

Doughboys of 1933 Off to the Woods



Who Said Chow?

“**W**E can't get 'em up, we can't get 'em up, we can't get 'em up in the morning”—reveille!

But 25,000 pasty-faced, thin-bellied doughboys of 1933 are already awake and pulling on their clothes. A turn at the faucet, wash-basin, or what have you, in these training camps for the big war on want, and then—mess call!

Chow, food, vittles—something solid to eat, something that will stay down and keep the walls of the stomach from caving in. These Army cooks know their bacon, and there's nothing like woodland air for the appetite. The mess-kits rattle in impatient hands, and presently the only sound is the sound of the first swallow. And what coffee! It's a picnic.

These 25,000 men and boys—they range from eighteen to twenty-five—are the first contingent of the army of 250,000 to be enlisted in the C. C. C., which stands for the Civilian Conservation Corps. The corps is to shave, trim, and massage the national forests, reforest and afforest the bare places which nature had forgot or neglected, and debug pest-ridden trees.

HEALTHY work, and the men get food, clothing, and a dollar a day, or \$30 a month, which for most of them is a 100 per cent. increase in wages. The larger part of the stipend will be sent to the folks back home, just as the soldier boys sent theirs in the Great War; but they'll have enough left for the little necessities incident to life in the big outdoors.

The doughboys are drawn from sixteen cities, each contributing a specified quota, the unmarried and younger ones first. They are enlisted for six months. It is all voluntary, if there is anything voluntary in a drowning man clutching at a straw and a hungry man grabbing a job and breeze sweeps down from the Kentucky hills. Three hundred and twenty-four young Clevelanders, lounging in front of unfamiliar barracks, are silenced. The first day of the first job that most of them have had since leaving high school is over. They are now members of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

The 324 were eased gradually into camp routine, under the eye of Col. James P. Barney, a regular Army man since the Spanish-American War. Colonel Barney is quite visibly a colonel.

“They're underfed, unused to work,” Colonel Barney said. “They can't work to-morrow because of the typhoid and smallpox vaccines they took to-day, and some won't be able to work for two or three days.”

C.C.C.

"I'll feed them when I can, hike them, work them at making the grounds park-like, and I hope by the end of the training period that these lads will look like something. They're terribly soft, altho I've seen worse material."

Colonel Barney said that each group of 212 men was designed to be an independent "housekeeping unit," fit to be assigned anywhere and take care of itself. One man will be made a cook, one a barber, one a clerk, and so on until the unit is made.

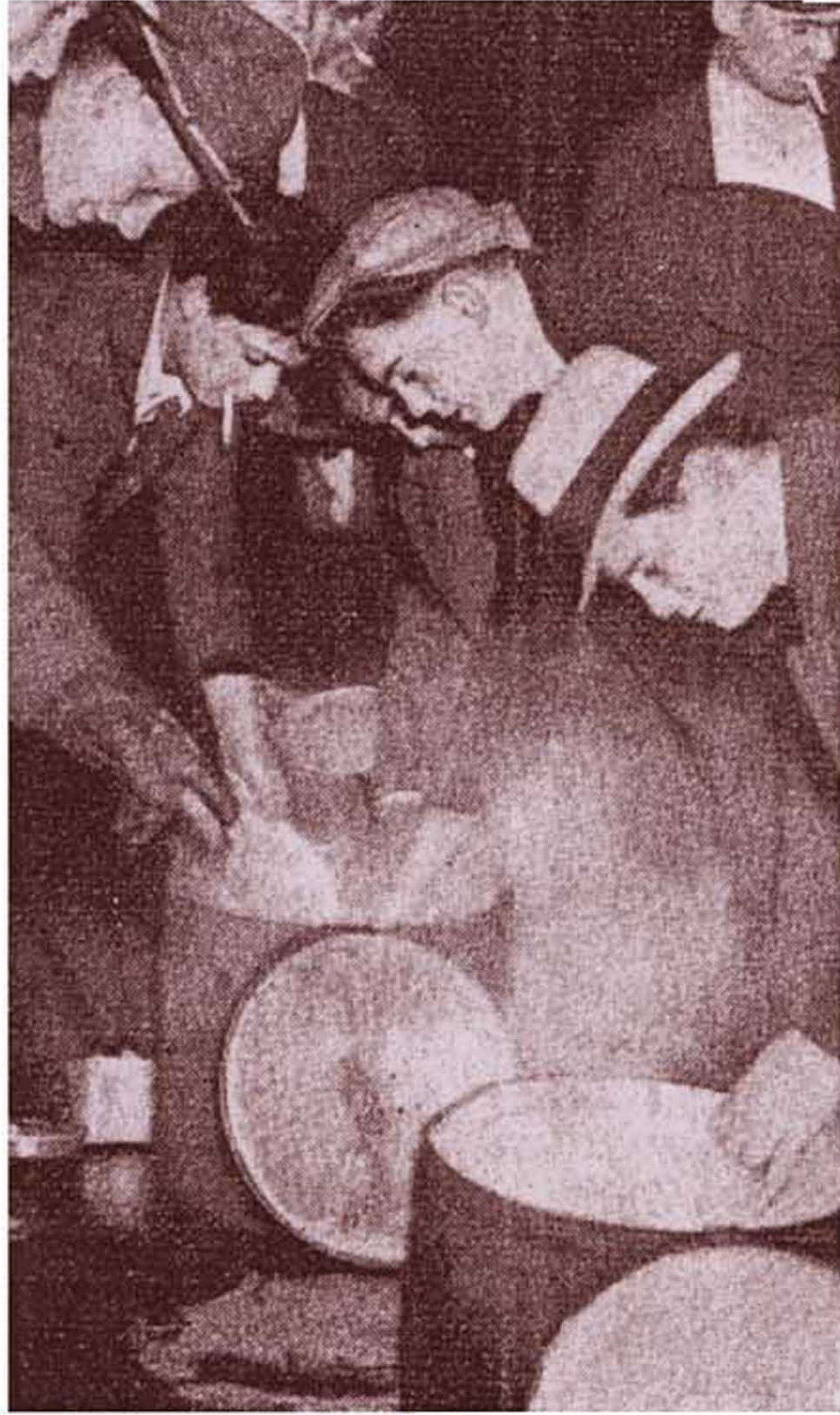
"They tell me I've got a couple of weeks to train these boys before they're assigned to some forest project, but two weeks isn't enough," Colonel Barney said. "It ought to be at least a month before they are fed enough and get their muscles used to work."

