¹²"Welcome to the Ranks!," *S3100*, Sept.–Oct. 1946, 5.

¹¹³E. W. Faber, "Classification of Police Personnel Returning from Military Leave," *PCNL*, Dec. 1944, 5–6.

¹¹⁴"Chairman Hickey Urges Civil-Military Police Planning for Demobilization," *PCNL*, Jan. 1945, 22–3; Frank S. Tenny, "An Army Officer Looks at America's Post-War Problems, and the Police," *PCNL*, Sept. 1944, 6–7. On

brought together civilian and military authorities.¹¹⁵ The IACP helped distribute findings and guidance on demobilization as it pertained to policing.¹¹⁶ One question that arose amid these discussions was when exactly a soldier became a civilian. This question had practical and geographic dimensions, along with the acknowledged but poorly understood psychological dimension. A soldier was officially a civilian within 48 hours of discharge, but he could continue to wear his uniform for up to three months afterward, especially while en route from overseas to a home destination. Within 48 hours, therefore, the military police had no jurisdiction over the soldier, but civilian police might discretionally offer latitude to a man in uniform. Fears that uniformed ex-soldiers could get away with criminal activity were strong.¹¹⁷ For the first year or more after the war, MPs patrolled public accommodations to supervise returning military personnel, but this program was gradually reduced beginning in mid-1946.¹¹⁸ More broadly, demobilization, and then within a few years the ramping up of the Cold War, created logistical challenges of relocating and repurposing matériel. Police traffic-safety experts from Northwestern University consulted with the Army on training personnel in safe driving techniques, traffic control, and accident prevention.¹¹⁹ The Army then developed its own curriculum on traffic safety.¹²⁰

Branches of the military jockeyed to achieve priority in postwar civilian police jobs for their veterans. Provost Marshal staff made a strong case that military police veterans were ideal candidates.¹²¹ If the war offered a benefit for policing, it was that “there will be a tremendous pool of police-trained, hardened young men.”¹²² The imperial reach of postwar planning was visible in the efforts by military police stationed in Puerto Rico at Fort Buchanan, for example, where a special course was developed for training military police in civilian policing in 1945. More than half the MPs stationed in the Caribbean hoped to become municipal police after the war.¹²³ Although MPs did not require the training that someone with no policing experience might need, they nevertheless often did require new training. In turn, the Provost Marshal made training materials for military police available to civilian police agencies in 1946.¹²⁴

Despite the large number of police who returned to the force, labor shortages persisted. Cities that succeeded in recruiting returning soldiers touted their achievements. Philadelphia proudly noted that it received 300 applications from soldiers in campaigns from the Pacific to North Africa, as well as Sicily and France, by April 1945.¹²⁵ Cities, states, and the federal government instituted new training efforts to turn soldiers into cops. The GI Bill was crucial, with almost 6,000 police (of 2.5 million veterans in schools or on-the-job training) trained for law-enforcement careers in 1947. It provided crucial funding for veterans to engage in training, along with a subsistence allowance, at the FBI National Academy or Harvard University

the aftermath of World War I and demobilization, see Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* (New York, 2008).

¹¹⁵“Provost Marshal Conference Considers Military-Civil Police Matters,” *PCNL*, Feb. 1945, 4–5.

¹¹⁶“IACP Approves Post-War Safety Program,” *PCNL*, Apr. 1944, 3.

¹¹⁷“Status of Discharged Soldiers,” *PCNL*, Oct. 1945; “M Ps Have No Authority over Dischargees,” *S3100*, Feb. 1946, 16.

¹¹⁸“Military Police Off Public Carriers,” *PCNL*, Nov. 1946, 2.

¹¹⁹“NUTI to Train Army Personnel,” *PCNL*, Sept. 1946, 3; “NUTI Graduates Army Personnel,” *Police Chiefs News*, June 1947, 24.

¹²⁰“Army Teaches Traffic Safety,” *PCNL*, Dec. 1946, 16.

