The War on Veterans: When Their Diplomacy was Met with Tear Gas

Sam Espach

Senior Division

Historical Paper

Paper: 2,498 words

Process paper: 500 words
Four million veterans were rewarded by the government, for their heroic service in the First World War, with a thank you and a sixty-dollar pat on the back. Non-disabled American World War I veterans received barely anything for their sacrifice; it would take over five years for Congress to even pass the bonus in the first place. When they dared protest against this injustice in 1932, the government sent in the military as if they were communist revolutionaries—which many people genuinely believed they were. I chose this topic because I found it tragically disturbing that the men who had watched their comrades lose their lives and risked their very own during the Great War found themselves attacked by the very institution they had not fifteen years ago fought for.

To develop my project, I first took notes on two secondary books (The Bonus Army: An American Epic and Beyond the Bonus March and the GI Bill). After getting the baseline knowledge of my topic, I drafted my thesis and began my search for primary sources. I’m grateful for the access to many sources provided to me through the Alexandria Public Library and my mom’s The New York Times account. I also benefited from my proximity to Washington, D.C., as I could take the metro to the Kiplinger Research Library on Lafayette Square (and miss school in the process!). There, the authors of The Bonus Army: An American Epic have compiled a thirteen-box “Bonus Army Research Collection,” containing many primary and secondary sources. After gathering a variety of sources, I wrote my outline. I then drafted my paper, one “bullet point” at a time, analyzing each source as I wrote its associated paragraph. Finally, I and others reviewed it and cut the approximately four hundred excess words.

The Bonus March, a product of the Great Depression, was initially diplomatic. Once the Senate tabled the bill, however, it gradually lost its diplomacy as the veterans refused to leave. The veterans’ diplomacy is in contrast to the undiplomatic actions of Hoover and MacArthur,
which ultimately led to the burning of the Anacostia encampment. The events of July 28
displayed Hoover in a negative light, contributing to his 1932 electoral defeat. Lastly, when FDR
was faced with another bonus march in 1933, he treated the veterans with diplomacy, in sharp
contrast to Hoover’s handling of the 1932 march.

The BEF didn’t accomplish its mission during its lifetime because the debate at that time
wasn’t in its favor; the government simply could not afford payment in the current economic
conditions. Ironically, they could have just paid the bonus in the 1920s, but they didn’t as
Coolidge and Harding opposed it. Despite these economic conditions, Congress finally passed
immediate payment in 1936. Lastly, the Bonus March had two long-term impacts. First, its
legacy contributed to the passing of the GI Bill of Rights—a significant change from the amount
of benefits, or lack thereof, given to World War I veterans. Second, it normalized protest marches
on Washington, D.C.
“Congress shall make no law respecting... the right of the people peacefully to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

— First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States

A product of the Great Depression, tens of thousands of World War I veterans converged on Washington, D.C., in the summer of 1932 as the Bonus Expeditionary Force (BEF), diplomatically lobbying for immediate payment of a wartime compensation bonus that the government had, after much debate, deferred until 1945. After immediate payment legislation was tabled, most people assumed they would leave; they did not. This standoff culminated on July 28 when President Hoover ordered the military to evict them from some buildings on Pennsylvania Avenue. However, General Douglas MacArthur, the commander of the military force, undiplomatically exceeded presidential orders by proceeding to burn the veterans’ encampment, dispersing the BEF, shocking America, and contributing to Hoover’s defeat in the 1932 election.

Although it did not achieve its objective, the Bonus March helped advance veterans’ benefits in the coming years. In 1936, after seventeen years of debate, Congress passed immediate payment despite President Roosevelt’s strong anti-veteran stance—although Roosevelt treated veterans with more diplomacy than Hoover. The monumental GI Bill of Rights also passed in 1944, granting veterans an “exceptionally generous” amount of benefits.² Lastly, the Bonus March normalized what is now a custom in our democracy: the march on Washington.

