

= Smedley Butler =

Smedley Darlington Butler (July 30 , 1881 ? June 21 , 1940) was a United States Marine Corps major general , the highest rank authorized at that time , and at the time of his death the most decorated Marine in U.S. history . During his 34 @-@ year career as a Marine , he participated in military actions in the Philippines , China , in Central America and the Caribbean during the Banana Wars , and France in World War I. Butler is well known for having later become an outspoken critic of U.S. wars and their consequences , as well as exposing the Business Plot , an alleged plan to overthrow the U.S. government .

By the end of his career , Butler had received 16 medals , five for heroism . He is one of 19 men to receive the Medal of Honor twice , one of three to be awarded both the Marine Corps Brevet Medal and the Medal of Honor , and the only Marine to be awarded the Brevet Medal and two Medals of Honor , all for separate actions .

In 1933 , he became involved in a controversy known as the Business Plot , when he told a congressional committee that a group of wealthy industrialists were planning a military coup to overthrow Franklin D. Roosevelt , with Butler selected to lead a march of veterans to become dictator , similar to other Fascist regimes at that time . The individuals involved all denied the existence of a plot and the media ridiculed the allegations . A final report by a special House of Representatives Committee confirmed some of Butler 's testimony .

In 1935 , Butler wrote a book entitled War Is a Racket , where he described and criticized the workings of the United States in its foreign actions and wars , such as those he was a part of , including the American corporations and other imperialist motivations behind them . After retiring from service , he became a popular activist , speaking at meetings organized by veterans , pacifists , and church groups in the 1930s .

= = Early life = =

Smedley Butler was born July 30 , 1881 , in West Chester , Pennsylvania , the eldest of three sons . His parents , Thomas and Maud (née Darlington) Butler , were descended from local Quaker families . Both of his parents were of entirely English ancestry , all of which had been in what is now the United States since the 1600s . His father was a lawyer , a judge and , for 31 years , a Congressman and chair of the House Naval Affairs Committee during the Harding and Coolidge administrations . His maternal grandfather was Smedley Darlington , a Republican Congressman from 1887 to 1891 .

Butler attended the West Chester Friends Graded High School , followed by The Haverford School , a secondary school popular with sons of upper @-@ class Philadelphia families . A Haverford athlete , he became captain of its baseball team and quarterback of its football team . Against the wishes of his father , he left school 38 days before his seventeenth birthday to enlist in the Marine Corps during the Spanish ? American War . Nevertheless , Haverford awarded him his high school diploma on June 6 , 1898 , before the end of his final year ; his transcript stated he completed the Scientific Course " with Credit " .

= = Military career = =

= = = Spanish ? American War = = =

In the anti @-@ Spanish war fervor of 1898 , Butler lied about his age to receive a direct commission as a Marine second lieutenant . He trained in Washington D.C. at the Marine Barracks on the corner of 8th and I Streets . In July 1898 , he went to Guantánamo Bay , Cuba , arriving shortly after its invasion and capture . His company soon returned to the U.S. and after a short break , he was assigned to the armored cruiser USS New York for four months . He came home to be mustered out of service in February 1899 , but on 8 April 1899 , he accepted a commission as a

first lieutenant in the Marine Corps .

= = = Philippine ? American War = = =

The Marine Corps sent him to Manila , Philippines . On garrison duty with little to do , Butler turned to alcohol to relieve the boredom . He once became drunk and was temporarily relieved of command after an unspecified incident in his room .

In October 1899 , he saw his first combat action when he led 300 Marines to take the town of Noveleta , from Filipino rebels known as Insurrectos . In the initial moments of the assault , his first sergeant was wounded . Butler briefly panicked , but quickly regained his composure and led his Marines in pursuit of the fleeing enemy . By noon the Marines had dispersed the rebels and taken the town . One Marine had been killed and ten were wounded . Another 50 Marines had been incapacitated by the humid tropical heat .

After the excitement of this combat , garrison duty again became routine . Butler had a very large Eagle , Globe , and Anchor tattoo made which started at his throat and extended to his waist . He also met Littleton Waller , a fellow Marine with whom he maintained a lifelong friendship . When Waller received command of a company in Guam , he was allowed to select five officers to take with him ; he chose Butler . Before they had departed , their orders were changed and they were sent to China aboard the USS Solace to help put down the Boxer Rebellion .

