Samuel A. Stouffer
and
The American Soldier

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The Liberty Limited arrived in Washington DC on 4 August 1941—a day when everyone knew what a Pullman train was, and when women were about to learn how to replicate stocking lines with eyebrow pencils. Alighting from the train was a diminutive man on his way to the War Department. He had no official status, no military rank, and although at forty-one he had reached a level of prominence in his field, no one would have noticed him much in a national capital that knew it was likely to go to war. The man stepped into a welter of activity, met a colleague for breakfast, and then headed for the Munitions Building. It was already hot, but it would get hotter still before the day was out. It was late summer in DC.1

Nineteen years later, The New York Times ran an extended obituary for the man, under the heading “Samuel Stouffer, Sociologist, Dead.” Readers learned that Stouffer (1900-1960) was from Sac City, Iowa, and that he had held sociology professorships at Wisconsin, Chicago, and Harvard Universities. He had also been founding director of the Laboratory of Social Relations at Harvard, and had been president of both the American Sociological Association and the American Association for Public Opinion Research. Readers also learned what had come of Stouffer’s train trip from Chicago to

Washington DC nineteen years before: “Dr. Stouffer was the principle [sic] author of ‘The American Soldier,’ an exhaustive study of the citizen-soldier…. The book was a report developed from the research work he directed during World War II at the Education and Information Division of the War Department.” Lieutenant General James Gavin, commander of the famed 82nd Airborne Division in World War II, was interviewed for the obituary, and he commented that Stouffer had made “a monumental contribution to the science of making citizens of a free country win its wars.” The obituary also indicated that the knowledge gained in Stouffer’s studies applied to business, urban planning, population control, public-opinion polls, civil liberties, and economics. It did indeed.²

Stouffer’s work is cited in journals as diverse as Child Development Abstract, The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, and Commentary. He served as a consultant to scores of private and public institutions, including the American Standards Association, the Cooperative Test Service of the American Council on Education, the University of California, the American Economic Association, the Population Association of America, the National Committee on Atomic Information, and the American Psychoanalytic Association.³ He was also a delegate to the 1938 International Conference on Population in Paris, as well as a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Philosophical Association, Phi Beta Kappa, the American Statistical Association, the Sociological Research Association, the Institute of Mathematical Statistics, the Population Association of America, the Psychometric Association, and the Harvard and Cosmos Clubs.

General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the US Army in World War II, believed that Stouffer’s The American Soldier, published by Princeton University Press in 1949, represented “the first quantitative studies of the impact of war on the mental and emotional life of the soldier.” Like others, Marshall also realized that “the value of these books goes beyond their obvious importance to military training.”⁴ After reading The American Soldier, Ernest Hemingway wrote to publisher Charles Scribner that it was “an excellent and im-
pressive work,“5 and many other influential figures also recognized its value and potential applications. Frank Stanton of the Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS) wrote in 1944 that “the work Sam Stouffer has done for the Army is by all odds the best to come out of the war. For that matter, his program represents the most complete thing of its kind to date…. In this mass of data there are buried the answers to many methodological problems in the entire field of sampling and attitude measurement.”6 In the post-war years, The American Soldier became what scholars refer to as a “landmark work.”

Around the turn of the twentieth century, there was a fierce contest between those who struggled to explain war in traditional human terms and those who were beginning to explain war in scientific terms. Samuel A. Stouffer and his work were key to this debate, in showing how sociometrics could inform theories of human behaviour in war. The cockpit of the contest was the Second World War, yet the argument was not entirely settled in the 1940s, and it continues today—between those who believe that human behaviour is a matter of common sense, and those who believe that it can and should be quantified. Stouffer and the Research Branch of the War Department’s Information and Education Division surveyed over half a million servicemen during World War II, work which represents the largest scientifically conducted survey of its kind. Unfortunately, what he learned is unknown but to specialists. As a result, social and particularly military history is often so fraught with myth, tradition, and nostalgia that it is becoming increasingly difficult to classify as history. Even the recent interest in the relationship of war to society has produced little inquiry into or analysis of Stouffer or his work, focussing instead on gender, labour, or political themes, or, less helpfully, rendering the soldier in heroic terms. Samuel Stouffer’s life, and his work on The American Soldier, which quite literally required the analysis of at least five hundred thousand primary documents, reveal insights that might be helpful in distinguishing fact from fiction. A closer look at Stouffer and his career offers an opportunity to understand the relevance of The American Soldier and the climate of the time in which it was produced.
The purpose of this essay is to illuminate Samuel Stouffer’s life and work, the impulses that gave rise to *The American Soldier*, how was it perceived, planned, and executed, and how it affected institutions and disciplines. “Samuel Stouffer and *The American Soldier*” undertakes simply to follow the advice of historian Sir Michael Howard on the three tasks of constructing narrative history: “First, find out what happened. Then, establish a chain of causation. Finally, apply critical judgment.” The essay is a synthesis of Stouffer’s ideas as a sociologist as they met and in some respects formed military culture. From this meeting emerged modern military sociology and modern survey research.

Samuel A. Stouffer. Photo Courtesy of Mrs. Jane Williams, daughter of Samuel A. Stouffer.

Stouffer repeatedly stressed in the introduction to *The American Soldier* that his was a social engineering rather than a social science task. “It must not be forgotten,” he wrote, “that the Research
Branch was set up to do a fast, practical job; it was an engineering operation; if some of its work has value for the future of social science this is a happy result, quite incidental to the mission of the branch in wartime.”

Still, it is tempting to speculate that Stouffer would have been gratified by General Gavin’s obituary comment about the wider scientific value of his work. Stouffer recognized the potential of his work when he noted in the introduction that “We have here a mine of data, perhaps unparalleled in magnitude in the history of any single research enterprise in social psychology or sociology.”

The data to which Stouffer referred have been sometimes ignored by historians, in contrast to the attention paid by counterparts in sociology. *The American Soldier* echoes and reverberates in the scholarship of sociology, but many historians, though familiar with it, have been rather tone deaf to the actual findings and ideas Stouffer presented, and uninterested in Stouffer himself. There are several explanations for the paucity of secondary historical literature on Stouffer. The current historical fashion is one of argument bordering on advocacy, rather than traditional narrative. Normally, these arguments are based on previous historical interpretation, and as there have been none on Stouffer to date, there is no historiographical debate to engage historians. Historians often also look for relevance to current events. As Stouffer’s work was based on a draftee Army, his findings may be thought irrelevant to the all-volunteer US Army of 2010, making comparisons difficult if not specious. Additionally, much popular American military history is now written by journalists, who may find the spade work of survey research somewhat less than compelling.

Stouffer’s Research Branch was a sub-unit of the ever-evolving Army Information and Education Division. The office, which had begun life in March 1941 as the Morale Division, took on broader tasks as the Special Services Division before settling into its final incarnation as the Information and Education Division of the US Army Service Forces. The Division ultimately had four branches: Information, Education, Orientation, and Research. None of the other three branches acted without consulting the Research Branch, how-
ever, as the data that Stouffer and his colleagues produced were often the basis for decisions on how best to inform, educate, and orient the soldier. Or, in Stouffer’s words, “The Information and Education Division…was an agency of communication. Most of its branches were concerned with imparting information to soldiers. The Research Branch was mainly concerned with analyzing and imparting information which it obtained from soldiers.” In any event, the Research Branch was established in October 1941, within two months of Stouffer’s arrival in Washington, DC. Almost immediately, its utility as a social engineering institution became apparent.