---

The Bonus

America’s World War I veterans received hardly any benefits for their service. Until 1914, each veteran received a pension. Upon seeing the cost of paying the 4.7 million returning “doughboys,” however, Congress stopped pensioning all able-bodied veterans. The federal government gave each non-disabled Great War veteran $60 upon discharge, life insurance, minor vocational assistance, and a message to “behave [himself]” (Appendix A) if he wanted to make it in society. Many veterans found their jobs filled by other men. “The mustering out pay, the 52–20 club, I know [World War II veterans] got unemployment, and they got educational benefits, they got loans, we got none of that in World War I,” one veteran emphasized. “We got a sixty-dollar bonus.”

After a cut in pay during the war, many veterans sought compensation via a “bonus” cash payment. Presidents Harding and Coolidge, though, had conservative economic policies, so they refused to support any bonus legislation. Additionally, they argued that every citizen “loaned and sacrificed, precisely in the same spirit” as the veterans. However, demand for a bonus gained momentum over time as veterans’ political voices became more pronounced and the American Legion made public its support for the bonus. In 1924, after five years and “full debate” on the matter, Congress passed the World War Adjusted Compensation Act by a margin of two votes to

---

3 Stephen R. Ortiz, videoconference interview by the author, January 9, 2022.
override Coolidge’s veto. It arguably passed only because of the outrage over Coolidge’s argument, “patriotism which is bought and paid for is not patriotism.” Coolidge had never served in the military himself, so his remark seemed especially vacuous.

This legislation compensated all Great War veterans with $1.00 per day of home service and $1.25 per day of overseas service. However, as a compromise to secure the two-thirds Senate majority, the payment would take the form of a certificate, redeemable in twenty years with interest (Appendix B). That way, the government would allocate $112 million annually into a fund paid in 1945 instead of paying $1.4 billion immediately.

During the early 1930s, the nation plunged into the worst depression in its history, causing veterans to intensify their efforts for immediate payment. By 1932, one out of every thirty-one men was homeless—a statistic even higher for veterans, who had a fifty percent higher unemployment rate than average. Their only asset for many, the bonus became “a substitute or a symbol for that long dreamt of new start, a job.” Consequently, an increasing number began to demand immediate payment. For example, because the Veterans of Foreign Wars lobbied for it, the organization’s membership increased 245 percent from 1929 to 1932.

---

10 Ortiz, Beyond the Bonus, 27.
13 Ortiz, Beyond the Bonus, 33.
15 Ortiz, Beyond the Bonus, 62.
The Army

One dissatisfied veteran was an unemployed ex-sergeant named Walter Waters. He had an idea: to lead a few hundred veterans to Washington, D.C., and diplomatically lobby for immediate payment. On May 11, 1932, Waters and three hundred men, with not $30 among them, set out from Portland, Oregon. They called themselves the Bonus Expeditionary Force, a play on “American Expeditionary Force,” the collective name for all American soldiers sent to France. The media would call them the “Bonus Army.” During their journey they gained publicity, and by their arrival on May 29, 20,000 veterans were traveling to Washington to join them. Some took up residence in half-demolished, government-owned buildings on Pennsylvania Avenue; most lived in a shantytown in what is now Anacostia Park.

Within two weeks, the House of Representatives passed an immediate payment bill. Two days later, as the Senate debated the bill, “an army” of eight thousand veterans filled the gallery and crowded the steps to the Senate wing and Capitol Plaza. The senators would occasionally hear them sing. By 1932, there had been a few marches on Washington: Jacob Coxey led the first-ever trek to the nation’s capital in 1894, and Alice Paul followed his example in 1913 advocating for women’s suffrage. But the methods employed by the BEF—living in Washington indefinitely and making daily trips to the Capitol—were entirely unprecedented:

The Senators were experiencing a new type of lobbying, not that of being entertained in some swank hotel where the business at hand is nonchalantly mentioned after a few drinks have been served, but that of being shown something of the poverty that had prompted the demand for the immediate payment of the bonus.

---

16 Waters and White, B. E. F.; the whole, 20.
19 Waters and White, B. E. F.; the whole, 146.
20 Ibid, 146–47.
One veteran summarized his side of the debate as “we helped you; now you help us.”

