

The Bonus Army March of 1932:
A Fight of Determination, Unity, and to Uphold One's Responsibilities

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Junior Division

Historical Paper

Paper: 2,500

Process Paper: 500

Process Paper

Last year, I had one goal: make it to NHD Nationals. I worked tirelessly, constantly refining my paper, convincing myself that my dedication would pay off. Passing regionals only deepened my hunger for success. I believed I had the skills, determination, and work ethic to go. But then, the results came in. I fell short at the state contest—my dreams of Nationals crushed.

For weeks, I was stuck in an endless loop of what-ifs. What if I had structured my argument differently? What if I had refined my thesis? Coming so close only to fall short gnawed at me. But then I realized something: I had another chance. That realization led me here, writing another paper.

Every year, my school hosts an event where veterans share their stories from their time in the military, which left a deep impression on me as I admired their courage and sense of duty. So, while researching for a topic that aligned with this year's theme, I came across the Bonus Army March of 1932. These World War I veterans were denied the compensation they were promised, despite risking everything for their country. Reading about their struggle reignited my passion for veterans and sparked outrage at the injustice they faced. I chose this topic because their story was unlike anything I had heard, and it demanded to be told.

Researching was exhilarating. I explored diverse sources, each offering new perspectives. It felt like uncovering a buried story of struggle, perseverance, and dignity. But writing was a challenge. Condensing everything I learned was difficult, and cutting parts of the story felt frustrating, yet necessary to maintain clarity and stay within the word limit.

Judging feedback also played a crucial role in refining my paper. I restructured key sections to clarify my argument and ensured my thesis connected directly to rights and

responsibilities. Judges' comments revealed gaps in my analysis and helped strengthen my historical argument.

I spent countless hours revising, pouring my heart into every word. The story resonated with me—it underscored that nothing is simply given; it must be fought for. Writer's block hit, but I refused to stop. I pushed forward, determined to honor the Bonus Army's legacy. Their march exposed the consequences of government inaction and proved that ordinary citizens, united by a common cause, can challenge injustice.

My historical argument is that the Bonus Army March of 1932 reveals the delicate balance between rights and responsibilities. These veterans had the right to demand their promised payment after risking their lives in service. The government was responsible for supporting them. When it failed, the veterans exercised their right to protest. Instead of aiding them, the government responded with force, stripping them of dignity and rights. The Bonus Army proved that when leaders neglect their duty, the people must demand justice, because rights and responsibilities are deeply intertwined. Their struggle is a testament to the power of collective action and a reminder that if justice is not granted, it must be fought for.

“We are not beggars, we are soldiers, and we are here to demand our dues.”

- Walter W. Waters

Leader of the Bonus Army

In 1919, the veterans of World War I marched back into their home country with scars no parade could heal.¹ From the trenches of Europe to the silence of their homes, they carried memories of gas, gunfire, and comrades left behind. But there was a silver lining: a promised bonus for their service, set to be paid in 1945. However, as the Great Depression deepened, their need for that payment became urgent.² At this moment, a question at the heart of the event came to the surface: What is the government’s responsibility to those who have given endless support to their country? The answer could have been recognition, compassion, or hope. Instead, for these veterans, it was nothing.

The Bonus Army March of 1932 became a powerful emblem of the nation’s failure to honor the rights of its defenders. Thousands of veterans gathered in Washington, D.C., demanding the \$580 bonus they had been promised for their service.³ The government, however, broke its promise by not providing them with this financial support, and then further betrayed them by forcibly removing them from the capital.⁴ What began as a fight for overdue compensation soon evolved into a challenge to the nation’s conscience and the promises it makes to those who serve. In doing so, the Bonus Army exposed a stark truth: a nation’s greatness is not measured by its promises but by its commitment to keep them, honoring the bond between rights earned and responsibilities owed.⁵

¹ “Returning Home | World Overturned | Explore | Echoes of the Great War: American Experiences of World War I | Exhibitions at the Library of Congress | Library of Congress.” *The Library of Congress*

² *Bonus Expeditionary Forces March on Washington (U.S. National Park Service)*.

³ *Ibid*

⁴ “Veterans on the March, by Jack Douglas; Foreword by John Dos Passos.” *HathiTrust*

⁵ *Ibid*

A Promise Forged

The United States' entry into World War I in 1917 marked a pivotal shift in the conflict.⁶ Over two million U.S. soldiers joined the Allied forces and played a key role in battles like the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, while providing critical supplies that sustained the Allies' fight, leading to their victory.⁷ Yet the cost was staggering—116,000 American lives were lost, with countless soldiers returning home with severe physical and psychological scars, including amputations, gas poisoning, and what would later be recognized as post-traumatic stress disorder.⁸

The idea of compensating veterans was not new; previously, benefits had been mostly limited to pensions for long-term service.⁹ However, the sheer scale of the war and the magnitude of sacrifice made the need for compensation urgent. In response to growing public pressure and acknowledgment of the hardships veterans faced, the U.S. government passed the World War Adjusted Compensation Act of 1924.¹⁰ The act promised servicemen a bonus of about \$580 to make up for wages lost during their time in the military.¹¹ However, the payments were postponed until 1945, based on the assumption that the post-war economy would stabilize and veterans could reintegrate into society without immediate assistance.¹²

In reality, many returned home to find their houses sold or destroyed, and their families struggling in their absence.¹³ Their lives had been irrevocably altered, with many physically and emotionally scarred and facing unemployment.¹⁴ As one veteran lamented in a letter to his

⁶ Knispel, Sandra. "Why Did the US Enter World War I?" *News Center*, 9 May 2024

⁷ "The Meuse-Argonne Offensive." *National Archives*, 4 Apr. 2023

⁸ Scharf, Michaela. "Weapons and Wounds." *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 21 Nov. 2014

⁹ VA History. "Veterans Benefits Administration - VA History." *VA History*, 26 Apr. 2023

¹⁰ *U.S. Senate: The Senate And The Bonus Expeditionary Force of 1932*. 16 Sept. 2024

¹¹ *Ibid*

¹² "World War Adjusted Compensation Act."