“The army reported that at the point of embarkation in New York, there were a great many desertions,” remembered Major General Frederick H. Osborn, Chief of the Information and Education Division and Stouffer’s wartime boss. “The army got much disturbed and asked the research division to make a study of what was happening.” Osborn had earlier “called in Sam Stauffer [sic] head of the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago, whom I had gotten to know before the war. He was not only on the hard factual side of sociology, but he had also been a newspaper reporter and had a keen sense for getting things done.”

To address the Army’s concerns about desertions, Stouffer ran a quick study. He discovered that the Army was sending men home on leave in civilian clothes, and he recommended that they be required to travel in uniform instead. “There were few desertions at the point of embarkation after that,” said Osborn, “It was a simple thing and such an amusing solution.” Stouffer’s recommendation was simple to the point of elegance, and doubtless amusing to a man with Stouffer’s sense of humour. Masters of their trades often make the complex look simple, the difficult look easy. If they are very good, they make it all a bit amusing as well.

That Stouffer could solve a desertion problem with a change of clothing was not alchemy. He discovered that, as Osborn later remembered, “When soldiers went home or went to their families or friends in uniform they were made much of as soldiers. Their families were proud of them and their girlfriends said they were heroes,
and saw them back to camp." Just how it was that Stouffer understood such things is a compelling question, as ideas such as these do not simply spring from the ground. Stouffer’s own experience, personality, and education certainly come to bear, but they are the end, not the beginning, of a long chain of intellectual history that begins as far back as the Stoics and their commitment to empirical observation. Sociological survey research existed long before it was formalized and named, and sociology and the military have been lurching towards their dialectical relationship since ancient times.

More immediately, Stouffer himself reported that he and his staff were influenced greatly by the ideas about behaviour and attitudes extant at the time they wrote *The American Soldier*. Of these, three were paramount. Dynamic Psychology envisaged man not as a rational being, but rather as a creature moved by unconscious desires. Learning Theory was based upon a conditioned response through rewards and punishments. Social Anthropology and Sociology were predicated upon the “plasticity of the human organism,” upon social roles, class, adaptation, and “the individual as a member of the social system.” These ideas too have their histories, passing in modern times through Emil Durkheim, Sigmund Freud, Max Weber, and a host of psychologists, sociologists, historians, clergymen, and anthropologists. These ideas, coupled with Stouffer’s survey research, had a lasting impact on sociology as well as American soldiers in World War II.

Stouffer conducted his first survey on 8 December 1941, the day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He would continue through November 1945, as the millions of American soldiers who had been summoned to fight World War II were demobilized. In these years, “more than half a million soldiers were to be questioned by the Research Branch in all parts of the world. Over 200 different questionnaires, many of which contained 100 or more separate items, were to be administered.” Stouffer’s business was to measure attitudes, and he did so, on everything from attitudes towards allies to attitudes of men in staging areas. As military operations expanded and revealed behavioural issues affecting the prosecution of the war,
so did Stouffer’s mandate. By 1944, in addition to measuring attitudes, the Research Branch conducted psychiatric screening tests, explored postwar plans for Black soldiers, studied psychoneurotics within the Army, and inquired about soldier savings habits, among many other inquiries. All of this work fell within the broadly defined mission of the Research Branch, “to provide the Army command quickly and accurately with facts about the attitudes of soldiers which, along with other facts and inferences, might be helpful in policy formation.”

World War I had given the Army experience with soldier attitudes, and some in the 1941 War Department remembered the rapid mobilization of 1917. They had learned the wisdom of caring about soldier attitudes in a large, democratic, and conscripted army, and had created in 1917 the Commission on Training Camp Activities, or CTCA. The mandate from the Secretary of War, Newton D. Baker, to Raymond B. Fosdick, the director of the CTCA, required him to see after the morale and, more important in Baker’s mind, the moral welfare of the troops. The Army took up in World War II where it left off in World War I, creating the Morale Division, which evolved into the Information and Education Division, of which Stouffer’s Research Branch was a part. And the perceived need was great. Shortly before Stouffer conducted his first survey, the War Department had in its Victory Program “projected an Army with peak strength of 213 divisions,” or about 3.2 million men, compared to World War I’s approximately 2.9 million. By 1945, counting non-divisional soldiers, the Army Air Corps, etc., the Army employed about 8.2 million men, most of them drafted. Stouffer surveyed nearly sixteen percent of them.

Notwithstanding World War I, Secretary Baker, and the CTCA, the intellectual line between ancient times and Stouffer is a long one, particularly when one considers the commentaries on soldier behaviour to be found in the works of the ancient historians Herodotus and Thucydides, as well as in those of the poet Homer. The pawns of the gods in the Iliad seem terribly distant from Stouffer’s self-determining World War II GIs who read Yank, the Army Weekly,
and *Stars & Stripes*, (written specifically for them), watched director Frank Capra’s *Why We Fight* films, (produced specifically for them), made demands that resulted in revisions of pay scales, changed award policies, and created the point system for demobilization. Stouffer and his Research Branch were intimately involved in gathering the data from soldiers that resulted in all of these measures.

The yawning gap between Homer and Stouffer, or rather the evolution of military sociology, is not, however, without some significant mile markers. Julius Caesar, Machiavelli, Napoleon, and dozens more have noted soldier attitudes and behaviour and commented on how they might be formed. None before Stouffer, however, undertook a systematic, scientific, and vast survey research project to determine soldier attitudes. His predecessors generally felt that they had an innate ability to judge men, and that such things were matters of intuition and common sense. Stouffer may not have read Machiavelli’s *The Art of War*, but it is almost certain that he read at least some of Caesar’s *Commentaries*. His high school and college transcripts, as well as the institutional catalogues of his education, tell much about his intellectual development. Additionally, there are Stouffer’s own writings and behaviour, all of which indicate a classically educated, insatiably curious modern stoic going about finding hard data rather than relying on impressions or conventional wisdom to make his case.

Stouffer was born in Sac City, Iowa on 6 June 1900. He could not have known in his boyhood that he would research and help to form the attitudes of American soldiers landing at Normandy forty-four years later. What he did know as he entered his teenage years was that war, and the behaviour of men in it, was a compelling subject. His father, Samuel Marcellus Stouffer, had become the owner of the *Sac Sun* newspaper in 1893, the year of the great Chicago Exposition to which the state of Iowa had sent goods and services worth $125,000. On the cover of the Iowa Exposition’s report is a flag-waving, musket-bearing soldier, not unlike the bronze Union American Civil War soldier placed on a pedestal opposite the Sac County Courthouse the year before. Young Samuel A. Stouffer often sat on
the porch of his father’s newspaper office, listening to Civil War veterans spin yarns of their experiences. 29 In 1923, Stouffer returned to Sac City with an MA in English from Harvard. He edited the newspaper until 1926, a time when the last of the Civil War veterans were dying, and their funeral announcements and obituaries were appearing in local papers. 30 In the summer of 1926, Stouffer sold the paper and entered doctoral studies in sociology at the University of Chicago, graduating in 1930. He remembered in an interview years later that he had decided to embark on such a study because, as a newspaperman, he had discovered that “people were tossing a lot of bunk around and it seemed a good idea to try to pin some of these things down.” 31 While at Chicago, Stouffer was deeply influenced by psychologist L.L. Thurstone and sociologist William F. Ogburn, both of whom were heavily engaged in applied sociology. 32 From this point onward, Stouffer became increasingly committed to what he would call “scientific sociology.” By 1948, he was arguing in a debate with a mathematician at Harvard that human behaviour could be predicted, and that “the controlled experiment [in social sciences] is coming into its own.” He even claimed that the work of sociologists would “help regulate the complex civilization wrought by physical science and technology.” 33