¹²¹“Paper Urges MP’s for Police Recruits,” *PCNL*, Feb. 1946, 22.

¹²²Pelham D. Glassford, “Personnel for Post-War Police Forces,” *PCNL*, Oct. 1943, 7.

¹²³“MP’s Prepare for Post-War Police Jobs,” *PCNL*, Aug. 1945, 3.

¹²⁴“Army Offers M.P. Training Aids,” *PCNL*, Dec. 1946, 8.

¹²⁵“Vets Apply for Police Jobs,” *PCNL*, Apr. 1945, 19. Yet the FBI’s 1943 study found Philadelphia the city with the lowest percentage of police who joined the military; “Police Personnel Turnover Ranges from Five to Sixty Per Cent in 53 Cities,” 1–2.

alike.¹²⁶ The GI Bill also funded veterans who created private police-adjacent security firms, including armored-car services.¹²⁷ Not all training programs occurred under the GI Bill's auspices or incentives.¹²⁸ Police in-service training already was funded through subsidy under the George-Deen Act of 1936, which allocated funds for vocational training in public service occupations, among others. This New Deal legislation originally gave priority to police and firefighters, and during the war, police experts pointed to it as a way to fund the training/retraining that returning veterans would need.¹²⁹ City leaders in Los Angeles, for instance, predicting that "most recruits to police departments in the future will be veterans," collaborated with the VA and the IACP to prioritize hiring of veterans, including women, and fast-track them to police service through "on the job" training. The VA offered the city a subvention to cover salary costs for the first three years.¹³⁰ By fall 1946, Winston-Salem, Cleveland, Dallas, Atlanta, Detroit, and Omaha had developed similar programs, though not all with VA assistance. Miami and other cities made concerted efforts to hire disfigured or disabled veterans with amputations and other injuries into police departments, where they learned how to use teletype machines and other tasks.¹³¹ In 1947, a few police agencies began reporting that their staffing levels had returned to prewar levels.¹³² Others took longer, but by decade's end police employment numbers exceeded prewar levels. In many cities, police returned from war having experienced life-altering events. World War II made it possible and plausible for a grand, global conflict to take shape at the highly localized level of the beat. Under the leadership of figures such as Hoover, the everyday routines of internal security during the Cold War grew from this foundation.

The Predicted Postwar Crime Wave

During the war, crime by soldiers and sailors increased as their numbers ballooned. One social scientist argued that the draft reduced the number of civilians committing crime, even as war itself created conditions for both new types of offenses and greater rates of offending in typical categories, such as prostitution.¹³³ In New York City, a decrease in arrests for offenses against the person, robbery, burglary, and larceny occurred among civilians twenty-one to thirty years of age, largely because of their service induction. Juvenile delinquency increased, as did arrests of civilians over age thirty.¹³⁴ In New York City, in 1942, police arrested 211 soldiers and 206 sailors; in 1943, 426 soldiers and 444 sailors; and in 1944, 441 soldiers and 766 sailors. The grand totals of formal NYPD interactions with members of the military, including detention,

¹²⁶Bernard Posner, "Police Training under the G. I. Bill," *PCNL*, Nov. 1946, 1, 6; "Police Education and Training," *PCNL*, Oct. 1946, 16; "Vets Train for Police Jobs," *Police Chiefs News*, Apr. 1948, n.p.; "GI Bill' Benefits Approved for Vets Attending the FBI National Academy," *FBILEB* 16, no. 2 (Feb. 1947): 18; V. A. Leonard, "Current Notes," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 37, no. 1 (1946): 70.

¹²⁷"Vets Launch Security Services," *Police Chiefs News*, June 1947, 24.

¹²⁸Michael J. Bennett, *When Dreams Came True: The GI Bill and the Making of Modern America* (Washington, DC, 1996); "Police Training Agency for Veterans," *PCNL*, Jan. 1946, 13; "On-the-Job Training for War Veterans," *PCNL*, Sept. 1946, 2.