¹³ "Returning Home | World Overturned | Explore | Echoes of the Great War: American Experiences of World War I | Exhibitions at the Library of Congress | Library of Congress." *The Library of Congress*

¹⁴ *Ibid*

family, “We fought for democracy abroad, but when we returned home, we found none here,” reflecting the disillusionment shared by many who returned from war.¹⁵

A National Crisis

The Great Depression was an economic disaster that added to veterans’ plights.¹⁶ Following the Roaring Twenties, the stock market crash and bank failures triggered a financial collapse that sent the nation into a tailspin.¹⁷ Unemployment soared from 3.2% to nearly 25%, and millions of families plunged into poverty.¹⁸ Veterans were hit especially hard, with many being denied hospital care for war injuries due to underfunded facilities, and living in makeshift shelters built from cardboard and scrap tin.¹⁹ Their altered physiques from the war—thin, aching, and exhausted—made it difficult to endure the brutal conditions of “Hooverilles,” offering little protection from weather or illness (see Appendix A).²⁰

Suicide rates among veterans rose sharply, with studies indicating they accounted for nearly 20% of all U.S. suicides, approximately three times higher than the national average.²¹ One veteran summed it up, saying, “I suppose we who have seen war will never stop seeing it.”²² For many, life had collapsed again—not on the battlefield, but at home.

¹⁵ TeachingAmericanHistory.org. “Letter From Bonus Army Leader to President Hoover (1932) | Teaching American History.” *Teaching American History*, 5 July 2024

¹⁶ Kiger, Patrick J., and Patrick J. Kiger. “5 Causes of the Great Depression.” *HISTORY*, 17 Apr. 2023

¹⁷ Ibid

¹⁸ National Parks Conservation Association. “The Forgotten March.” *National Parks Conservation Association*

¹⁹ Ibid

²⁰ “July 28, 1932: Bonus Army Attacked.” *Zinn Education Project*, 29 July 2024.

²¹ MSW, Charles R. Hooper. “Suicide Among Veterans - Why Are Veterans at a Higher Risk of Suicide?” *American Addiction Centers*, 27 Mar. 2025

²² “Joseph L. Galloway Quotes (Author of We Were Soldiers Once... And Young)”.

Amidst their despair, many veterans held onto a distant hope: the government-issued bonus promised for 1945.²³ Yet, having served with honor, they now faced government indifference to their hardships.

By 1929, frustration boiled over at the government. Veterans had upheld their duty; now, they expected the same from their nation. In the depths of economic collapse, they reached a shared conclusion: they had to act. As traction for early payment of the bonus grew, public awareness spread, fueled by sympathetic news coverage and propaganda that highlighted their suffering.²⁴ One phrase—“Tombstone Bonus”—coined by the veterans themselves, reflected their grim belief they would die before receiving a cent.²⁵ Over time, it became their rallying cry—a symbol of their refusal to be forgotten.²⁶

In May 1929, Congressman Wright Patman of Texas, a war veteran himself, declared, “The American veteran is entitled to the bonus and should have it, and should have it immediately.”²⁷ For this reason, Patman tried to pass a bill for the immediate cash payment of the bonus, and although it never made it out of committee, his words laid the ground for future action.²⁸ Additionally, former Army sergeant Walter W. Waters, empowered by the hardship he and other veterans endured, recognized that collective action, after Patman’s move, was their only path to justice.²⁹ Waters began organizing veterans in Portland, Oregon, to rally support and amplify their cause, igniting a nationwide movement.³⁰ He declared that their protest was not a plea for charity, but a demand for what they had rightfully earned. “We are here because we have

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Allen, Paul Dickson and Thomas B. “Marching on History.” *Smithsonian Magazine*, 17 Nov. 2013

²⁵ National Parks Conservation Association. “The Forgotten March.” *National Parks Conservation Association*

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Communications, Dav. “The Bonus Army March: A Fight for Veterans’ Rights.” *DAV*, 31 Aug. 2023

²⁸ Allen, Paul Dickson and Thomas B. “Marching on History.” *Smithsonian Magazine*, 17 Nov. 2013

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Land, Joni. “The Portland Veteran Who Took on Washington, D.C., During the Great Depression.” *Opb*, 11 Nov. 2023

been wronged, and we will not leave until we are heard,” he declared.³¹ Under his leadership, this Bonus Army, as they would soon be named by the media, became a powerful force—a movement driven by deep conviction and a refusal to be ignored.³² From Portland, Oregon, they began a long and uncertain march to the capital—each step a cry for justice that they refused to let go unheard.³³

Moving to Washington

When veterans learned of Waters’ efforts to organize the Bonus Army, many joined the march along its route.³⁴ Waters and his supporters circulated flyers and a Bonus Army newsletter, proclaiming, ‘We are all brothers-in-arms,’ which fostered solidarity among veterans, including Black soldiers.³⁵ Local newspapers helped amplify the story, giving it national attention.³⁶ Communities rallied around the marchers, offering food, clothing, and shelter.³⁷ Church basements became kitchens, schoolchildren gathered canned goods, and families opened their doors to those who had worn the uniform.³⁸ Across towns and cities, people began to understand this fight was theirs, and these veterans were not outsiders; they had been their neighbors, fathers, classmates—people who had risked everything under the same flag. Citizens recognized that rights come with responsibilities, including the duty to care for those who had served.³⁹

³¹ “Walter W. Waters Quotes.” *Quote.org*

³² “Bonus Army, Great Depression, Veterans’ Protest, 1932, Washington D.C., Herbert Hoover, World War I, Military Bonus.” *Bill of Rights Institute*

³³ The Washington times. [volume] (Washington [D.C.]), 30 March 1934. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.

³⁴ Vbc. “When Veterans Stormed the Capital: The March of the Bonus Army of 1932, Part 1.” *Veterans Breakfast Club*, 6 Oct. 2022,

³⁵ Allen, Paul Dickson and Thomas B. “Marching on History.” *Smithsonian Magazine*, 17 Nov. 2013

³⁶ *Ibid*

³⁷ Vbc. “When Veterans Stormed the Capital: The March of the Bonus Army of 1932, Part 1.” *Veterans Breakfast Club*, 6 Oct. 2022

³⁸ *Ibid*

³⁹ *Ibid*

Traveling by freight train and on foot, the marchers spread their message of injustice. By late May 1932, their numbers swelled to around 17,000, unified in demanding what they were owed.⁴⁰ As novelist and veteran John Dos Passos observed, “The March was a spontaneous movement of protest, arising in virtually every one of the forty-eight states.”⁴¹ This was no longer a regional demonstration; it had become a national outcry.