Transcripts of his early formal education reveal an emphasis on the classics common at the time. At Sac City High School, he studied Latin through Caesar, Cicero, and Virgil, as well as English composition, French, German, history, and economics. These subjects were supplemented with a healthy dose of the hard sciences (physics, biology, and mathematics—both algebra and geometry). Graduating in 1918 and moving to nearby Morningside College in Sioux City, he took a BA in Latin in 1921, studying French, English, trigonometry, Bible literature, and military science along the way. 34 Although sociology was offered at Morningside as a major, Stouffer took no sociology courses. 35 Instead, he concentrated on rhetoric, taking courses in public speaking and participating successfully in intercollegiate debate. One of his yearbooks mentions that Stouffer could “find more to say and say it in less time than any member of the
class. He is always ready to take the lead and is always hunting new work. He disguises himself and many are the things he finds out. Among his accomplishments are those of a book agent, newspaper man, debater and comedian.” His dizzying array of extracurricular activities—tennis, editorship of the college paper, and membership in the YMCA, Student Council, Republican Club, and Literary Society—provide insight into his restless energy and devotion to his work. 36 While in college, he also met Ruth McBurney, whom he married in 1924, and with whom he had three children.

By 1949, when Stouffer published The American Soldier, he was a master of the major ideas in sociology, psychology, anthropology. The colleague he breakfasted with upon his arrival in Washington in August 1941 was political scientist Harold Lasswell, who had written his doctoral dissertation on World War I propaganda, and who was a pioneer in the field of applied psychology. 37 After lunch the same day, Stouffer met with Walter Bingham, holder of doctorates from both Harvard and the University of Chicago. Bingham was founder and director of the prestigious Carnegie Institute of Technology’s Division of Applied Psychology, and during World War I he had designed the classification, personality, and intelligence tests for the Army that were the starting point for similar tests in World War II, and which became the basis for the modern Scholastic Aptitude Tests given to American high school students. During World War II, Bingham was the Army’s head psychologist. 38 The next day at lunch Stouffer met Vannevar Bush, Chairman of the Office of Scientific and Research Development, which oversaw the beginnings of the Manhattan Project (the atomic bomb) and the development of, among other things, radar, the proximity fuse, and the Norden bombsight. 39

Stouffer spent the war years working with these men and many like them. In acknowledging the contributions of his colleagues to The American Soldier, Stouffer named some of the most influential scholars, government officials, and businessmen in the United States at the time, from some of the most prestigious institutions. 40 Like Stouffer, these contributors had the ability to transcend their own disciplines and work with others on the problem at hand, win-
ning the war. They did not live in a world of Cartesian separations which would have prevented them from apprehending the dynamics of a world war, or would have prevented their cooperation. The stiff divisions that exist today between academic disciplines were not yet in place.

The Research Branch, ostensibly a sociological organization, was featured prominently in Ellen Herman’s intellectual history of modern American psychology, *The Romance of American Psychology* (1995). She notes that Stouffer encouraged “an eclectic intellectual approach in the Research Branch that combined psychoanalysis, learning theory, cultural anthropology, and social systems theory, along with the latest statistical techniques in opinion polling.”

No surprise then, that in the index to the first two of the four volumes of *The American Soldier*, one will find references to Emile Durkheim, Sigmund Freud, Gunnar Myrdal, I.P. Pavlov, and Max Weber. It should be noted that Herman’s book is one of the few recent books on war and society that seriously considers Stouffer and his work. Sociology books that mark his significance abound—Howard Schuman’s recently published *Method and Meaning in Polls and Surveys* (2008) is dedicated to Stouffer—yet historians usually ignore Stouffer, or only mention him in passing.

The Research Branch had a definitive compass, found in its name. Stouffer, an empiricist, believed in the value of research and evidence. He commented early in *The American Soldier* on “the experimental tradition,” and went on to write that “Just as medicine did not make distinctive progress until the exclusively clinical approach gave way to controlled experiments as a method of rigorous verification of hypotheses, so social psychology is likely to be limited in its development until the habit of required experimental verification is firmly established in research in social psychology.” His tool was the survey.

A look at Stouffer’s doctoral dissertation for the University of Chicago (1930) is instructive in this connection. In “An Experimental Comparison of Statistical and Case History Methods of Attitude Research,” Stouffer studied the attitudes of 238 University of Chicago
students towards prohibition. He demonstrated that statistical survey methods rendered almost the same results as case histories evaluated by experts, and he stressed that his conclusion “rests on experimental evidence,” which he presented in detail. The intrinsic value of survey research notwithstanding, the war became an important focus for the Research Branch. As Ellen Herman noted, “Dedicated throughout the war to enlarging their own sphere of influence, experts nonetheless quickly grasped that furthering a psychological science of social relations or theory of society was not the point. Winning the war was.”

Stouffer remained at Chicago for a year after completing his PhD, and taught statistics. While he was teaching the Introduction to Statistics Course, some of the most famous sociologists in the United States were teaching with him. William F. Ogburn taught Research in Quantitative Sociology, Robert Ezra Park taught Human Migration, along with The Crowd and the Public, and Herbert Blumer taught Introduction to the Study of Society. Ogburn had previously taught sociology at Columbia University, and had served as President of the American Sociological Association (ASA) in 1929. Park also served as ASA president (1925). Blumer had been the first chair of Sociology at the University of California at Berkeley, and was also an ASA president (1956). Stouffer clearly was in on the ground floor as sociology developed as a scientific discipline in the United States. (The American Sociological Association was founded in 1905.) Additionally, Stouffer spent the academic year of 1931-1932 pursuing postdoctoral work in statistics at the University of London, where he studied with British statisticians Karl Pearson and R.A. Fisher. Upon his return to the United States in 1932, Stouffer served as a professor of social statistics at the University of Wisconsin. In 1935, he accepted a sociology professorship at the University of Chicago, where he remained until 1946—spending the war years of course in Washington.

Frederick Osborn, Stouffer’s boss at the War Department, persuaded the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) to bring Stouffer from the University of Chicago to Washington in the summer of
1941. (It was the SSRC that had funded Stouffer’s postdoctoral work in London.) The SSRC had also during the 1930s been keenly interested in the effects of the Great Depression on American society, and had appointed Stouffer to oversee thirteen monographs on the subject, collectively entitled Social Aspects of the Depression. In addition to mastering the administrative duties needed to run such a project, Stouffer made contacts that would be useful during the war. He co-authored one of the monographs with Paul Lazarsfeld, who would later consult with the Research Branch and co-author one of the volumes of *The American Soldier.* Stouffer’s work with the SSRC, as well as his academic labours, prepared him well for the work the War Department assigned him in 1941. So too did his work in the 1930s with Gunnar Myrdal on the landmark study *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (1944). Additionally, during his professorship at the University of Wisconsin, Stouffer had worked with the Census Bureau and with the Central Statistic Board, later to become the Division of Statistical Standards of the Bureau of the Budget. He spent the remainder of the 1930s as a professor of sociology at the University of Chicago.