Even apart from the delay in payment, the bonus itself was compensation for lower pay than that of the average civilian. Now unemployment was at twenty-five percent, and the veterans were absolutely desperate for money. But payment would not be easy for the government. In 1932, it would have cost $2.4 billion; for context, that year’s federal budget was $3.9 billion. Arguing that it was economically infeasible, President Hoover claimed that “a cost at once arises to the people when… the government is forced to secure a huge sum by borrowing or otherwise, especially in the circumstances of today when we are compelled in the midst of depression to make other large borrowings.” For this reason, on the evening of June 17, 1932, the Senate terminated the bill, sixty-two votes to eighteen.

With this defeat, most assumed the veterans would leave. *The Washington Post* editorialized, “nothing but suffering, disease, hardship and a waste of energy can result from [staying in Washington].” Even Police Chief Pelham Glassford, who had until this point supported the BEF, admitted the police department “has not the means to continue much longer to provide for” the veterans, and advised them to “initiate some plan of withdrawal.” Waters, however, viewed it as only a “temporary setback,” and undiplomatically vowed to stay until the bonus was paid—even if it meant staying until 1945.

---

26 Waters and White, *B. E. F.; the whole*, 159.
27 Ibid, 151.
The Rout

Hoover, believing the BEF was a Democrat-sponsored ploy, wanted the veterans gone. Waters, realizing it would be impossible to stay until 1945, had agreed with district authorities on a plan to evacuate Pennsylvania Avenue by August 1.  

But on July 28, in an extremely undiplomatic move, Hoover ordered the evacuation of one of the buildings by 10:00 a.m. that day—ten minutes after Waters received the message. Inevitably, some veterans rioted, prompting a request for military aid. Hoover complied, ordering General MacArthur to “proceed immediately to the scene of disorder… Surround the affected area and clear it without delay.”

Hours later, 200 cavalry, 5 tanks, and 400 infantry advanced down Pennsylvania Avenue, “like a giant, well-oiled machine.” As each building was cleared, thousands of spectators on the street watched “tear gas bombs… thrown into the stubborn ranks of the veterans as they refused to budge, while infantrymen, with fixed bayonets, moved into the disputed area” (Appendix C). Despite this, the task was completed without any casualties or shots fired. As stated by MacArthur, “the show of force, the excellent discipline of the troops, and the proper use of tear gas had turned the trick without serious bloodshed.”

After clearing Pennsylvania Avenue, MacArthur ordered his troops to approach the 11th St. Bridge, across which lay the shantytown housing most of the BEF. MacArthur’s aide, Colonel Dwight D. Eisenhower, suggested that proceeding to the encampment was “inadvisable.”

---

28 Ibid, 204.
29 Ibid, 209.
33 MacArthur, Reminiscences, 95.
Hoover sent a messenger reminding MacArthur that his orders did not include doing so. MacArthur, according to the messenger, “was very much annoyed in having his plans interfered with in any way until they were executed completely.” When Hoover sent a second messenger, it was too late: The troops were advancing on the bridge.

For weeks, MacArthur had believed that, as had happened in Russia a decade ago, revolution was close at hand for the “sullen, riotous mob,” of which he believed actual veterans constituted under ten percent. While it is true that communists had tried to infiltrate the BEF, they did not have much success. Regardless, with visions of being “publicly hanged on the steps of the Capitol,” MacArthur undiplomatically and deliberately disobeyed presidential orders by crossing the Anacostia River, set on ridding Washington of its revolutionaries.

The encampment was set on fire (Appendix D). Described as “a blast furnace” by one source, flames could even be seen from the White House. The question of who set the fire was widely disputed, but historians believe that both armies, the federal one and the bonus one, took part. That night, the veterans “walked out of their home of the past two months, going they knew not where” as the Bonus March was finally concluded.