Inside the capital, government officials watched the growing movement with apprehension. What they had first dismissed as a scattered protest was quickly becoming a visible challenge—one that threatened public confidence in their leadership.⁴² President Hoover’s team described the Bonus Army as “a mob... animated by a spirit of revolution,” revealing the anxiety the march provoked at the highest levels of government.⁴³

Media coverage of the event reflected a divided nation. Some outlets praised the marchers as patriots seeking justice under the World War Adjusted Compensation Act of 1924; others raised concerns about public order and fiscal responsibility.⁴⁴ Congressman Wright Patman, who introduced the early bonus bill, declared, “The veterans are hungry. They need the money now more than ever.”⁴⁵ In contrast, General Douglas MacArthur viewed the movement as a national security risk, calling the marchers “class-conscious revolutionaries,” symbolizing a nation torn between compassion and control.⁴⁶

By May 29, 1932, most of the Bonus Army had arrived in Washington, D.C., setting up camp in Anacostia Flats.⁴⁷ Over 20,000 people gathered, eventually forming 26 separate camps.⁴⁸

⁴⁰ VA History. “Object 21: Bonus Army - VA History.” *VA History*, 29 June 2023

⁴¹ Ibid

⁴² *U.S. Senate: The Senate And The Bonus Expeditionary Force of 1932*. 16 Sept. 2024

⁴³ Ibid

⁴⁴ VA History. “Object 21: Bonus Army - VA History.” *VA History*, 29 June 2023

⁴⁵ “Top 50 WRIGHT PATMAN Quotes and Sayings.”

⁴⁶ Kratz, Jessie. “The 1932 Bonus Army: Black and White Americans Unite in March on Washington.” *Pieces of History*, 15 July 2020

⁴⁷ VA History. “Object 21: Bonus Army - VA History.” *VA History*, 29 June 2023

⁴⁸ Ibid

Despite their circumstances, the veterans preserved dignity and order. They built makeshift shelters, published newspapers, created a library, and organized vaudeville shows.⁴⁹ Police Chief Pelham Glassford, an ally of the veterans, played a key role in providing medical care and supplies.⁵⁰ “I had no fear of the marchers,” he said. “I had only fear of what might be done to them.”⁵¹ His compassion stood in stark contrast to the hostility of other officials, highlighting the deep divide in attitudes toward the veterans.⁵²

Still, the protest’s peaceful nature didn’t ease tensions with the U.S. government. President Hoover, under political pressure and influenced by the lingering paranoia of the First Red Scare, viewed the Bonus Army not as veterans exercising their rights but as a potential Communist uprising.⁵³ Despite the lack of evidence, he declared, “We cannot allow a situation where armed groups of any kind take control of the nation’s capital.”⁵⁴ Yet wary of public backlash, Hoover hesitated to act, choosing instead to closely monitor the situation as marchers camped at the Capitol’s doorstep.⁵⁵

The Final Decision

Throughout their time in Washington, veterans marched beneath American flags and banners reading “Bonus or Job,” demanding not only justice but accountability.⁵⁶ Amid the deep divisions of Jim Crow America, the Bonus Army camps stood as a rare example of unity: Black

⁴⁹ Library Of Congress, Sponsoring Body Library Of Congress. Researcher And Reference Services Division, and U.S Veterans History Project. *The Bonus Army: An American Epic*. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, -06-22, 2005. Video. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <www.loc.gov/item/2021687699/>.

⁵⁰ “Veterans on the March, by Jack Douglas; Foreword by John Dos Passos.” *HathiTrust*

⁵¹ Deseret News and Cody Carlson, For the Deseret News. “This Week in History: President Hoover Orders the Bonus Army Dispersed.” *Deseret News*, 29 Dec. 2023

⁵² *Ibid*

⁵³ “The Bonus March and the New Deal.” *HathiTrust*

⁵⁴ *Ibid*

⁵⁵ Allen, Paul Dickson and Thomas B. “Marching on History.” *Smithsonian Magazine*, 17 Nov. 2013

⁵⁶ *Ibid*

and white veterans living side by side, sharing tents, meals, and a unified cause (see Appendix B).⁵⁷ For many, it was their first encounter with racial solidarity—a quiet challenge to the status quo. Photos and reports of this unity spread quickly, drawing interest from civil rights leaders and the public.⁵⁸ The growing media spotlight added pressure on lawmakers, prompting a dramatic House revote on the bill Patman had previously tried to pass.⁵⁹

On June 15, the bill passed the House with a 211 to 176 vote, giving veterans renewed hope.⁶⁰ Representative Edward Eslick of Tennessee delivered an impassioned speech supporting the bill: “I don’t need to tell of the splendid service of our soldiers in the World War...They are fairly and justly entitled to the adjusted compensation.”⁶¹ But one final hurdle remained—the Senate vote on June 17.⁶² As 8,000 veterans lined up outside the Capitol and 10,000 more at the Anacostia Bridge, anticipation surged.⁶³ Yet, despite their best efforts, the Senate ultimately defeated the bill, 62 to 18.⁶⁴ Senate Minority Leader Joseph T. Robinson stated, “I do not favor cash payments of adjusted service certificates,” citing fiscal concerns and the belief that existing veterans’ benefits were already “sufficient.”⁶⁵

Trouble Arises

⁵⁷ VA History. “Object 21: Bonus Army - VA History.” *VA History*, 29 June 2023

⁵⁸ Kratz, Jessie. “The 1932 Bonus Army: Black and White Americans Unite in March on Washington.” *Pieces of History*, 15 July 2020

⁵⁹ “‘Faith, Hope, and Charity’ and the 1932 Bonus Army.” *Department of Theater*, 30 Sept. 2020

⁶⁰ Ibid

⁶¹ Glass, Andrew. “House Passes Bonus Bill for WWI Veterans, June 15, 1932.” *POLITICO*, 15 June 2009

⁶² Allen, Paul Dickson and Thomas B. “Marching on History.” *Smithsonian Magazine*, 17 Nov. 2013