¹²⁹The funding reimbursed 75 percent of the cost to the agency paying for the training. James M. Mitchell, "Current Trends in Public-Employee Training," *Journal of Educational Sociology* 14, no. 5 (1941): 292–7; Leonard and Cornuelle, *A Study of the Kansas City Police Department*, 97.

¹³⁰"Los Angeles P. D. Trains War Veterans," *PCNL*, May 1946, 18.

¹³¹W. E. Headley, "Miami Police Department Employs Disabled War Veterans," *Police Chiefs News*, Apr. 1947, 14.

¹³²"South Carolina Patrol Adds 51 Men," *Police Chiefs News*, Apr. 1947, n.p.

¹³³Walter C. Reckless, "The Impact of War on Crime, Delinquency, and Prostitution," *American Journal of Sociology* 48, no. 3 (1942): 378–86.

¹³⁴These data covered the early years of the war. Harry Willbach, "Crime in New York City as Affected by the War," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 34, no. 6 (1944): 371–6.

arrest, and accident, plus other small categories, in 1942, 1943, and 1944, were 6,033, 15,433, and 14,431, respectively.¹³⁵ Although military police had no jurisdiction over civilians outside the context of offenses they witnessed, civilian police held jurisdiction over service members, which heightened feelings of discrimination among Black servicemen for whom the uniform provided no insulation.¹³⁶ Police experts blamed increasing juvenile delinquency on police personnel depletion during the war, using rising crime to try to convince federal authorities to allow police to obtain draft deferments.¹³⁷

Predictions of a postwar crime wave circulated widely during the later years of the war, raising the importance of increasing police personnel and of finding employment for returning veterans. According to one police expert (and First World War veteran), if the crime rate increased, it could be addressed by “increasing the facilities of law enforcement.” But if the types of crimes committed also changed, then new problems would emerge, which indicated the necessity of upgrading investigative capabilities while adhering to constitutional protections—in a word, professionalization.¹³⁸ Law-enforcement experts offered two main explanations for why crime would increase: psychological and material (separate from the predictions of heightened racial conflict and Black militancy). Psychological explanations predicted that returning veterans would suffer from what is today called post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and therefore might be prone to committing crimes or other types of disturbances. Hoover, though acknowledging the risk of a postwar crime rise, rejected alarmism, calling the implication that overseas combat would turn veterans into murderers at home an unpatriotic, “dastardly libel.”¹³⁹ Police leaders nevertheless created programs to deal with “shocked” veterans who misbehaved. Birmingham, Alabama, mounted one such program in early 1945, under the oversight of Commissioner of Public Safety Eugene “Bull” Connor. Officers in Birmingham were lethal to Black veterans, however, killing five in the span of six weeks after a protest march demanding the right to vote in early 1946.¹⁴⁰ Military police touted their own expertise in social control and restraining “abnormal behavior,” again pushing to hire ex-MPs in civilian roles.¹⁴¹

Homer Garrison, the leader of the Texas Department of Public Safety (overseeing the Texas Rangers), predicted a crime wave “far bloodier and costlier than any the world has yet experienced.” His explanation was more material than psychological. Wartime employment had raised the standard of living for many who previously were not in the workforce, and, he posited, if postwar unemployment left them embittered and unwilling to give up their newfound material wealth, they might turn to crime to maintain it. Further, he suggested, workers in industries such as shipyards had likely encountered hardened criminals and organized crime, which had changed their attitudes toward criminality. Garrison veered toward a psychological explanation, however, as he predicted increased automobile crashes. Growing access to private automobiles would combine with a postwar release of “tension,” creating a “nation gone wild,” “seized with a frenzy that might be called ‘super-jitter-bugging.’” Fast driving in the

¹³⁵NYPD *Annual Report*, 1943 and 1944.