= = = Boxer Rebellion = = =

Once in China , Butler was initially deployed at Tientsin . He took part in the Battle of Tientsin on July 13 , 1900 and in the subsequent Gaselee Expedition , during which he saw the mutilated remains of Japanese soldiers . When he saw another Marine officer fall wounded , he climbed out of a trench to rescue him . Butler was then himself shot in the thigh . Another Marine helped him get to safety , but also was shot . Despite his leg wound , Butler assisted the wounded officer to the rear . Four enlisted men would receive the Medal of Honor in the battle . Butler 's commanding officer , Major Littleton W. T. Waller , personally commended him and wrote that " for such reward as you may deem proper the following officers : Lieutenant Smedley D. Butler , for the admirable control of his men in all the fights of the week , for saving a wounded man at the risk of his own life , and under a very severe fire . " Commissioned officers were not then eligible to receive the Medal of Honor , and Butler instead received a promotion to captain by brevet while he recovered in the hospital , two weeks before his nineteenth birthday .

He was eligible for the Marine Corps Brevet Medal when it was created in 1921 , and was one of only 20 Marines to receive it . His citation reads :

The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure in transmitting to First Lieutenant Smedley Darlington Butler , United States Marine Corps , the Brevet Medal which is awarded in accordance with Marine Corps Order No. 26 (1921) , for distinguished conduct and public service in the presence of the enemy while serving with the Second Battalion of Marines , near Tientsin , China , on 13 July 1900 . On 28 March 1901 , First Lieutenant Butler is appointed Captain by brevet , to take rank from 13 July 1900 .

= = = The Banana Wars = = =

Butler participated in a series of occupations , police actions , and interventions by the United States in Central America and the Caribbean , commonly called the Banana Wars because their goal was to protect American commercial interests in the region , particularly those of the United Fruit Company . This company had significant financial stakes in the production of bananas , tobacco , sugar cane , and other products throughout the Caribbean , Central America and the northern portions of South America . The U.S. was also trying to advance its own political interests by maintaining its influence in the region and especially its control of the Panama Canal . These interventions started with the Spanish ? American War in 1898 and ended with the withdrawal of

troops from Haiti and President Franklin D. Roosevelt 's Good Neighbor Policy in 1934 . After his retirement , Butler became an outspoken critic of the business interests in the Caribbean , criticizing the ways in which U.S. businesses and Wall Street bankers imposed their agenda on United States foreign policy during this period .

= = = = Honduras = = = =

In 1903 , Butler was stationed in Puerto Rico on Culebra Island . Hearing rumors of a Honduran revolt , the United States government ordered his unit and a supporting naval detachment to sail to Honduras , 1 @, @ 500 miles (2 @, @ 414 km) to the west , to defend the U.S. Consulate in Honduras . Using a converted banana boat renamed the Panther , Butler and several hundred Marines landed at the port town of Puerto Cortés . In a letter home , he described the action : they were " prepared to land and shoot everybody and everything that was breaking the peace " , but instead found a quiet town . The Marines re @-@ boarded the Panther and continued up the coast line looking for rebels at several towns , but found none .

When they arrived at Trujillo , however , they heard gunfire , and came upon a battle in progress that had been waged for 55 hours between rebels called Bonillista and Honduran government soldiers at a local fort . At the sight of the Marines , the fighting ceased and Butler led a detachment of Marines to the American consulate , where he found the consul , wrapped in an American flag , hiding among the floor beams . As soon as the Marines left the area with the shaken consul , the battle resumed and the Bonillistas soon controlled the government . During this expedition Butler earned the first of his nicknames , " Old Gimlet Eye " . It was attributed to his feverish , bloodshot eyes ? he was suffering from some unnamed tropic fever at the time ? which enhanced his penetrating and bellicose stare .

= = = = Marriage and business = = = =

After the Honduran campaign , Butler returned to Philadelphia . He married Ethel Conway Peters of Philadelphia in Bay Head , New Jersey , on June 30 , 1905 . His best man at the wedding was his former commanding officer in China , Lieutenant Colonel Littleton W. T. Waller . The couple eventually had three children : a daughter , Ethel Peters Butler (Mrs. John Wehle) , and two sons , Smedley Darlington , Jr. and Thomas Richard .

Butler was next assigned to garrison duty in the Philippines , where he once launched a resupply mission across the stormy waters of Subic Bay after his isolated outpost ran out of rations . In 1908 , he was diagnosed as having a nervous breakdown and received nine months sick leave which he spent at home . He successfully managed a coal mine in West Virginia , but returned to active duty in the Marine Corps at the first opportunity .