**Aftermath**

Headlines the following day ran: “ONE SLAIN, 60 HURT AS TROOPS ROUT B.E.F. WITH GAS BOMBS AND FLAMES”; “HOOVER’S CAVALRY, TANKS, INFANTRY

---

36 MacArthur, Reminiscences, 92.  
37 Ibid, 97.  
38 The Waterbury Democrat, July 29, 1932, 10.  
39 Waters and White, B. E. F.; the whole, 235.  
MAKE WAR ON BONUS MARCHERS AFTER POLICE KILL TWO”; and inevitably, “HOOVER BLAMED FOR BLOODSHED.” Hoover was already unpopular due to his mishandling of the Depression and refusal to repeal Prohibition, but the events of July 28 completely ended any chance he had at reelection. “The day of all days in the history of the United States finally arrived yesterday,” one BEF leader declared, “when the President of the United States ordered our soldiers to attack the flag of our country, the symbol of our freedom—the freedom our forefathers gave up their lives to give us.”

In Hoover’s defense, he had only resorted to force after two failed attempts at diplomacy by funding the veterans’ transportation home and as well as an eviction order that had not been carried out. Moreover, he was arguably not responsible for many of the events of July 28; all he did was comply with the district authorities’ “urgent request for troops to clear the riot area,” and the situation soon developed too quickly for him to retain control. However, he did not mention any of this to the public. Instead, he defended himself by, just like MacArthur, falsely claiming the BEF was infiltrated by communists. That November, he won only 59 out of 531 electoral votes.

Franklin D. Roosevelt had criticized Hoover for not inviting some veterans in for negotiations. In 1933, his words were put to the test as 8,700 veterans staged another “bonus march” demanding, among other things, immediate payment. Roosevelt, in stark contrast to his predecessor, supplied the veterans with food and shelter, invited in a delegation, and had Mrs.

43 The Waterbury Democrat, July 29, 1932, 1.
Roosevelt visit their camp. Eleanor “waded through mud ankle deep” to give a speech or two, chat with the veterans, and lead them in various songs.⁴⁸ “Hoover sent the army,” one veteran proclaimed. “Roosevelt sent his wife.”⁴⁹ While Roosevelt did not meet any of the veterans’ demands, his diplomacy peacefully resolved the situation at hand.

In 1934, veterans held another bonus march for the third year in a row; the bonus was as hotly debated as ever. Those for immediate payment claimed it would hasten economic recovery, and that the veterans were in dire need, referencing how seventy-three percent of certificate holders borrowed money (the loan would be deducted from their certificates) for “absolute necessities.”⁵⁰ However, Roosevelt simply could not, “as a matter of practical sense,” afford it—⁵¹—a recurring theme argued by every president since Harding. His rebuttal was that all Americans were in need and that veterans “can best be aided by the rehabilitation of the country as a whole.”⁵² He also did not believe in spending so much on a group that constituted only one percent of the population. Nevertheless, on January 27, 1936, Congress passed the Adjusted Compensation Payment Act, overriding Roosevelt’s veto and paying the bonus later that year.

**Legacy**

On June 22, 1944, during the peak of the Second World War, Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act, more popularly known as the GI Bill of Rights. One of the “most successful and popular federal programs in the nation’s history,”⁵³ it funded veterans’ education, offered them vocational assistance and unemployment pay, subsidized loans

---

⁴⁹ Ortiz, *Beyond the Bonus*, 100.
⁵⁰ Ibid, 119.
⁵¹ Patch, “The Bonus.”
⁵³ Ibid, 201.
for veterans, and more. Yet Congress passed it in part because of the fear of unrest and potential revolution, reminiscent of the violence of 1932 (Appendix E). The sixteen million World War II veterans—3.4 times more than World War I—would be a “potent force for good or evil in the years to come.” One representative simply pledged, “history shall not repeat itself.”

The Bonus March also established the precedent of diplomatically traveling to Washington, D.C., to lobby. While it was not the first of its kind, it was the largest to date, and by far the most famous. An “increase in federal tolerance and even assistance to [marches],” first appearing in the 1933 march, also became evident. Since then, millions of Americans have made this pilgrimage, for causes ranging from racial equality to withdrawal from Vietnam to LGBT+ rights. Today, they “are part of the landscape” of the city: a routine occurrence. But what is tradition now was highly unprecedented a century ago—a transformation that started in 1932.