¹³⁶“Civilian and Military Police,” *PCNL*, Aug.–Oct. 1942, 11. Civilian police, however, could not detain service members for traffic violations, except under certain circumstances, or for purely military offenses. D. G. Monroe, “Law and the Service Man,” *PCNL*, Oct. 1944, 14, 16.

¹³⁷Smyth, “War and Post-War Police Problems.”

¹³⁸Don L. Kookan, “Post War Influence Upon Criminal Investigation,” *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 35, no. 6 (1945): 426–30.

¹³⁹Hoover, “Country’s Opportunity,” 27. Hoover argued that the “bobby-soxer” and “zoot-suiter” who had not gone to war posed a greater threat than the returning veteran.

¹⁴⁰C. Floyd Eddins, “Birmingham Police Receive Instruction in Handling Shocked Veteran Cases,” *PCNL*, Feb. 1945, 3; Nelson B. Peery, *Black Radical: The Education of an American Revolutionary* (New York, 2007), 8; Robinson, *Black Movements in America*.

¹⁴¹Longaker, “Significance of the Provost Marshal General’s Schools.”

search for excitement was going to kill and maim many people.¹⁴² Whatever the cause, Garrison was right. Numbers of traffic injuries and deaths both during and after the war were high and occupied a great deal of police attention, as demonstrated by consistent coverage of the issue in the professional literature.

The war's end coincided with a crime wave, but whether it was the work of veterans was unclear. The largest measured increase in crime since the FBI began collecting national data occurred in 1945.¹⁴³ Reported crime increased further in 1946 (7.4 percent), with murder and robbery growing the most.¹⁴⁴ Yet a study of New York City found that although crime did increase at war's end, those under age twenty were responsible for 40 percent of serious crime, while those in the age cohort of World War II veterans were responsible for 30 percent. The annual increase in arrests in the age cohort of veterans was something like four per 1,000 after the war.¹⁴⁵ Ultimately, even as multiple criminologists and police experts disputed the hypothesis that veterans were likely to commit crime—whether because the war inculcated a violent disposition or because leaving the service meant veterans lost the strict regimentation of military life—it was nonetheless true that arguing for or against historically contingent and social explanations for criminal behavior among an otherwise esteemed and valorous group of people rendered older biological and/or racial explanations of criminality obsolete.¹⁴⁶ Explanations of social causality for crime gained greater legitimacy, underpinning the “root causes” framework that predominated until the 1970s.

Another new problem that emerged as veterans returned home was increased possession of firearms and knives, many brought home as souvenirs. Some of these were dangerous to those unfamiliar with them, such as a trick Japanese gun that fired with a secondary secret button next to the trigger. Even in defeat, it seemed, Japan threatened the tranquility of the mainland United States.¹⁴⁷ Police began the mass collection of illegal and dangerous weapons. New York City, for example, collected 1,655 firearms in December 1945 alone.¹⁴⁸ In Connecticut, the state police developed a plan for voluntary registration of souvenir weapons, which led to 2,000 registrations in a month.¹⁴⁹ People eventually began using foreign-made souvenir guns in criminal activity, and their provenance made the weapons difficult to track. The FBI struggled to expand its reference collection and laboratory specimens to allow it to aid in identification of firearms.¹⁵⁰ Although a small detail in the grand sweep of the war's effects, this need led to the expansion of state capacity—one of the war's greatest legacies. Further, surplus war matériel, ranging from pistols and machine guns to leg irons to printing presses, became available to police agencies at war's end, revealing a long history of police adoption of military-grade gear.¹⁵¹ The Defense Supplies Corporation monopolized arms distribution to police across the country, including 116,000 .38 caliber revolvers by mid-1946, which consequently came

¹⁴²“Previews Post-War Crime Wave,” *PCNL*, Jan. 1945, 19–20.

¹⁴³“Crime—1945,” *FBILEB* 15, no. 5 (May 1946): 16–8.

¹⁴⁴Hoover, “To All Law Enforcement Officials.”