= = = = Central America = = = =

From 1909 to 1912 , Butler served in Nicaragua , enforcing U.S. policy , and once again led his battalion to the relief of a rebel @-@ besieged city , this time Granada , and again , with a 104 @-@ degree fever . In December 1909 , he commanded the 3d Battalion , 1st Marine Regiment , on the Isthmus of Panama . On August 11 , 1912 , he was temporarily detached to command an expeditionary battalion with which he participated in the Battle of Masaya on September 19 , 1912 and the bombardment , assault and capture of Coyotepe Hill , Nicaragua in October 1912 . He remained in Nicaragua until November 1912 , when he rejoined the Marines of 3d Battalion , 1st Marine Regiment , at Camp Elliott , Panama .

= = = = Veracruz , Mexico , and first Medal of Honor = = = =

Butler and his family were living in Panama in January 1914 when he was ordered to report as the Marine officer of a battleship squadron massing off the coast of Mexico , near Veracruz , to monitor

a revolutionary movement . He did not like leaving his family and the home they had established in Panama and he intended to request orders home as soon as he determined he was not needed .

On March 1 , 1914 , Butler and Navy Lieutenant (later Admiral) Frank Fletcher went ashore in Veracruz and made their way to Jalapa , Mexico and back . A purpose of the trip was to allow Butler and Fletcher to discuss the details of a future expedition into Mexico . Fletcher 's plan required Butler to make his way into the country and develop a more detailed invasion plan while inside its borders . It was a spy mission and Butler was enthusiastic to get started . When Admiral Fletcher explained the plan to the commanders in Washington , D.C. , they agreed to it . Butler was given the go @-@ ahead . He entered Mexico and made his way to the U.S. Consulate in Mexico City , posing as a railroad official named " Mr. Johnson " . He and the chief railroad inspector scoured the city , saying they were searching for a lost railroad employee ; there was no lost employee , and in fact the employee they said was lost never existed . The ruse gave Butler access to various areas of the city . In the process of the so @-@ called search , they located weapons in use by the Mexican army , and determined the sizes of units and states of readiness . They updated maps and verified the railroad lines for use in an impending US invasion . On March 7 , 1914 , he returned to Veracruz with the information he had gathered and presented it to his commanders . The invasion plan was eventually scrapped when authorities loyal to Victoriano Huerta detained a small American naval landing party in Tampico , Mexico , which became known as the Tampico Affair .

When President Woodrow Wilson discovered that an arms shipment was about to arrive in Mexico , he sent a contingent of Marines and sailors to Veracruz to intercept it on April 21 , 1914 . Over the next few days , street fighting and sniper fire posed a threat to Butler 's force , but a door @-@ to @-@ door search rooted out most of the resistance . By April 26 , the landing force of 5 @,@ 800 Marines and sailors secured the city , which they held for the next six months . By the end of the conflict , the Americans reported 17 dead and 63 wounded and the Mexican forces had 126 dead and 195 wounded . After the actions at Veracruz , the United States decided to minimize the bloodshed and changed their plans from a full invasion of Mexico to simply maintaining the city of Veracruz . For his actions on April 22 , Butler was awarded his first Medal of Honor . The citation reads :

For distinguished conduct in battle , engagement of Vera Cruz , 22 April 1914 . Major Butler was eminent and conspicuous in command of his battalion . He exhibited courage and skill in leading his men through the action of the 22d and in the final occupation of the city .

After the occupation of Veracruz , many military personnel received the Medal of Honor , an unusually high number that diminished somewhat the prestige of the award . The Army presented one , nine went to Marines and 46 were bestowed upon Navy personnel . During World War I , Butler , then a major , attempted to return his Medal , explaining he had done nothing to deserve it . The medal was returned with orders to keep it and to wear it as well .

= = = = Haiti and second Medal of Honor = = = =

In 1915 , members of the populace killed the Haitian president Vilbrun Guillaume Sam . In response , the United States ordered the USS Connecticut to Haiti with Major Butler and a group of Marines on board . On October 24 , 1915 , an estimated 400 Cacos ambushed Butler 's patrol of 44 mounted Marines when they approached Fort Dipitie . Surrounded by Cacos the Marines maintained their perimeter throughout the night . The next morning , they charged the much larger enemy force by breaking out in three directions . The startled Haitians fled . In early November Butler and a force of 700 Marines and sailors returned to the mountains to clear the area . At their temporary headquarters base at Le Trou they fought off an attack by about 100 Cacos . After the Americans took several other forts and ramparts during the following days , only Fort Rivière , an old French @-@ built stronghold atop Montagne Noire , was left .