Tens of thousands of desperate veterans converged on their nation’s capital in 1932, trying to sway the political debate in their favor so that they would not have to wait thirteen years to receive money that was rightfully theirs. Within two months, however, Hoover’s and MacArthur’s undiplomatic actions brought their diplomatic lobbying to a fiery end. Immediate payment passed four years later, and additional benefits were attained with the GI Bill, but the Bonus March’s ultimate legacy reaches far beyond 1944. It taught an “American lesson” to all future advocates: “If you have a grievance, take it to Washington, and if you want to be heard, bring a lot of people with you.”

---

55 Ortiz, Beyond the Bonus, 198.
56 Ibid, 199.
57 Barber, Marching on Washington, 105.
58 Ibid, 2.
60 Dickson and Allen, The Bonus, 277.
Appendix A

The government printed and displayed posters like this one to returning Great War veterans.

This is an adjusted service certificate.


Appendix C

Troops escort some veterans away from Pennsylvania Avenue.

Appendix D

The Anacostia encampment on fire.

Appendix E

Many newspapers printed this ad supporting the GI Bill.


https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/display-ad-12-no-title/docview/151589906/se-2

?accountid=31191.
Annotated Bibliography

**Primary Sources:**


On the front page of each issue of *The B.E.F. News*, the official newspaper of the BEF starting on June 25, there is a political cartoon. On the issue written two days after the expulsion, the cartoon depicts Herbert Hoover as the “enemy,” comparing him to a German soldier in World War I. This source helped me understand the BEF’s reaction to the expulsion and its attitude towards Hoover following July 28.


This is Calvin Coolidge's speech upon vetoing the World War Adjusted Compensation Act. It provided me with the arguments against the bonus before 1924, and I quoted Coolidge to show another argument that he made.


Written the day after the expulsion, this issue of *The Daily Worker* has a headline that I quoted to support my argument that the expulsion "shocked America."


One of the articles in this newspaper issue talks about the 1933 Bonus March, encourages veterans to stand up and demand immediate payment, criticizes the government's actions on the matter, and lists the marchers' demands. I found it useful in understanding the politics and context of the 1933 march, and it told exactly what the marchers’ demands were.


This is a transcript of an interview with Eisenhower about the events of July 28. It includes Eisenhower’s thoughts on MacArthur crossing the 11th Street Bridge, what he did to try to convince MacArthur otherwise, and what MacArthur’s response was.

I used this photograph as Appendix D.

http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,850388,00.html.

This is a reprint describing the then-proposed GI Bill of Rights, and one of the only sources I could find listing every specific benefit back-to-back. It also helped me realize people's opinions on the GI Bill before it was passed.

https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/329335.

This is Warren G. Harding's 1922 speech upon vetoing a bonus bill almost identical to the World War Adjusted Compensation Act but without the delay in payment. It helped me understand Harding's stance on the bonus, which, while similar to Coolidge's, was more economic and less moral.


In the section of Hoover's memoirs dedicated to the Bonus March, Hoover defends his actions in response to accusations of inhumanity and lack of morals through two arguments: that the BEF was mostly made up of communists and criminals, and that he should not receive the blame for the disgraceful events of July 28. I used this source to understand Hoover's perspective on the expulsion.

https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/207374.

When passed over Hoover's veto in hopes of stimulating economic recovery, the Emergency Adjusted Compensation Bill increased the amount that could be taken out on a loan from an adjusted service certificate. While this legislation was not about immediate payment of the bonus, the arguments Hoover made in this veto speech were equally applicable to immediate payment. Therefore, it informed me of some of the arguments against immediate payment, and I used a quote from the speech to elaborate on specifically the fiscal argument.

This is a publicized letter to Herbert Hoover condemning him for calling in the military. It supports my argument that the expulsion “shocked America,” as well as another argument that it contributed to Hoover’s defeat in the 1932 election.