⁶³ Ibid

⁶⁴ “B. E. F.; the Whole Story of the Bonus Army / by W. W. Waters as Told to William C. White.” *HathiTrust*

⁶⁵ *U.S. Senate: The Senate And The Bonus Expeditionary Force of 1932*. 16 Sept. 2024

Many expected the veterans to turn violent after such a devastating setback. Instead, they sang a song they had written in D.C.⁶⁶ “All you here / Here and there / Pay the bonus / Pay the bonus everywhere / The Yanks are starving / The Yanks are starving / The Yanks are starving over here.”⁶⁷

Most veterans left after receiving a government-paid trip out of the capital, disheartened and without any hope for the bonus. But more than 20,000 veterans remained, with no resources to sustain them.⁶⁸ As one veteran, Frank H. Hough, explained, “We came to Washington to get what we were promised, and we’re not leaving until we do.”⁶⁹

Meanwhile, President Hoover, fearing violence, grew increasingly anxious.⁷⁰ He questioned whether all the marchers were truly veterans or possibly ex-felons and Communists, prompting an investigation of the camps, which only heightened tensions.⁷¹ This unrest peaked on July 28, when Treasury officials attempted to evict 40 veterans from a building scheduled for demolition, though whether this was truly accurate or a strategic provocation remains debated.⁷² When veterans refused to vacate, officials called in the police.⁷³ As more veterans rallied in support, the situation escalated, with some police accidentally opening fire in the confusion, killing two and sparking a riot.⁷⁴

⁶⁶ *The 1932 Bonus Army (U.S. National Park Service)*.

⁶⁷ Winter, Jay. “Steven Trout . On the Battlefield of Memory: The First World War and American Remembrance, 1919–1941 . Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press. 2010. Pp. xxxiii, 304. \$48.50. John Bodnar . The ‘Good War’ in American Memory . Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 2010. Pp. x, 299. \$40.00.” *The American Historical Review*, vol. 116, no. 3, June 2011, pp. 755–58.

⁶⁸ “Veterans on the March, by Jack Douglas; Foreword by John Dos Passos.” *HathiTrust*

⁶⁹ Walsh, Robert. “WWI Veterans Came Together to Demand Their Bonuses in a 1932 March on Washington.” *Explore the Archive*, 27 May 2021,

⁷⁰ *Ibid*

⁷¹ *Statement on the Justice Department Investigation of the Bonus Army. | the American Presidency Project.*

⁷² *Ibid*

⁷³ *U.S. Senate: The Senate And The Bonus Expeditionary Force of 1932.* 16 Sept. 2024

⁷⁴ TeachingAmericanHistory.org. “Statement on the Dispersal of the Bonus Army | Teaching American History.” *Teaching American History*, 5 July 2024

In response, Hoover ordered the military to intervene.⁷⁵ Troops and tanks flooded the capital.⁷⁶ Tear gas filled the air.⁷⁷ Camps were destroyed, and veterans were driven out forcefully.⁷⁸

In the end, the event severely tarnished President Hoover's reputation.⁷⁹ The public was outraged that he had unleashed the military on unarmed veterans, and his chances of re-election collapsed.⁸⁰ The incident laid bare the government's failure to protect those who had once protected it, underscoring its neglect of responsibility to citizens. As haunting newspaper photographs of the burning Bonus Army camp spread across the nation, Franklin D. Roosevelt reportedly remarked, "This will elect me."⁸¹ Public fury over Hoover's actions did just that—fueling Roosevelt's rise and pushing voters toward Democrats in hopes of a better government.⁸²

Conclusion

The Bonus Army's march of 1932 on Washington, D.C. was more than a protest—it was a reckoning. It displayed a moment when patriotism met betrayal, and loyalty was met with silence. Their movement revealed how fragile the bond is between citizen and state, especially in times of national crisis. It challenged the notion that duty ends at discharge, insisting that service deserves recognition. Black and white veterans stood side-by-side, quietly defying segregation

⁷⁵ Ibid

⁷⁶ "July 28, 1932: Bonus Army Attacked." *Zinn Education Project*, 29 July 2024

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Gary-Olson. "Remembering the Bonus Army Protest of 1932." *Common Dreams*, 23 Nov. 2024

⁷⁹ "Herbert Hoover: Campaigns and Elections | Miller Center." *Miller Center*, Oct. 2016

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ Buehler, Michael. "Remarkable Eyewitness Account of the Bonus Army's Encampment in Washington Including a Manuscript Map and Photographs." *Boston Rare Maps*

⁸² Ibid

and demonstrating unity in the struggle for equal rights. Thus, the Bonus Army became a symbol of economic justice and a reminder that governments are accountable to those who defend them.

While the Bonus Army may have been seen as a failure in its own time, its legacy endured as it sparked several future protests, including those by Vietnam War veterans in the 1970s and the Veterans for Peace movement, which advocated for veteran welfare and anti-war efforts.⁸³ More importantly, it also paved the way for landmark reforms such as the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944—better known as the GI Bill—which granted education benefits, home loans, and unemployment aid to World War II veterans.⁸⁴ Increasingly, decades later, their movement echoed in the 2014 Veterans Affairs reform, passed in response to major failures in veteran care.⁸⁵ These measures not only changed how veterans were treated but also set a precedent for how America responds to those who serve it.

In the end, the Bonus Army's story is not just a chapter in history—it is a call to action. Their march forced the nation to reckon with the meaning of democracy, citizenship, and justice. It showed that the measure of a nation lies not in its promises, but in its follow-through. The Bonus Army may not have won their bonuses, but they reshaped the moral contract between a country and its defenders. In doing so, they paved the way for a stronger, more just America—one where rights must be defended, and the responsibilities that are borne, upheld.

⁸³ Times. "Barry Romo Obituary: Vietnam Veteran Who Became a Peacenik." *The Times*, 31 May 2024

⁸⁴ Buehler, Michael. "Remarkable Eyewitness Account of the Bonus Army's Encampment in Washington Including a Manuscript Map and Photographs." *Boston Rare Maps*

⁸⁵ Cfm, Daniel Coley. "Review of the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act." *Coley Government Contract Services*, 19 Sept. 2017

Appendix A



WW1 veteran slums during the Great Depression.