For the operation , Butler was given three companies of Marines and some sailors from the USS Connecticut , about 100 men . They encircled the fort , and gradually closed in on it . Butler reached the fort from the southern side with the 15th Company and found a small opening in the wall . The Marines entered through the opening and engaged the Cacos in hand @-@ to @-@ hand combat .

Butler and the Marines took the rebel stronghold on November 17 , 1915 , an action for which he received his second Medal of Honor , as well as the Haitian Medal of Honor . The entire battle lasted less than twenty minutes . Only one Marine was injured in the assault when he was struck by a rock and lost two teeth . All 51 Haitians in the Fort were killed . Butler 's exploits impressed Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt , who recommended the award based upon Butler 's performance during the engagement . Once the medal was approved and presented in 1917 , Butler achieved the distinction , shared with Dan Daly , of being the only Marines to receive the Medal of Honor twice for separate actions . The citation reads :

For extraordinary heroism in action as Commanding Officer of detachments from the 5th , 13th , 23d Companies and the Marine and sailor detachment from the U.S.S. Connecticut , Major Butler led the attack on Fort Rivière , Haiti , 17 November 1915 . Following a concentrated drive , several different detachments of Marines gradually closed in on the old French bastion fort in an effort to cut off all avenues of retreat for the Caco bandits . Reaching the fort on the southern side where there was a small opening in the wall , Major Butler gave the signal to attack and Marines from the 15th Company poured through the breach , engaged the Cacos in hand @-@ to @-@ hand combat , took the bastion and crushed the Caco resistance . Throughout this perilous action , Major Butler was conspicuous for his bravery and forceful leadership .

Subsequently , as the initial organizer and commanding officer of the Gendarmerie d 'Haïti , the native police force , Butler established a record as a capable administrator . Under his supervision , social order , administered by the dictatorship , was largely restored and many vital public works projects were successfully completed . He recalled later that , during his time in Haiti , he and his troops " hunted the Cacos like pigs . "

= = = World War I = = =

During World War I Butler was , to his disappointment , not assigned to a combat command on the Western Front . He made several requests for a posting in France , writing letters to his personal friend , Wendell Cushing Neville . While Butler 's superiors considered him brave and brilliant , they described him as " unreliable . "

In October 1918 , he was promoted to the rank of brigadier general at the age of 37 and placed in command of Camp Pontanezen at Brest , France , a debarkation depot that funneled troops of the American Expeditionary Force to the battlefields . The camp had been unsanitary , overcrowded and disorganized . U.S. Secretary of War Newton Baker sent novelist Mary Roberts Rinehart to report on the camp . She later described how Butler tackled the sanitation problems . Butler began by solving the problem of mud : " [T] he ground under the tents was nothing but mud , [so] he had raided the wharf at Brest of the duckboards no longer needed for the trenches , carted the first one himself up that four @-@ mile hill to the camp , and thus provided something in the way of protection for the men to sleep on . " General John J. Pershing authorized a duckboard shoulder patch for the units . This earned Butler another nickname , " Old Duckboard . " For his exemplary service he was awarded both the Army Distinguished Service Medal and Navy Distinguished Service Medal and the French Order of the Black Star . The citation for the Army Distinguished Service Medal states :

The President of the United States of America , authorized by Act of Congress , July 9 , 1918 , takes pleasure in presenting the Army Distinguished Service Medal to Brigadier General Smedley Darlington Butler , United States Marine Corps , for exceptionally meritorious and distinguished services to the Government of the United States , in a duty of great responsibility during World War I. Brigadier General Butler commanded with ability and energy Pontanezen Camp at Brest during the time in which it has developed into the largest embarkation camp in the world . Confronted with problems of extraordinary magnitude in supervising the reception , entertainment and departure of the large numbers of officers and soldiers passing through this camp , he has solved all with conspicuous success , performing services of the highest character for the American Expeditionary Forces .