MacArthur dedicates six of the 426 pages of his book to the Bonus March. In these pages, he talks about his opinions on the "quality" of the later BEF (infiltrated by criminals and communists) and his perspective on the events of July 28. I used this source to understand MacArthur's reasons for crossing the Anacostia River that night, as well as his thoughts on both the military's push that afternoon and the Bonus March as a whole.


I looked at the July 29 issues of three newspapers: *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Waterbury Democrat*. These sources gave me primary source insight on the events of July 28. I analyzed them all to get the opinions and stories of various newspapers with diversity in opinion on veterans' rights, the Bonus March, and the bonus itself.


This source contains two articles I found useful: a message from Franklin D. Roosevelt arguing against immediate payment, and an anti-bonus editorial including Roosevelt's rebuttals to all of the principal arguments for it. I found them helpful in understanding Roosevelt's stance on immediate payment, and why he was against it.

https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1933/05/17/issue.html?

This issue of *The New York Times* has an article on Roosevelt's handling of the 1933 Bonus March. I used it to get information relating to the marchers, a description of Eleanor Roosevelt’s visit, the veterans’ feelings toward Roosevelt afterward, and more.


This article is about the cost, necessity, politics, and economic impacts of the bonus and immediate payment as of 1932, or when the article was written. While I already knew most of its information, it had many new statistics, some of which I included in my paper to justify some of the arguments for and against immediate payment.
Joe Angelo was a World War I veteran with a Distinguished Service Cross for saving the life of Major George Patton in the Battle of Saint-Mihiel. In his testimony, he describes how he saved Patton, trying to find a job, his experience of unemployment, his need for the bonus, and more. This source helped me understand my historical context, i.e. the lives of Great War veterans during the Depression.


This is Roosevelt's veto speech for a 1935 immediate payment bill. In the speech, he states almost all of the (then-current) arguments against immediate payment. I found this source helpful in understanding these arguments, which were the basis for Roosevelt’s repeated veto of all bonus bills.


This is a message to the public twelve days after Roosevelt signed the 1933 Economy Act, which cut federal expenditures on veterans by almost 50 percent. (I removed the Economy Act from my historical argument after the state competition in order to meet the word limit.) This source helped me understand Roosevelt’s perspective on the Economy Act and why he was in favor of it.

I used this photograph as Appendix C.


I took a photo of the Adjusted Service Certificate at the research library and used it as Appendix B.

The quote at the beginning of my paper is from the First Amendment to the Constitution.


There is an ad on page 13 of this issue of The Washington Post that I used as Appendix E. It argues that the veterans of World War II need to be taken care of to not have a repeat of the 1932 Bonus March, and calls on the reader to support the proposed compensation bills for them. This source helped me understand the public attitude toward veterans' benefits during World War II, and how the Bonus March over a decade earlier fostered the support of the GI Bill.


This newspaper issue contains an account of the events at the Capitol on the evening of June 17 both inside and outside the Capitol building, as well as Waters's reaction to the defeat of the Bonus Bill by urging his men to stay in Washington until it is passed. It gave me more insight on that evening so I could improve its description and imagery in my paper.


This is an editorial after the House of Representatives voted on the Bonus Bill claiming that all hopes of getting Congress to pass immediate payment until its next session would be futile and that the bonus marchers, therefore, should now return home. (While the House did pass the bill, not enough representatives voted for it to override Hoover's promised veto.) This source helped me understand how most people wanted the bonus marchers to leave after the Senate defeated the bill.

The Waterbury Democrat (Waterbury, CT), July 29, 1932.


Waters’s book on the Bonus March, published in 1933, gave me Waters’s detailed account of every major event for the duration of the march, what his thoughts were, and his opinions about everything that happened involving the BEF. He also talks about the desperation that caused the march, which I found extremely helpful for developing my understanding of the historical context. Lastly, I used many quotes from the book to prove various arguments and provide imagery.