The camp, which covers thousands of acres and a wilderness of barracks and shacks, has been divided into two parts.

The Army, regular residents, are sequestered at one end. The Conservation Corps is to be housed in twenty or thirty buildings by itself.

Camp chefs reported that the Clevelanders and seventy-seven Cincinnatians who arrived first nearly ate them out of food. The Clevelanders ate fifty dozens of eggs, a mountain of bread, several hundred pounds of fried potatoes, gallons and gallons of coffee, and crates of prepared breakfast foods.

At ten, when half had been doused under outdoor showers, examined, and given new clothes, they were ready for dinner. When dinner was ready they were ready for that and supper, too. Calls are now coming from out of barrack windows.



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Dishwashing, Army Style

"Hey, fellow," a youngster calls to a lieutenant walking sprucely by, "how's for opening up the chow wagon?"

The lieutenant looks at the illuminated dials of his wrist watch.

"Chow will be served at 6 A. M.," he says, and walks off.

A great chorus from several barracks follows him.

MR. FECHNER predicts that the full complement of 250,000 men will be in the forest by May 15. Men who have used the

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ax on the family woodpile will march to the greenwood with men who once didn't know an ax from a cold chisel, or a hoe from a hatchet. In one batch of recruits were a sculptor, a former clerk in a Fifth Avenue bank, storekeepers, miners, postal clerks, blacksmiths, telegraph operators, electricians, barbers, and real estate men. In another batch were two recent college graduates with A.B. degrees, who had hunted in vain for work since last June.

THE LITERARY DIGEST

December 11, 1937: p. 29

CCC & CRIME

from "The Atlantic Monthly"

THE social values of the CCC are just beginning to be realized. Some authorities have credited directly to the corps a decrease in juvenile crime. From the superintendent of the Nebraska Reformatory for Men comes the statement that the CCC has been responsible, since 1933, for a 25 per cent decrease in the number of inmates in his institution. The superintendent of the Virginia State Penitentiary attributes to the CCC a drop in commitments of 156 in nine months. Justin Miller, chairman of the United States Attorney General's Committee on Crime, in a statement of December 14, 1936, brought out the three main causes of juvenile crime and delinquency—those arising from the physical environment of the delinquent, from his contact with his family, and from his own personality and status in society. He added:

"A simple knowledge of the aim of the CCC, the conservation of both human and natural resources is enough to suggest what the organization does to oppose these conditions."

The CCC program has made use of the forests, parks, and eroded fields of the nation to supply work for these idle youths; it has given hands and brains something to do. The forests and parks offered an opportunity not only to give these men jobs, but also to restore confidence in themselves and to build them up physically. These things it has done for some two million men since the spring of 1933.—*F. A. Silcox*