Kelly, Jason. "A Multimedia Story of the 'Bonus Army': In 1932, the U.S. Government Used Tanks and Tear Gas on Its WWI Veterans — Jason M. Kelly." *Jason M. Kelly*, 16 Dec. 2022, jasonmkelly.com/jason-m-kelly/2021/7/2/bonusarmy1932.

Appendix B



African-American and white veterans united.

National Parks Conservation Association. "The Forgotten March." *National Parks Conservation Association*, www.npca.org/articles/1915-the-forgotten-march.

Annotated Bibliography

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HathiTrust, babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015027775421&seq=32. Accessed 12 Feb. 2025.

“B.E.F.; The Whole Story of the Bonus Army by W.W. Waters”, as told to William C. White”, gave me a firsthand perspective on how the Bonus Army was organized and how its members stayed united. I used this source to better understand the motivations and lived experiences of the veterans who joined the movement. Waters’ account helped me portray the emotional urgency and camaraderie within the group, adding authenticity and depth to my narrative.

“Bonus Army, Great Depression, Veterans’ Protest, 1932, Washington D.C., Herbert Hoover, World War I, Military Bonus.” Bill of Rights Institute,

billofrightsinstitute.org/essays/the-bonus-army. Accessed 12 Feb. 2025.

The Bill of Rights Institute article, “Bonus Army, Great Depression, Veterans’ Protest, 1932, Washington D.C., Herbert Hoover, World War I, Military Bonus,” gave me a strong factual overview of the events and key figures involved in the Bonus Army protest. I used this source to build a timeline and clarify the government’s response to the veterans’ demands. It helped me understand the broader historical context and political consequences, particularly President Hoover’s decision-making and its impact on public opinion.

Buehler, Michael. “Remarkable Eyewitness Account of the Bonus Army’s Encampment in Washington Including a Manuscript Map and Photographs.” Boston Rare Maps,

bostonraremaps.com/inventory/bonus-army-eyewitness-archive-1932/?srsltid=AfmBOoojgl2rdEhwi6GK0PfgSl8IedFLYJGJFGmZRRAmKoTzS716xKUx. Accessed 12 Feb. 2025.

Michael Buehler's article, "Remarkable Eyewitness Account of the Bonus Army's Encampment in Washington Including a Manuscript Map and Photographs," provided firsthand descriptions and visual materials that gave life to the veterans' experience on the ground. I used this source to better describe the conditions in the camps and the marchers' organization and dignity. It helped me understand how the Bonus Army created a sense of community and resilience, despite poverty and government resistance.

Cfcm, Daniel Coley. "Review of the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act." Coley Government Contract Services, 19 Sept. 2017, www.coleygsa.com/the-veterans-access-choice-and-accountability-act-of-2014-at-a-glance/

Daniel Coley's article, "Review of the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act," helped me draw modern parallels between past and present efforts to support veterans. I used this source to understand how veteran care has evolved over time, especially in relation to government accountability. It deepened my perspective on how the legacy of the Bonus Army continues to influence current veteran policies.

Gary-Olson. "Remembering the Bonus Army Protest of 1932." Common Dreams, 23 Nov. 2024, www.commondreams.org/views/2020/07/26/remembering-bonus-army-protest-1932.

Gary Olson's article, "Remembering the Bonus Army Protest of 1932," provided essential historical context and firsthand reflections that helped humanize the marchers beyond just facts and figures. I used this source to explore the emotional and political

dimensions of the protest. It clarified how the Bonus Army became a symbol of both patriotic sacrifice and governmental failure, deepening my understanding of its long-term impact.

Hamilton, David E. "Herbert Hoover: Campaigns and Elections | Miller Center." Miller Center, Oct. 2016, millercenter.org/president/hoover/campaigns-and-elections.

David E. Hamilton's article, "Herbert Hoover: Campaigns and Elections," offered a detailed look into Hoover's presidency and the political environment surrounding the Bonus Army protest. I used this source to gain insight into Hoover's political strategy and the pressures he faced during the Great Depression. It helped me understand the tension between his actions and the public's expectations, particularly in how his handling of the Bonus Army protest contributed to his political downfall.

"July 28, 1932: Bonus Army Attacked." Zinn Education Project, 29 July 2024, www.zinnedproject.org/news/tdih/bonus-army-attacked. Accessed 12 Feb. 2025.

The article, "July 28, 1932: Bonus Army Attacked" from the Zinn Education Project, provided a detailed account of the violent clash between the Bonus Army and U.S. military forces. I used this source to understand the specifics of the military's intervention and its implications for the public perception of the government's treatment of veterans. It helped me grasp the turning point when the peaceful protest escalated, leading to public outrage and influencing the political landscape during the Great Depression.

Kelly, Jason. "A Multimedia Story of the 'Bonus Army': In 1932, the U.S. Government Used Tanks and Tear Gas on Its WWI Veterans — Jason M. Kelly." Jason M. Kelly, 16 Dec. 2022, jasonmkelly.com/jason-m-kelly/2021/7/2/bonusarmy1932.

This photograph of makeshift shacks in an urban alleyway captures the dire living conditions faced by the Bonus Army veterans during the Great Depression. The image conveys the desperation and resilience of those who, despite their service, were abandoned by the government in a time of economic crisis. It emphasizes the emotional and physical toll the veterans endured as they fought for the bonuses they were promised.

Kratz, Jessie. "The 1932 Bonus Army: Black and White Americans Unite in March on Washington." Pieces of History, 15 July 2020, prologue.blogs.archives.gov/2020/07/15/the-1932-bonus-army-black-and-white-americans-unite-in-march-on-washington.

In "The 1932 Bonus Army: Black and White Americans Unite in March on Washington" from Pieces of History, Jessie Kratz explored the racial unity within the Bonus Army, highlighting the unprecedented solidarity between Black and white veterans during the protest. I used this source to understand how the march served as a significant moment of racial cooperation, challenging the racial divisions of the time. The article deepened my understanding of how this unity was an act of defiance against the racial status quo and how it impacted the broader civil rights movement.

National Parks Conservation Association. "The Forgotten March." National Parks Conservation Association, www.npca.org/articles/1915-the-forgotten-march.