This is an audio recording of the interview of Leonard Weisensel, a World War I veteran and member of the American Legion. In the interview, he talks about life as a Great War veteran, including his thoughts on the Bonus March (although he did not participate in it), the activities of the American Legion during the time, his thoughts on the Roosevelt administration, and his life during the early 1930s, including how he managed to pay off his last bill. This source shaped my knowledge of how World War I veterans were initially treated (I quoted Weisensel in my third paragraph to emphasize their lack of benefits), and how their circumstances led to the Bonus March.

Secondary Sources:


This book chronicles the history and development of the practice of marching on Washington, D.C., through six marches, one of them being the Bonus March. The Bonus March’s chapter tells the story of the march in the context of the development of the practice, and only includes information that is either critical to the story of the Bonus March itself or related to the concept of marching on Washington. As this was one of the last sources I looked at, most of the information gained from it was about the Bonus March's significance to the development of marching on Washington, displayed in the penultimate paragraph of my paper.


This secondary article told me about the government's treatment of returning World War I veterans from the veterans’ point of view in the couple of years after Armistice Day. It also talks about the government's negligence towards returning veterans, and includes various posters created by the government telling veterans to, as the headline says, "Behave Yourselves." This source helped shape my understanding that Great War
veterans received barely any benefits upon returning home and that the World War Adjusted Compensation Act was essentially the first significant benefit given to them.


This is a 270-page (not including appendices, endnotes, and citations) comprehensive book on the complete story of the Bonus March. Because it is a popular history book, it goes in depth specifically into the context of the march, the 1933 march, Coxeys Army (the first-ever march on Washington in 1894), and the Labor Day Hurricane, which in 1935 killed hundreds of veterans in the Florida Keys. This was one of the first sources I looked at, so it gave me a baseline knowledge of my topic and helped me write my thesis.


This secondary article talks about the politics following July 28 up until Hoover's defeat against FDR on November 8. It includes the public's initial reaction to the expulsion, what arguments Hoover made to defend himself, how people responded to them, and it goes into detail about the American Legion and its national convention in September.


This book has an eight-page chapter on the Bonus March which, other than the general story of the march that I knew already, told a lot about the context of the march, as well as the aftermath of the expulsion and who exactly was blamed for it. Additionally, it is the source for two of the statistics in my paper.


This is a book mostly on "veteran politics" (namely the activities and lobbying of the two major veteran organizations at the time, the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars), and how it influenced the politics and legislation of the early Depression and First New Deal. It talks about the context for the major pieces of legislation concerning veterans during the interwar period, such as the World War Adjusted Compensation Act, the Economy Act, the Adjusted Compensation Payment Act, and the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, as well as the "fight for the bonus" from 1932–36. Just like the other secondary book I read (*The Bonus Army: An American Epic*), it deepened my knowledge on my topic, mostly for the events/legislation that occurred after the Bonus March itself.

Stephen Ortiz is an associate professor of history at Binghamton University and the author of *Beyond the Bonus March and GI Bill*. Going into this interview, most of my questions concerned simple facts that I wanted to clarify, such as what exact benefits able-bodied World War I veterans received. By the end, however, the most useful information I got concerned the arguments for and against the bonus, as well as how the debate over the bonus changed over time between 1919–36.


This article includes George van Horn Mosely’s (the first messenger that Hoover sent to tell MacArthur not to cross the 11th Street Bridge) recount of his involvement in and experience of the events of July 28, which I found very helpful in understanding MacArthur's attitude that day and what happened before he crossed the bridge. In addition to this role, Mosely strongly felt for the duration of the BEF’s existence that the presence of tens of thousands of protesting veterans in Washington, D.C., was a recipe for revolution, and urged Hoover to take measures to expel them earlier. Therefore, this source also helped me understand the military’s attitude toward the Bonus Army, both during and before the expulsion.


This secondary article focuses on the idea of political entitlement and talks about the termination and revival of “entitlement” benefits to veterans in the United States during the Great Depression, i.e. the passing and gradual repeal of the Economy Act. It also gave me the arguments in favor of the act, which I found useful as this perspective is not nearly talked about as much as the veterans’ perspective.