Stouffer’s pre-war experiences gave him the ability to work as an outsider within a large bureaucracy, none of which was more intimidating and tribal than the United States Army. He was keenly aware that he had no official status as far as the Army was concerned. He wore no uniform, and, although he was ultimately granted the rank and privileges of a brigadier general, he was wise enough never to don one, as many of his colleagues did. He knew that he had not been through the rites of passage required to wear a uniform, and he understood the totemic significance of the uniform within his society. Nor did he arrive in Washington full of demands for information, office space, a secretary, or letterhead. He took the opposite approach, as he had done years earlier when he was an undergraduate newspaper editor: he disguised himself, and thus he was able to find out many things. He knew that he would, in his words, “not get to first base for SSRC without some kind of War Dept. status.” One of his friends in Washington told him that the War Department was the
“hardest nut in Washington to crack,” and Stouffer understood the truth of it.\(^{54}\)

On Stouffer’s second day in Washington, Osborn arranged for him to be an expert consultant to the Secretary of War. “Expert,” commented Stouffer wryly in his notes, “quite a joke; know less about the army than about the Vatican.” But he did know how to learn. “My idea is to hunt the fellow actually carrying the ball; he may be far down in a hierarchy…. I want to learn from ground up; not just what is officially said but what is really done.” His understanding that there is a difference between the two would serve him well. He spent his early days in Washington making contacts and asking polite questions, looking at records and talking with colleagues about how selection and classification of soldiers had been done in World War I. He remained all too aware of how easily he could be marginalized. “I don’t blame old army officers for looking at a layman like me as a nuisance…. I know darned well how I’d feel if the V.P. of the university sent a layman around to cooperate with me on my teaching & research & I suspect the army is much more of a club than a university.”\(^{55}\) His sensitivity to the Army’s institutional mores helped to produce in him understanding, and even wisdom.

Stouffer’s impact on the ultimate Allied victory in World War II should not be underestimated. Based on what he had learned at Chicago, and numerous refinements in the years between 1930 and 1940, Stouffer and his team of sociologists and psychologists at Research Branch designed a twelve-step system for gathering and processing data on soldier attitudes. As described in a Research Branch briefing, the system proceeded as follows:

1. Research Branch consults with members of staff section requesting survey.
2. Trained field man informally interviews GIs on problems bearing on study.
3. After carefully testing all questions, final questionnaire form is prepared.
4. Units to be sampled are selected in order to insure representativeness.
5. A short talk explains survey purpose: given to men by trained class leader.
6. Each man in the assembled group fills out questionnaire form anonymously.
7. Questionnaires are processed by having each answer assigned a numerical code.
8. Codes representing soldiers’ answers are punched as holes on IBM (MRU) cards.
9. The information is placed on these IBM cards with electrical punch machines.
10. Holes enable cards to be electronically sorted and tabulated: 7 per second.
11. Expert technician of Research Branch analyzes data and summarizes findings.
12. A report of findings is prepared and then submitted to agencies concerned.56

Using this system, Stouffer was able to apply the techniques he had employed to survey 238 University of Chicago Students to approximately 500,000 soldiers during World War II. Questions about prohibition became questions about the Army, such as “Do you agree or disagree with the statement that the Russians can be depended upon to cooperate with us after the war?” (Agree 44%, Undecided 40%, Disagree 16%).57 Black soldiers were asked, “Suppose your company could get its lieutenants from the North only, but they could be either WHITE or NEGRO. Which would you rather have?” (57% Negro, 33% No Difference, 10% White).58 Such data was quickly translated into policy changes or propaganda through training films or Army publications.

By war’s end, fifty-five military personnel and sixty-eight civilians had worked or were working in the Washington, D.C. headquarters of Research Branch, many of them prominent sociologists and psychologists. The branch produced well over three hundred and fifty surveys, studies, and information papers, along with the voluminous correspondence attendant with any bureaucracy. Their surveys were eclectic, with titles from “Memorandum on the Attitudes of New Recruits” (March 1942) to “Attitudes of Dischargees toward Separation and Evaluation of Information Provided at the Separation
Survey reports were generally based on attitudes of soldiers in a specific theatre, or attitudes towards a specific issue. Sometimes the research questions were narrow, and bordered on the ridiculous, such as the “laundry situation in Panama.” Often, however, they were broad, such as the “very serious morale problems of the Infantry,” which resulted in “revision of pay scales, the introduction of symbols such as the Combat Infantryman’s Badge and the Expert Infantryman’s Badge, and the development of an aggressive program of publicity.” While field commanders may have been understandably vexed at being told they had to worry about laundry services in the middle of a world war, they tended to be more receptive to the larger issues of managing a draftee Army, and keeping that Army pointed towards the enemy rather than grousing amongst themselves.

In the wake of the tepid American performance in Operation Torch—their debut in the European theatre in North Africa—and the debacle at Kasserine Pass in Tunisia in February 1943, where several American units broke and ran, Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall had good reason to question the “common sense” approach to knowing soldier attitudes. Marshall had approved the Army’s Operations Field Manual (FM 100-5) on 22 May 1941. The manual stated that “man is the fundamental instrument in war,” that “the essential considerations” in training “are to integrate individuals into a group and to establish for that group a high standard of military conduct,” and that “war places a severe test on the physical endurance and moral stamina of the individual soldier.” Despite the use of words such as “fundamental” and “essential,” any systematic effort to establish primary groups had been sacrificed to speed and numbers as the Army hastily prepared for Torch. Instead, officers tended to rely on their own experience as wisdom, and on the belief that “strong men, inculcated with a proper sense of duty, a conscious pride in their unit, and a feeling of mutual obligation to their comrades in the group, can dominate the demoralizing influences of battle.” Indeed, FM 100-5 assured the officer that “By personal observation and experience, he will then be able to judge … [troop] needs and combat value.”
Notwithstanding this sort of lip-service, the Americans found in North Africa that the Germans could be ruthless teachers, unsympathetic to the willpower and confidence of their GI enemies. John W. Appel, Chief of the Army’s Mental Hygiene Branch and a consultant for Research Branch, described the effects of combat on soldiers in a 1944 report of an investigative trip to North Africa. Appel began his report by reminding his readers that “psychiatric disorders have constituted the leading cause for medical evacuations.” His detailed observations, because they have been so often ignored or forgotten, deserve quotation at length:

The key to understanding the psychiatric problem is the simple fact that danger of being killed imposes a strain so great that it causes men to break down. This fact is frequently not appreciated and cannot be fully understood until one has either seen psychiatric cases just out of the lines or himself has actually been exposed to bombing, shell, and mortar fire. One look at the shrunken apathetic faces of psychiatric patients as they come stumbling into the medical station, sobbing, trembling, referring shudderingly to ‘them shells’ and to buddies mutilated or dead, is enough to convince most observers. Anyone entering the combat zone undergoes a profound emotional change which can no more be described than can sexual intercourse. Each man ‘up there’ knows that at any moment he may be killed, a fact kept constantly before his mind by the sight of dead and mutilated buddies around him. To one who has been ‘up there’ it is obvious that there is no such thing as ‘getting used to combat.’ Each moment of it imposes a strain so great that men will break down in direct relation to the intensity and duration of their exposure. Thus psychiatric casualties are as inevitable as gun shot or shrapnel wounds in warfare.62