This photograph of Bonus Army veterans raising their fists in solidarity highlights the unity and determination of a diverse group, transcending racial divides. The image symbolizes the strength of their collective struggle as they came together to demand what was rightfully owed to them. It underscores the veterans' resilience in the face of both governmental neglect and societal racial norms.

“Returning Home | World Overturned | Explore | Echoes of the Great War: American Experiences of World War I | Exhibitions at the Library of Congress | Library of Congress.” The Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/exhibitions/world-war-i-american-experiences/about-this-exhibition/world-overturned/returning-home.

In “Returning Home | World Overturned | Explore | Echoes of the Great War: American Experiences of World War I” from the Library of Congress, the exhibition highlighted the struggles veterans faced after returning from World War I, including the lack of support and the financial hardships they endured. I used this source to gain a deeper perspective on the historical context of the Bonus Army’s protest, understanding the long-standing issues veterans had with the government’s failure to provide adequate compensation. It helped me grasp how the Bonus Army movement was a direct response to the unmet needs of veterans from earlier wars.

“Statement on the Dispersal of the Bonus Army | Teaching American History.” Teaching American History, 5 July 2024, teachingamericanhistory.org/document/statement-on-the-dispersal-of-the-bonus-army. Accessed 12 Feb. 2025.

I used the source “Statement on the Dispersal of the Bonus Army” from Teaching American History to understand the government’s official perspective on the eviction of the Bonus Army and its justification for using military force. This source helped me grasp the reasoning behind President Hoover’s decision to disband the veterans’ protest, which contributed to the escalating tension between the marchers and the government. By analyzing this document, I was able to explore how the government’s stance on public

order and national security clashed with the rights and needs of veterans, further illuminating the complexity of the Bonus Army's fight.

“Statement on the Justice Department Investigation of the Bonus Army. | the American Presidency Project.”

www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/statement-the-justice-department-investigation-the-bonus-army. Accessed 12 Feb. 2025.

I used the source “Statement on the Justice Department Investigation of the Bonus Army” from the American Presidency Project to examine the government's response to public concerns regarding the Bonus Army protest. This source provided insight into the official investigation into the events surrounding the Bonus Army, revealing how the government sought to justify its actions and the scrutiny it faced. It helped me understand the tension between the government's desire to control the situation and the public's growing sympathy for the veterans, thus contributing to the broader context of the Bonus Army's protest and the political fallout that followed.

TeachingAmericanHistory.org. “Letter From Bonus Army Leader to President Hoover (1932) | Teaching American History.” Teaching American History, 5 July 2024, teachingamericanhistory.org/document/letter-from-bonus-army-leader-to-president-hoover. Accessed 12 Feb. 2025.

The source “Letter From Bonus Army Leader to President Hoover (1932)” from Teaching American History offered direct insight into the veterans' demands and frustrations with the government's refusal to honor the promised bonus. It highlighted the emotional and personal stakes for the veterans, revealing their sense of betrayal. This

letter deepened my understanding of the dignified yet desperate tone of the Bonus Army's protest and provided valuable context for the 1932 march.

"The Bonus Army: An American Epic." The Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/item/2021687699. Accessed 12 Feb. 2025.

The source "The Bonus Army: An American Epic" from the Library of Congress offered valuable context on the protest, including the marchers' backgrounds and their journey to Washington. It highlighted the societal, political challenges veterans faced and the public's response to the military intervention. This source helped me explore the symbolic role of the Bonus Army in advocating for veterans' rights and the government's responsibility to its citizens.

"The Bonus March and the New Deal." HathiTrust, babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=inu.30000048964377&seq=21. Accessed 12 Feb. 2025.

"The Bonus March and the New Deal" from HathiTrust provided insights into how the Bonus Army's protest influenced public opinion and Roosevelt's policies. It helped me understand the shifting political landscape of the Great Depression and how the march, despite its failure, set the stage for future veterans' rights movements. The source also illuminated the connection between the veterans' struggle and the New Deal's promise to address economic hardship and inequality.

"The Meuse-Argonne Offensive." National Archives, 4 Apr. 2023, www.archives.gov/research/military/ww1/meuse-argonne. Accessed 12 Feb. 2025.

I used "The Bonus March and the New Deal" from HathiTrust to explore the relationship between the Bonus Army and the political context of the New Deal. The source provided insights into how the protest influenced public opinion and Roosevelt's policies. It helped

me understand how the march, despite its failure, set the stage for future veterans' rights movements and connected the veterans' struggle to the New Deal's promise to address economic hardship.

The Washington Times. [volume] (Washington [D.C.]), 30 March 1934. *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*. Lib. of Congress.

<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026749/1934-03-30/ed-1/seq-26/>

I used The Washington Times from March 30, 1934, found in *Chronicling America*, to examine contemporary reactions to the Bonus Army's protest and its aftermath. This source helped me understand the public discourse surrounding the Bonus Army, particularly the political and social tensions of the time. By analyzing this publication, I gained insight into how media portrayal shaped public opinion on the veterans' demands and the government's response, revealing the complex relationship between the protest and the broader national crisis during the Great Depression.

U.S. Senate: The Senate and the Bonus Expeditionary Force of 1932. 16 Sept. 2024, www.senate.gov/artandhistory/senate-stories/senate-and-the-bonus-expeditionary-force-of-1932.htm. Accessed 12 Feb. 2025.

I used the U.S. Senate's article on the Bonus Expeditionary Force of 1932 to explore the Senate's role in the Bonus Army protest. The source provided detailed accounts of the legislative actions and key senators' responses, shedding light on the resistance the veterans faced. It helped me understand how political opposition in the Senate escalated tensions and ultimately shaped the outcome of the Bonus Army's struggle.

Vbc. "When Veterans Stormed the Capital: The March of the Bonus Army of 1932, Part 1." Veterans Breakfast Club, 6 Oct. 2022,

veteransbreakfastclub.org/when-veterans-stormed-the-capital-the-march-of-the-bonus-army-of-1932-part-1. Accessed 12 Feb. 2025.

I used the Veterans Breakfast Club article “When Veterans Stormed the Capital: The March of the Bonus Army of 1932, Part 1” to gain a deeper understanding of the events leading up to the Bonus Army’s march. The source included firsthand accounts that revealed the veterans’ motivations, feelings of betrayal, and desperation. These insights helped me grasp the emotional and human dimensions of the protest and how they influenced public perception.