¹⁴⁵Harry Willbach, “Recent Crime and the Veterans,” *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 38, no. 5 (1948): 501–8.

¹⁴⁶See Michael Hakeem, “Service in the Armed Forces and Criminality,” *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 37, no. 2 (1946): 120–31.

¹⁴⁷“Beware of this Japanese Pistol,” *PCNL*, Apr. 1946, 14.

¹⁴⁸Arthur Wallander, “How New York Has Met Problem of Dangerous ‘Souvenir’ Weapons,” *PCNL*, Jan. 1946, 4.

¹⁴⁹“Firearms Registration Plan Succeeds,” *PCNL*, Jan. 1946, 18.

¹⁵⁰J. Edgar Hoover, “To All Law Enforcement Officials,” *FBILEB* 16, no. 3 (Mar. 1947); “Firearms Identification Problems Presented by World War II Souvenir Weapons,” *FBILEB* 16, no. 4 (Apr. 1947): 10–1; “Re: The Problem of Souvenir Weapons,” *Police Chiefs News*, Dec. 1947; Walter J. Howe, “Problems of the Submachine Gun in Post-War Crime,” *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 35, no. 1 (1944–1945): 69–72.

¹⁵¹For instance, see “Surplus Property for Police Use,” *FBILEB* 15, no. 2 (Feb. 1946): 3; “Surplus Machine Guns Available,” *FBILEB* 16, no. 2 (Feb. 1947): 21; and “Notice of Surplus Property,” *FBILEB* 16, no. 9 (Sept. 1947): 19.

to be seen as the standard police service weapon, despite having Army origins.¹⁵²

The shifts the war wrought on U.S. policing constitute a tiny slice of the war's effects. But for the police profession, the war was epochal. This article has demonstrated that the police and the military interacted extensively during the war. Many civilian police became soldiers, sailors, and military police. Figuring out how the war would affect the profession was a concern for a wide range of police experts, who planned how to make the most of the opportunities provided by the war for remaking policing. The numbers of police grew after the war, and a large number of police who went abroad during the war returned home with a new sense of themselves and of the stakes of policing. They made sense of the war by analogizing it to policing or by adopting police terminology and symbolism, but they also reconfigured policing practices according to martial routines and requirements. Ultimately, the result was that military-like professionalism combined with traditional practices of discretion. This tension defined law enforcement for the coming decades. If militarization occurred, it was often in subtle, capillary fashion, primarily in the form of professionalization, including the adoption of new technologies, training, and techniques.

The questions the war posed, in terms of new sociological and criminological problems, led to the reassertion of police power in everyday life in U.S. cities. But by enrolling police in a globally extensive operation, the war transformed police power. The global reach of U.S. policing never shrank, and the war footing remained, now transferred from a shooting war to a cold, ideological war, fought through the national consolidation of professional technical expertise. Already characterized by "defining indefinability" due to the discretion at its core, the upscaling of police power in this moment primed police agencies to address new, and increasingly vaguely outlined, objectives, including countering subversion and terrorism.¹⁵³ Hoover declared in 1945 that "so far as subversion is concerned there is no such thing as a domestic field. It is international."¹⁵⁴ The threat of communist subversion demanded that police be nimble, mobile but cohesive across scalar resolutions of governance. The war lighted this path. The United States remains on it.

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¹⁵²"Police Departments Receive Large Percentage of Supplies," *FBILEB*, 15, no. 9 (Sept. 1946): 8; Jon Diamond, "Colt Commando .38 Special: Revolver Pressed into Service," *Warfare History Network*, Jan. 10, 2019, <https://warfarehistorynetwork.com/2019/01/10/colt-commando-revolver-38-special-and-the-25-war-department-deal/> (accessed Feb. 16, 2021).

¹⁵³Markus Dirk Dubber, *The Police Power: Patriarchy and the Foundations of American Government* (New York, 2005).

¹⁵⁴Hoover, "Reconversion of Law Enforcement," 3.