In response, Marshall ordered Research Branch to conduct a survey and produce a report. This was undertaken with the cooperation of the Neuropsychiatry Branch of the Surgeon General’s Office. The report of 1 October 1943, “Report B-66: Fear of German Weapons,” was based on responses to questions by over seven hundred enlisted men who had recently been evacuated from North Africa,
and indicated the complex nature of attitudes and the need for more than instinct as a guide to designing soldier training:

1. The German 88 mm. gun is considered by the men to be both the most frightening and most dangerous German weapon.
2. Men rate the dive bomber as the second most frightening weapon, despite the fact that they consider it relatively ineffective in inflicting casualties.
3. The light machine gun and rifle are seldom rated as most frightening or most dangerous weapons, although their effectiveness is shown by the fact that they account for a high proportion of the wounds among the men interviewed.
4. Only about half of the men say that combat experience reduced their fear of the weapon that was most frightening to them.
5. The proportion of men considering bombing most frightening decreases with increased combat experience, while the proportion fearing artillery increases.

Soldiers revealed, among other things, the counter-intuitive idea that factors other than what is most likely to hurt them accounted for their fear. The psychologists and sociologists of Research Branch acknowledged in the report that “To bring about some balance between the known effectiveness of weapons and the degree to which men fear them is a major problem of soldier training.” Recommendations for solving this problem included more training under live ammunition, training with captured enemy weapons, more training on protection from German weapons, discussions on fear, and more realistic combat simulations. Within six weeks of the release of Report B-66, the National Defense Research Council requested a copy of the report on behalf of the Navy, which was considering “the usefulness of battle noise equipment in the selection and training of Naval personnel.” So it went with the majority of Research Branch’s work—everyone wanted a copy. And, as intuition and instinct gave way to research and analysis, morale and performance improved.
In April and May of 1944, Research Branch questioned 454 men for Survey Number S-126, “Psychoneurotic Survey.” The survey included men in the 96th Station Hospital “that are not deemed curable in the European Theater of Operations, and are to be shipped back to the United States,” and “men from the 312th General Hospital who are less severe psychoneurotic cases.” Of these men, 189 had never seen combat. The survey began as most all of them did, with questions designed to obtain demographic data: age, education, marital status, time in and branch of army service, etc. Then the questions moved on to demographic inquiries that might bear on the problem of psychoneurosis in combat, such as birth order and employment history. For example, respondents were asked, “Before you came into the army, had you ever been fired or asked to resign from a job?” Other questions asked about their participation in “Blood Sports,” defined as “football, boxing, basketball…and any other vigorous sport involving bodily contact.” Bedwetting, fingernail biting, and fighting all figure in the survey, but most compelling are the questions on attitudes:

Of 454 respondents:

| Question 16: In general, what sort of a time do you have in the army? |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 62 1. I have a pretty good time in the army | 222 2. It’s about fifty-fifty | 154 3. I have a pretty rotten time | 16 0. No answer |

| Question 26: Do you think the things we are fighting for are worth risking your life for? |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 290 1. Yes. | 76 2. I think so, but I’m not sure. | 31 3. No | 42 4. Undecided |
| 15 0. No answer |

| Question 27: If it were up to you, what kind of outfit would you rather be in? |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 290 1. Yes. | 76 2. I think so, but I’m not sure. | 31 3. No | 42 4. Undecided |
| 15 0. No answer |
131 1. In a combat outfit overseas  
86 2. In a non-combat outfit overseas  
191 3. In an outfit that will stay in the United States  
46 0. No answer

Question 28: If it were up to you to choose, do you think you could do more for your country as a soldier or as a worker in a war job?

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>1. As a soldier</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>2. As a war worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>3. Undecided</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0. No answer</td>
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Question 29: If it were up to you, and you yourself had to decide, would you choose to be a soldier or a civilian?

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<tr>
<td>110</td>
<td>1. Would choose to be a soldier</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>2. Would choose to be a civilian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>3. Undecided</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0. No Answer.</td>
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What the Research Branch learned from this survey, among a great many other things, was that while 290 of 454 respondents thought that what they were fighting for was worth risking their lives, 260 of the same 454 would choose to be a civilian rather than a soldier, or not to risk their lives. Psychologists analyzing this particular survey determined that 175 of the soldiers surveyed were normal, while 279 were psychoneurotic. These kinds of findings would typically translate into propaganda on these issues through Army newspapers and films, including *Stars & Stripes* and Frank Capra’s *Why We Fight* pictures, and Research Branch would conduct follow up surveys to determine the effectiveness of this propaganda in reshaping soldier attitudes. (The findings have also translated, well over fifty years later, into techniques for the prevention and treatment of what has come to be known as post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.)

In addition to issue-specific reports, Research Branch also published during the war sixteen summaries of their findings. Much as *The American Soldier* is a post-war summary of the many diverse
surveys and studies conducted by Research Branch, “What the Soldier Thinks” reports were monthly summaries during the war of Research Branch’s work. These reports provided commanders and higher level staffs with information on soldier attitudes—what today would be called “actionable intelligence.” The first issue was published in December 1943, and included a primer on morale, an article about the relationship between fighting spirit and physical conditioning, and a comforting re-affirmation of the old saw that busy soldiers are happy soldiers. Commanders read that the purpose of the report was “that of bringing to officers concerned information of practical value in maintaining the morale and the fighting efficiency of troops under their command.” For doubters, and those comfortable with their own ability to monitor their soldiers’ morale through intuition, the report offered the explanation that “studies of soldier attitudes reported here are based on the statistical analysis of replies made anonymously to questions asked of thousands of soldiers in overseas theaters in [sic] Continental United States. Such factual evidence is more representative—and therefore more generally applicable—than the personal impressions of even the most experienced and able officer-observers.”

The final issue of “What the Soldier Thinks,” dated September 1945, considered such issues as “The Point Discharge Plan in Operation,” and “Things Combat Soldiers Would Change in the Army.” Twenty-one percent of soldiers surveyed thought the point discharge plan was very good, while forty-nine percent called it “fairly good.” Only eight percent thought it “not good at all.” As for things combat soldiers would change in the Army, the leading desire was for “some form of relief from the hard grind of combat.” The other major desired change was for “better relations between officers and enlisted men.” This final issue of “What the Soldier Thinks” printed that the men wanted “officers to be one of the men and not a dictator who treats a man that is fighting like a dog.” Changes in policy during the war clearly indicate that at least some officers were reading and reacting to what was reported in “What the Soldier Thinks.” Although few of these officers would have been likely to pick up the heavy
tomes of *The American Soldier*, even if these had been available during the war, they did, despite their suspicions, read “What the Soldier Thinks.”