“Veterans on the March, by Jack Douglas; Foreword by John Dos Passos.” HathiTrust, 1934, babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015027775264&seq=9. Accessed 12 Feb. 2025.

I used *Veterans on the March* by Jack Douglas to gain an in-depth perspective on the experiences of the Bonus Army during their march to Washington. The firsthand accounts offered a personal look at the harsh conditions the veterans endured and their unwavering determination. This helped me better understand the protest’s emotional and physical toll, as well as its broader social and political context.

Winter, Jay. “Steven Trout. *On the Battlefield of Memory: The First World War and American Remembrance, 1919–1941*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press. 2010. Pp. Xxxiii, 304. \$48.50. John Bodnar. *The ‘Good War’ in American Memory*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 2010. Pp. x, 299. \$40.00.” *The American Historical Review*, vol. 116, no. 3, June 2011, pp. 755–58. <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr.116.3.755>.

I used Jay Winter’s review of *On the Battlefield of Memory* by Steven Trout and *The ‘Good War’ in American Memory* by John Bodnar to deepen my understanding of how American memory of World War I shaped responses to the Bonus Army. The review

offered insights into the societal and political frameworks that influenced public perceptions of veterans and their struggles. This source helped me see how the veterans' protest was not only a fight for immediate financial compensation but also part of a larger narrative about war memory and the treatment of soldiers after service, providing a broader historical context for their actions.

Secondary Sources

“Bonus Expeditionary Forces March on Washington.” (U.S. National Park Service).

www.nps.gov/articles/bonus-expeditionary-forces-march-on-washington.htm.

I used the U.S. National Park Service article on the Bonus Expeditionary Force March on Washington to gain a more detailed historical account of the events surrounding the Bonus Army's protest. The article provided a comprehensive timeline of the march, including key events and figures, as well as the government's response. This source helped me understand the logistical and political aspects of the march, offering context about the national significance of the protest and the impact it had on both the public and the government's handling of veterans' issues.

Communications, Dav. “The Bonus Army March: A Fight for Veterans' Rights.” DAV, 31 Aug. 2023, www.dav.org/learn-more/news/2020/the-bonus-army-march.

I used the DAV article, “The Bonus Army March: A Fight for Veterans' Rights,” to understand the motivations and outcomes of the Bonus Army march, particularly from the perspective of veteran advocacy organizations. The article highlighted the efforts of the veterans to secure their promised compensation and the broader implications of their

protest for veterans' rights. It helped me better grasp the ongoing struggle for veteran benefits and how the Bonus Army's actions contributed to shaping future veterans' policy, especially in the context of advocacy and legislation.

“Faith, Hope, and Charity’ and the 1932 Bonus Army.” Department of Theater, 30 Sept. 2020, theater.dartmouth.edu/news/2016/09/faith-hope-and-charity-and-1932-bonus-army.

I used the article “Faith, Hope, and Charity’ and the 1932 Bonus Army” from the Department of Theater to explore the cultural and emotional impact of the Bonus Army protest. The article offered insights into how the event was perceived in the public consciousness, particularly in how it was represented in the theater and media. It helped me understand the emotional and symbolic significance of the Bonus Army's fight, showing how their struggle for justice resonated with broader themes of faith, hope, and charity in American society during the Great Depression.

Glass, Andrew. “House Passes Bonus Bill for WWI Veterans, June 15, 1932.” POLITICO, 15 June 2009, www.politico.com/story/2009/06/house-passes-bonus-bill-for-wwi-veterans-june-15-1932-023722.

I used the article “House Passes Bonus Bill for WWI Veterans, June 15, 1932” from POLITICO to understand the legislative actions surrounding the Bonus Army and the passage of the Bonus Bill. The article provided historical context on the political debate and the eventual passage of the bill in the House, shedding light on the difficulties veterans faced in securing financial compensation. It helped me grasp the political dynamics of the time, especially how public pressure from veterans and the general public influenced lawmakers, despite the eventual defeat of the bill in the Senate.

“Joseph L. Galloway Quotes (Author of We Were Soldiers Once... And Young)”.

www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/23898.Joseph_L_Galloway.

I used the quote by Joseph L. Galloway to emphasize the lasting emotional toll of war on veterans. His reflection, “We who have seen war will never stop seeing it,” underscored the psychological scars that linger long after battle. This helped me show that the Bonus Army’s demands were rooted in both economic need and unresolved trauma, highlighting the moral failure of the government’s response.

Kiger, Patrick J., and Patrick J. Kiger. “5 Causes of the Great Depression.” HISTORY, 17 Apr. 2023, www.history.com/news/great-depression-causes.

I used the article “5 Causes of the Great Depression” by Patrick J. Kiger to understand the broader economic factors that contributed to the national hardship during the time of the Bonus Army march. The source helped me highlight that, beyond the immediate financial struggles, systemic issues like over-speculation and banking failures set the stage for widespread poverty, which influenced the veterans’ demand for a bonus. This context allowed me to deepen my argument by connecting the veterans’ protest to larger economic challenges that affected both military and civilian populations.

Knispel, Sandra. “Why Did the US Enter World War I?” News Center, 9 May 2024, www.rochester.edu/newscenter/looking-back-100-years-u-s-enters-world-war-i-on-april-6-1917.

I used Sandra Knispel's article “Why Did the US Enter World War I?” to provide context on the U.S. involvement in World War I, which was pivotal in shaping the experiences of the Bonus Army marchers. The source helped me understand the factors that led to the U.S. joining the war, such as the Zimmerman Telegram and economic interests, which

were significant in motivating soldiers to serve. This understanding allowed me to frame the veterans' demands for compensation in the broader context of their service and sacrifice during the war, emphasizing the gap between their contributions and the treatment they received after returning home.

Land, Joni. "The Portland Veteran Who Took on Washington, D.C., During the Great Depression." *Opb*, 11 Nov. 2023, www.opb.org/article/2023/11/11/bonus-army-veterans-washington-dc-walter-waters.

I used the article "The Portland Veteran Who Took on Washington, D.C., During the Great Depression" by Joni Auden Land to understand the leadership and motivations behind the Bonus Army movement. The article highlighted Walter Waters' role as a charismatic leader who organized and led hundreds of veterans from Portland to Washington, D.C., demanding early payment of their service bonuses. This source helped me grasp the personal and collective struggles of the veterans during the Great Depression and how their protest symbolized broader issues of economic hardship and government accountability.