After the war, academia, business, and government took full advantage of the Research Branch’s labours. The GI Bill, which granted veterans affordable housing and educational benefits, was based upon Research Branch findings. Scholars, executives, and government officials began to speak of human and social engineering, at first as a means to avoid future wars, and later as a means for better education, business, race relations, and government. Those who had worked with the Research Branch in World War II took up prominent positions in universities, business, and government, from which they kept in touch with each other and exerted a major influence of post-war psychology and sociology. Seemingly everyone wanted Stouffer’s opinion on how to analyze attitudes and opinions, from pollster Elmo Roper to Standard Oil. Often, retailers would conduct their own studies, and then refer them to Stouffer for comment. One of the more interesting of these was a detailed study by Schlitz in 1958 on the demographics, psychology, and preferences of American beer drinkers. But as the US military left World War II behind and headed toward conflicts such as Vietnam, Stouffer’s work seemed to resonate less and less with them, although he was often asked for his opinion. Among his many projects for the military were consultations in 1954 on the Vietnam Area Study, and extensive work on Project Revere, an analysis of the effectiveness of propaganda leaflets. Beyond his activities for the military, Stouffer in 1955 published what many believe to be his most influential work, *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties*. Again using survey research, Stouffer demonstrated that the average American was much less concerned with communism than the demagogue Senator Eugene McCarthy wanted people to believe. For his pains, Stouffer received special attention from J. Edgar Hoover of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and had to show cause to retain his security clearance. Shortly before his death in 1960, Stouffer was in Puerto Rico conducting research
on population control, and only the swift progress of the cancer that
killed him forced him to leave his work behind.72

Stouffer conducted his post-war work from Harvard’s Labora-

tory of Social Relations, of which he had been appointed founding
director in 1946. In addition to his many other duties and consulting
projects, he chaired the Joint Committee of the National Research
Council and Social Science Research Council, which continued to
refine the survey research techniques he had employed to produce
*The American Soldier.*73 In 1953, he served as the President of the
American Sociological Association (ASA), and delivered the cus-
tomary annual address. Unsurprisingly, he chose for his subject
“Measurement in Sociology.” He asked his audience to consider “the
place of measurement in the process of invention in sociology itself,
as a special case of the general working of invention in technology
and science.” He further asked, “If students of culture do not examine
their own discipline as a specimen of culture, who else will do it bet-
ter?” Clearly, he believed that sociology was a science. He spoke of
“quantitative methods” and sociology’s ability to “measure interac-
tions.” Nevertheless, he concluded his address by acknowledging the
value of philosophy and art to sociology, and stated that the best so-
ciological work is done by that sociologist or team of specialists who
can combine philosophical, artistic, and scientific methods. His pre-
diction for the future of sociology was a bright one, ending with the
phrase, “I bid you welcome into a brave new world.”74

That summer at Berkeley in 1953, however, Stouffer was not
content with simply giving an address, and what he did there demon-
strates one of the dozens of reasons he has remained such an influen-
tial figure in sociology. Prior to the conference, he had asked each of
the living former presidents of the ASA to record a two-minute mes-
sage to “a young PhD just launching his or her sociological career.”
The audience then heard from many of the scholars who had founded
and formed American sociology. Among them were Emory S. Bo-
gardus, Leonard S. Cottrell, Henry Pratt Fairchild, Ellsworth Faris,
John L. Gillin, George A. Lundberg, Howard W. Odum, William
Fielding Ogburn, Talcott Parsons, and Rupert B. Vance. Their com-
ments, which were duly recorded in the *American Sociological Review*, provide a brief but comprehensive background of the state of the art of sociology in and around the period in which *The American Soldier* was written, and clearly show the rise of survey research within the sociological community.75

Among the contributions of *The American Soldier* that have had a continuing influence on sociology is the concept of relative deprivation. Stouffer calls this idea “simple, almost obvious.” According to Stouffer’s definition, the comprehension of sacrifice felt by soldiers in taking on the role was “greater for some than for others, depending on their standards of comparison.” He noted that the idea was related to “well known sociological concepts,” such as “‘social frame of reference,’ ‘patterns of expectation,’ or ‘definitions of situation.’”76 Relative deprivation was an idea with far-reaching implications. Sociologist Robert K. Merton developed the idea further in his *Social Theory and Social Structure* (1949), as did R.G. Runciman in his *Relative Deprivation and Social Justice* (1966).77 Relative deprivation is not the only concept Stouffer developed for sociology. In the late 1930s he formulated the idea of “intervening opportunities” in migration, which considered the effect of en route as well as destination opportunities and their effect on American migration patterns.78

But the most important legacy of Samuel A. Stouffer is his contribution to survey research. The practice of digging through census records for demographic information and social conclusions was to transform into a systematic method of asking specific questions to answer specific problems—survey research—largely due to the efforts of Samuel A. Stouffer.79

Stouffer, like many in the “soft sciences” of his day, was doing what he could to “harden” his discipline into a “proper” science. Happily, his grounding in the liberal arts, particularly his graduate work in English and his experience as a newspaper editor never left him. His lectures were peppered with both Shakespearean quotations and baseball statistics, making his work both enjoyable and accessible. He also maintained a keen sense of history and geography. Much
of his summer vacation time was devoted to travelling with his family. He wanted his children to see every state capital, and when he visited the Tower of London he told them, with some relish, of the beheadings and imprisonments that had taken place there. He also ensured that his children had a good sense of sociological problems in the United States, sometimes taking them to the South to visit the segregation of the Jim Crow region first hand, and other times allowing them to accompany him as he did his field work.80

Part of the value, then, of *The American Soldier* is the voice in which it was written, its clear, simple prose, free of bureaucratic or scientific jargon. Stouffer also, refreshingly, was quick in *The American Soldier* to explain his survey and research methods and to point out their limitations. All of his written work reads as if it was written, not by a man striving to be a scientist, but rather by a man wanting to convey complex ideas elegantly. Stouffer’s voice is an eminently human voice, and a reflection of his personal life as well as his professional education.

“What an empiricist he was!” sociologist Herbert H. Hyman wrote of Stouffer in a 1962 *Public Opinion Quarterly* article. Hyman wrote that, unfortunately, even Stouffer’s writings are “too pallid a representation” of Stouffer’s style. “How passionately Sam could attack a table, or an IBM machine, and not only in the darkest hours of night, but all through the next day as well.”81 Howard Schuman, a sociology professor at the University of Michigan and a student of Stouffer at Harvard, dedicated two of his books to the chief author of *The American Soldier*: “Stouffer had a firm belief in the value of survey research, but at the same time a commitment to understanding its limitations and developing its potential so that it could be used more wisely for both practical and theoretical ends.”82

A chain smoker who ended most of his working days covered in chalk dust and ashes, Stouffer had his faults and foibles, but he is generally remembered as affable, warm, and possessed of a restless energy that never seemed to fail him. He held himself and those around him to high standards, was deeply interested in the education of his children, and was, in that hackneyed phrase, the consummate
professional. James Davis, of the University of Chicago’s National Opinion Research Center and a former student of Stouffer’s, remembered him as looking “a bit like the men who played fussy bookkeepers in 1930’s screwball comedies,” and lacking “the combination of paternalism and narcissism that motivates the Great Man. Sam simply wanted to get on with the job….but Sam was a great sociologist.”

This, then, was the diminutive man who stepped off the train and into World War II Washington that hot, muggy summer day in 1941.

Modern social historians are deeply interested in identity and how it develops. But “identity,” notes historian Wayne E. Lee, “as many historians have discovered, is a funny thing. It is simultaneously defined by the self and the observer—usually not in the same way.” Hollywood and scores of books have co-opted the identity of the soldier and, in the United States particularly, the identity of the World War II American soldier. Modern Homers film or write, basing their findings largely on letters and diaries, recruiting posters, oral histories, and heroic and moving Norman Rockwell paintings which depict the ideal, rather than the reality, of warfare in American life. Their efforts do indeed add to the body of knowledge, but they tend to minister to modern demands for two-dimensional caricatures of soldiers as either heroes or villains. Neither of these is found in the pages of The American Soldier, but rather human beings caught up in events well beyond their control, reacting and developing attitudes that are full of ambiguity and nuance.

Stouffer was a kind of circular conduit for soldiers, gathering their attitudes and using the data to influence policies about soldiers. Their attitudes were their identities, and he returned their identities to them with policy. Stouffer was asking, in as scientific a way as he knew, how soldiers interpret their own experience. He was, in a very real and verifiable way, the best and most informed advocate of their identities as they saw them. Here, then, is the value of Stouffer’s work, and a better understanding of the American World War II GI should, it seems, begin here. Soldier attitudes and Stouffer’s work with them helped to shape modern sociology, a contribution most of
them would have been oblivious to, but that was no less real for it. Were this not the case, a reference to Stouffer and *The American Soldier* would not appear on the second page of a Strategic Studies Institute Report of July 2003 on combat motivation in Iraq. Samuel A. Stouffer and *The American Soldier* are heavy skeins indeed in the weave of modern American sociology, military history, and the creation of the American soldier.
Notes

1 Samuel A. Stouffer, “Notes on Arrival in Washington DC.” Samuel Stouffer’s Private papers in the possession of Mrs. Jane Williams, daughter of Samuel Stouffer, Wicomico Church, Virginia [hereafter Jane Williams collection].


3 Stouffer Correspondence 1946-1960, Harvard University Archives, Pusey Library, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

4 Letter from George C. Marshall, President, American Red Cross, to Frederick Osborn, 7 April 1950, Stouffer Papers, HUG FP 31.6, Box 1, Harvard University Archives.


6 Letter from Frank Stanton (CBS) to William Benton (Encyclopedia Britannica), 17 June 1944, Jane Williams collection.

7 Michael Howard, Captain Professor: A Life in War and Peace (London: Continuum, 2006), 130.

8 “In the event of remobilization of research functions,” reads a hastily typed 1955 memo in the files of the National Archives, “valuable counsel, based on pase [sic] experience with attitude assessment among military personnel, should be sought from the following.” (Untitled Memorandum, 17 November 1955. Record Group 330, Entry 89, Box 970, (Secretary of Defense) Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Personnel & Reserve) Research Division Historical File, 1941- June 1955, Justification for Research Division to Thursday Reports. National Archives of the United States, College Park, Maryland.) The list of names recorded was short and distinguished, but could have been longer. It included Stouffer, who had gone to Harvard to found and direct the Laboratory of Social Relations, Leland C. DeVinney, Acting Director of the Social Sciences at the Rockefeller Foundation, Charles Dollard, President of the Carnegie Corporation, Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., Secretary and Director of Research at the Russell Sage Foundation, Carl I. Hovland, Sterling Professor of Psychology at Yale and founding director of the Yale Communication and Attitude Change Program, and William W. McPeak, Vice President of the Ford Foundation. Though short, the list was representative of the post-war positions and influence of the sociologists and psychologists who had worked with Stouffer in Research Branch. Eight Research Branch alumni served as president of the American Sociological Association. Veterans of Research Branch maintained contact with one another, often served as advisors and consultants for the Department of Defense, and from their universities, government positions, foundations, or businesses, exerted a considerable influence on the military and sociology. The American Soldier was similarly influential within profes-

The ASA presidents were Kimball Young (1945), Samuel A. Stouffer (1953), Donald Young (1955), Robert K. Merton (1957), Robin M. Williams, Jr. (1958), Paul F. Lazarsfeld (1962), Philip M. Hauser (1968), and Arnold M. Rose (1969). See also Ellen Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology: Political Culture in the Age of Experts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 126-128, and John A. Clausen, “The American Soldier as a Career Contingency,” *Social Psychology Quarterly* 47, no. 2 (June 1984): 207-213: “The division in which the [Research] Branch was located was headed by General Frederick Osborne, [sic] who…had been President of the Carnegie Corporation. He knew leading figures in the Social Science Research Council and recruited a number of them to serve in other parts of the Information and Education Division. The result was that those fortunate enough to be working in the Research Branch had both an extraordinarily talented group of mentors and consultants and an extraordinary set of ties that would open doors and facilitate access to a wide variety of opportunities. As Nathan Maccoby put it: ‘The Research Branch not only established one of the best old-boy (or girl) networks ever, but an alumnus of the Branch had an open door to most relevant jobs and career lines. We were a lucky bunch.’”


10 Ibid., 29-30.

11 Still, many historians have embraced Stouffer’s work as critical to their own. Few historians writing about American soldiers in the Second World War fail to include *The American Soldier* in their bibliographies, and some have found it critical to their arguments about the identity of World War II GIs. Among the examples are Lee Kennett, *G.I: The American Soldier in World War II* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1987); Gerald F. Linderman, *The World Within War: America’s Combat Experience in World War II* (New York: The Free Press, 1997); and Michael D. Doubler, *Closing with the Enemy: How GIs Fought the War in Europe, 1944-1945* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1994). Perhaps more significantly, Sir John Keegan, one of the world’s foremost historians, included *The American Soldier* in the bibliography of his landmark *The Face of Battle*. This book, more than any other in the twentieth century, directed the attention of military historians away from general officers and manoeuvres, and on to soldiers and their behaviour. If one recognizes that attitudes often govern behaviour, the next stop for the historian of American soldiers in World War II is *The American Soldier*. The most comprehensive use of Stouffer by a sociologist/historian can be found in Jean M. Converse’s masterful *Survey Research in the United States: Roots and Emergence, 1890-1960* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987).


Frederick H. Osborn Papers, Part II, page 16. The misspelling of Stouffer’s name by the typist is understandable. Osborn would have pronounced it that way. Stouffer insisted on that pronunciation, and would say “Stouffer, as in louse.” The pronunciation is one example of his self-effacing humour.

Frederick H. Osborn Papers, Part II, 17.

Ibid., 17.


Newton D. Baker, *Frontiers of Freedom* (New York: George H. Doran, 1918), 94. Another guidepost for the World War II US Army was the experience with the Civilian Conservation Corps during the American Depression. While the emphasis in World War I was on keeping prostitutes and liquor away from soldiers, the great concern of World War II was understanding soldier attitudes so the government could keep them content and fighting.