MSW, Charles R. Hooper. "Suicide Among Veterans - Why Are Veterans at a Higher Risk of Suicide?" *American Addiction Centers*, 27 Mar. 2025, americanaddictioncenters.org/veterans/suicide-among-veterans.

I used Charles R. Hooper's article "Suicide Among Veterans – Why Are Veterans at a Higher Risk of Suicide?" to understand the specific mental health challenges faced by veterans, which are critical to comprehending the broader context of the Bonus Army's protest. Hooper's insights into the elevated suicide rates among veterans, 1.5 times higher than the general population, highlight the severe psychological toll of military service.

This source deepened my understanding by illustrating that the veterans' demands for compensation were not solely financial but also a call for recognition of their mental and emotional suffering, emphasizing the government's moral obligation to support those who served.

National Parks Conservation Association. "The Forgotten March." National Parks Conservation Association, www.npca.org/articles/1915-the-forgotten-march.

I used "The Forgotten March" by the National Parks Conservation Association to understand the racial dynamics of the Bonus Army protest, which was integrated despite the segregation of Anacostia Park at the time. The article helped me see how the protest, though unsuccessful in its immediate goals, influenced future legislation like the G.I. Bill and sparked broader social movements. This source deepened my understanding of the protest's historical significance and its lasting impact.

Scharf, Michaela. "Weapons and Wounds." *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, 21 Nov. 2014, ww1.habsburger.net/en/chapters/weapons-and-wounds.

I used Michaela Scharf's article "Weapons and Wounds" from *Der Erste Weltkrieg* to understand the severe physical injuries sustained by soldiers during World War I. The source detailed the devastating effects of modern weaponry, such as dum-dum bullets and poison gas, which caused complex and often fatal wounds. This information helped me grasp the profound physical toll of the war on veterans, emphasizing the importance of providing them with adequate care and support upon their return home.

Times. "Barry Romo Obituary: Vietnam Veteran Who Became a Peacenik." *The Times*, 31 May 2024,

www.thetimes.com/uk/obituaries/article/barry-romo-obituary-vietnam-veteran-who-became-a-peacenik-rkjmkt2s2

I used “Barry Romo’s Obituary: Vietnam Veteran Who Became a Peacenik” from The Times to understand how the legacy of veteran protest evolved after the Bonus Army March. The article detailed Romo’s shift from decorated soldier to outspoken critic of the Vietnam War, offering a powerful example of veterans demanding justice beyond the battlefield. This helped me draw connections between the Bonus Army’s movement and later activism by Vietnam veterans, reinforcing my argument that the 1932 march sparked a broader tradition of veteran-led advocacy for both welfare and accountability.

“Top 50 WRIGHT PATMAN Quotes and Sayings.”

www.inspiringquotes.us/author/8150-wright-patman.

I used the quote by Wright Patman from Inspiring Quotes to emphasize the moral imperative behind the Bonus Army’s protest. Patman’s criticism of the government’s financial practices highlighted the systemic issues that veterans faced, resonating with the marchers’ demands for justice. Incorporating this perspective enriched my argument that the protest was not merely about financial compensation but also about rectifying broader governmental injustices.

VA History. “Object 21: Bonus Army - VA History.” VA History, 29 June 2023, department.va.gov/history/100-objects/object-21-bonus-army.

I used the article “Object 21: Bonus Army” from VA History to understand the historical context of the Bonus Army protest. It explained how veterans demanded their bonuses during the Great Depression and how the government’s harsh response affected future

veterans' advocacy. This helped me connect the Bonus Army's struggle to later veterans' movements and legislation.

VA History. "Veterans Benefits Administration - VA History." VA History, 26 Apr. 2023, department.va.gov/history/veterans-benefits-administration.

I used the article "Veterans Benefits Administration - VA History" from the Department of Veterans Affairs to understand the evolution of veterans' benefits and the establishment of the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA). The article details how the federal government began providing pensions for wounded soldiers during the American Revolution and how the administration of these benefits evolved over time, including the creation of the VBA in 1989. This source helped me grasp the historical context of veterans' advocacy and the systemic challenges they faced in securing support, which informed my understanding of the Bonus Army's protest and its significance in the broader history of veterans' rights.

Walsh, Robert. "WWI Veterans Came Together to Demand Their Bonuses in a 1932 March on Washington." Explore the Archive, 27 May 2021, explorethearchive.com/bonus-army.

I used Robert Walsh's article "WWI Veterans Came Together to Demand Their Bonuses in a 1932 March on Washington" from Explore the Archive to understand the motivations and organization behind the Bonus Army protest. The article details how over 43,000 individuals, including 32,000 veterans, marched to Washington, D.C., seeking early payment of their service bonuses amid the Great Depression. This source helped me grasp the scale of the protest and the veterans' determination, enriching my understanding of their struggle for immediate compensation.

“Walter W. Waters Quotes.” Quote.org,

[quote.org/quote/were-here-for-the-duration-and-were-588321](https://www.quote.org/quote/were-here-for-the-duration-and-were-588321).

I used the Walter W. Waters Quotes article to explore the sentiments expressed by Walter W. Waters, the leader of the Bonus Army, to better understand his motivations and the message he conveyed to both his fellow veterans and the American public. The quotes highlighted his determination and resilience, underscoring the legitimacy of the veterans’ demand for the promised bonuses. These insights enriched my argument by providing a direct perspective from Waters himself, reinforcing the significance of the Bonus Army’s march as a pivotal moment in advocating for veterans’ rights and government accountability.

“World War Adjusted Compensation Act.” www.u-s-history.com/pages/h1399.html.

I used the article “World War Adjusted Compensation Act” from U.S. History to understand the legislative background and provisions of the 1924 Bonus Act. The article details how the act awarded veterans additional pay based on their military service, with payments deferred until 1945, and how the Great Depression led to widespread demands for immediate compensation. This source helped me connect the act’s deferred payments to the Bonus Army’s 1932 march, highlighting the government’s delayed response to veterans’ needs and its impact on their advocacy for immediate relief.