Ideas are elusive and difficult to trace. Stouffer was perhaps unaware that Machiavelli (1469-1527) showed considerable interest in attitudes in both *The Prince* and *The Art of War*. He may not have known that Marshal of France Maurice de Saxe (1649-1750) ruminated at length on how to handle soldiers in his *Reveries on the Art of War*, that Napoleon’s chief surgeon Dominique Jean Larrey (1766-1842) made several observations on soldier attitudes, or that Sydnam Poyntz (circa 1607-?), Benjamin Harris (circa 1781-?), Adrien J.B.F. Bourgogne (1785-1867), William Siborne (1797-1842), and Jakob Walter (1788-1864) all left memoirs and diaries that reflect, albeit through the refraction of memory, their attitudes as soldiers. He may or may not have read the memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant or Robert E. Lee, and it is likely that he had not, as his recreational reading tended toward Mickey Spillane, Shakespeare, and *Sherlock Holmes*. He also probably missed Benjamin Apthorp Gould’s *Investigations in the Military and Anthropological Statistics of American Soldiers* (1869), and although Colonel Ardent du Picq’s (1819-1870) *Études sur le combat*, perhaps the first modern work that would fit nicely next to *The American Soldier* on a library shelf, was translated into English in 1920, there is no evidence that Stouffer read it, in French or English.


Shirley Phillips, *Sac City Iowa*, 16.

Interview with Mrs. Jane Williams, Samuel A. Stouffer’s daughter, Wicomico Church, Virginia, 4 September 2007.


“Bridgeman, Stouffer Disagree About International Role of Social Science,” *The Harvard Crimson* 120, no. 61, 21 April 1948, 1.

Transcripts courtesy of the Registrar and Alumni Relations of Morningside College, Sioux City, Iowa.


Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology*, 24-25. See also Stouffer, “Notes on Arrival in Washington DC.”


Stouffer, “Notes on Arrival in Washington DC.”


Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology*, 68.

Stouffer et al., *Studies in Social Psychology in World War II*, vol. II, *The American Soldier: Combat and Its Aftermath*, 655-675. Sociologists Andrew Abbott and James Sparrow have pointed out the confusing nomenclature of the work: “The studies commonly known as The American Soldier were in fact issued by Princeton University Press in four separate volumes whose official series title is *Studies in Social Psychology in World War II*. Of these four volumes, the first two share the main title The American Soldier, the first being subtitled Adjustment during Army Life and the second Combat and Its Aftermath. Historical convention has generalized the main title of these first two volumes to the whole series. Volume 3 is actually titled *Experiments on Mass Communication* and volume 4 *Measurement and Prediction*.” See Andrew Abbott and James Sparrow, “Hot War, Cold War: The Structures of Sociological Action, 1940-1955,” in *Sociology in Amer-


44 Stouffer’s advisor was Ellsworth Faris (1874-1953), himself a psychologist (PhD, University of Chicago, 1914). While Stouffer as a scholar tells us much about sociology, Faris tells us much about the permeability of disciplinary walls in his time. Although by education a psychologist, he served as both editor of the American Journal of Sociology and President of the American Sociological Association. See Robert E.L. Faris, Chicago Sociology: 1920-1932 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 158.

45 Samuel A. Stouffer, “Experimental Comparison of Statistical and Case History Methods of Attitude Research” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1930), 64.


47 University of Chicago, Summer Quarter Time Schedule, 1930, 9. University of Chicago Special Collections Research Center, ARC Ref. 1, LD 909.

48 Faris, Chicago Sociology, 156, 159.


51 Herbert H. Hyman, “Stouffer, Samuel Andrew,” in Dictionary of American Biography, 1956-1960, ed. John A. Garraty, supplement six (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1980), 605. Stouffer’s work on the Myrdal study is relatively unknown, but, according to Myrdal, it was critical. Myrdal himself returned to Sweden upon the German invasion of Norway in 1940, leaving Stouffer as director of the project, which Stouffer completed as the Battle of Britain began in September, 1940.


53 Stouffer began his work in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Wisconsin in 1930 as a part-time assistant professor of social statistics. Upon his return from London in 1932, he took on full-time duties there, and was promoted to full professor in 1934. He taught undergraduate and graduate courses in social statistics, statistical methods in social psychology, statistics in population research, and statistical research in social pathology. While Stouffer was at Wisconsin, an organization connected to the Rockefeller Foundation attempted to hire him at a much larger salary than he was earning there, which resulted in his immediate promotion to full professor. This would not be the last time Stouffer was
offered lucrative positions in the private sector. He left Wisconsin in 1935 to take up a professorship at the University of Chicago, which he held until his 1946 move to Harvard. University of Wisconsin Archives and Records Management: Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin – General Announcement of Courses, 1933-34. Prospective Candidates for Professor of Statistics, 1926-37, Series 7/33/1-1, Box 1, Department of Sociology, General Files, Correspondence. College of Letters and Science, Administration (Dean’s Office), General Correspondence, George C. Sellery, 1935-36 R-Z, folder R 1935-36.

54 Stouffer, “Notes on Arrival in Washington DC.”
55 Ibid.
63 Fear of German Weapons: Based on A Survey of Enlisted Men Recently Evacuated from North Africa. Joint Study by Neuropsychiatry Branch, Surgeon General’s Office and Research Branch, Special Services Division Army Service Forces, War Department Washington, DC, 1 October 1943, 1, 12-13. Record


When Stouffer left the Research Branch and World War II Records were closed out, many of the original punch cards and survey questionnaires were turned over to the Roper Center. The University of Virginia Library has subsequently made them available online at http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/amso/docs/amsoS-126cbook.txt (18 February 2008).

For a comprehensive overview of the structure and findings of *The American Soldier*, see Paul Lazarsfeld, “The American Soldier - An Expository Review,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 13, no. 3 (Fall 1949).


Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology*, 127. Some in sociology continued to regard survey research as something of a “renegade” discipline, but it is clear that after the war, survey research had come to stay.

The Papers of Samuel Andrew Stouffer. HUG (FP) 31.6. Harvard University Archives.

Clellan S. Ford to Samuel A. Stouffer, Samuel Andrew Stouffer Correspondence 1953-1960, Box 27: Guttman, Louis – J HUG (FP) 31.6, and Charles Winick to Samuel A. Stouffer, Samuel Andrew Stouffer Correspondence 1953-1960, Box 32: Correspondence: S – W, HUG (FP) 31.6. Harvard University Archives.


See Herbert H. Hyman, “Samuel A. Stouffer and Social Research,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 26, no. 3 (Autumn, 1962): 327. “As an empirical social researcher, young Sam had a rough life. In his early career, when he had already begun to employ multivariate analysis, the large scale sample survey had hardly set up in business. Now, it is easy for a young man. Back then, one couldn’t just manufacture the data appropriate to a problem by conducting a new survey. Whatever was available had to be converted to one’s needs, and this meant digging into neglected archives in the U.S. Census, or somewhere in Massachusetts, or even in Australia. Then one had to transform what one found into the appropriate indices to suit the problem and, simultaneously, modify or translate the problem to suit the data. From such hardship comes the gifted empiricist who has a mind well-stocked with data accumulated by others and who can think cleverly. This was the intellectual capital one needed in those days. Now, by contrast, the only capital one needs is money to finance a new survey, and that is not much of a problem in our affluent society.”

Interview with Ann Bisconti-Stouffer-Dyke, daughter of Samuel A. Stouffer, Washington DC, 7 August 2006, and Williams interviews. “Jim Crow” was a comedic character in nineteenth and early-twentieth-century American minstrel shows, often portrayed by a white man who had blackened his face. His name has become synonymous with American racial segregation.