The citation for the Navy Distinguished Service Medal states :

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the Navy Distinguished

Service Medal to Brigadier General Smedley Darlington Butler , United States Marine Corps , for exceptionally meritorious and distinguished services in France , during World War I. Brigadier General Butler organized , trained and commanded the 13th Regiment Marines ; also the 5th Brigade of Marines . He commanded with ability and energy Camp Pontanezen at Brest during the time in which it has developed into the largest embarkation camp in the world . Confronted with problems of extraordinary magnitude in supervising the reception , entertainment and departure of large numbers of officers and soldiers passing through the camp , he has solved all with conspicuous success , performing services of the highest character for the American Expeditionary Forces .

Following the war , he became Commanding General of the Marine Barracks at Marine Corps Base Quantico , Virginia . At Quantico , he transformed the wartime training camp into a permanent Marine post . During a training exercise in western Virginia in 1921 , he was told by a local farmer that Stonewall Jackson 's arm was buried nearby , to which he replied , " Bosh ! I will take a squad of Marines and dig up that spot to prove you wrong ! " Butler found the arm in a box . He later replaced the wooden box with a metal one , and reburied the arm . He left a plaque on the granite monument marking the burial place of Jackson 's arm ; the plaque is no longer on the marker but can be viewed at the Chancellorsville Battlefield visitor 's center .

= = China and stateside service = = =

From 1927 to 1929 , Butler was commander of the Marine Expeditionary Force in China and , while there , cleverly parlayed his influence among various generals and warlords to the protection of U.S. interests , ultimately winning the public acclaim of contending Chinese leaders . When Butler returned to the United States in 1929 he was promoted to major general , becoming , at age 48 , the youngest major general of the Marine Corps . He directed the Quantico camp 's growth until it became the " showplace " of the Corps . Butler won national attention by taking thousands of his men on long field marches , many of which he led from the front , to Gettysburg and other Civil War battle sites , where they conducted large @-@ scale re @-@ enactments before crowds of distinguished spectators .

In 1931 , Butler violated diplomatic norms by publicly recounting gossip about Benito Mussolini in which the dictator allegedly struck and killed a child with his speeding automobile in a hit @-@ and @-@ run accident . The Italian government protested and President Hoover , who strongly disliked Butler , forced Secretary of the Navy Charles Francis Adams III to court @-@ martial him . Butler became the first general officer to be placed under arrest since the Civil War . He apologized to Secretary Adams and the court @-@ martial was canceled with only a reprimand .

= = Director of Public Safety = =

At the urging of Butler 's father , in 1924 , the newly elected mayor of Philadelphia W. Freeland Kendrick asked him to leave the Marines to become the Director of Public Safety , the official in charge of running the city 's police and fire departments . Philadelphia 's municipal government was notoriously corrupt and Butler initially refused . Kendrick asked President Calvin Coolidge to intervene . Coolidge contacted Butler and authorized him to take the necessary leave from the Corps . At the request of the President , Butler served in the post from January 1924 until December 1925 . He began his new job by assembling all 4 @,@ 000 of the city police into the Metropolitan Opera House in shifts to introduce himself and inform them that things would change while he was in charge . He replaced corrupt police officers and , in some cases , switched entire units from one part of the city to another , undermining local protection rackets and profiteering .

Within 48 hours of taking over , Butler organized raids on more than 900 speakeasies , ordering them padlocked and , in many cases , destroyed . In addition to raiding the speakeasies , he also attempted to eliminate other illegal activities : bootlegging , prostitution , gambling and police corruption . More zealous than he was political , he ordered crackdowns on the social elite 's favorite hangouts , such as the Ritz @-@ Carlton and the Union League , as well as on drinking

establishments that served the working class . Although he was effective in reducing crime and police corruption , he was a controversial leader . In one instance he made a statement that he would promote the first officer to kill a bandit and stated , " I don 't believe there is a single bandit notch on a policeman 's guns [sic] in this city , go out and get some . " Although many of the local citizens and police felt that the raids were just a show , the raids continued for several weeks .

He implemented programs to improve city safety and security . He established policies and guidelines of administration , and developed a Philadelphia police uniform that resembled that of the Marine Corps . Other changes included military @-@ style checkpoints into the city , bandit chasing squads armed with sawed @-@ off shotguns , and armored police cars . The press began reporting on the good and the bad aspects of Butler 's personal war on crime . The reports praised the new uniforms , the new programs and the reductions in crime but they also reflected the public 's negative opinion of their new Public Safety director . Many felt that he was being too aggressive in his tactics and resented the reductions in their civil rights , such as the stopping of citizens at the city checkpoints . Butler frequently swore in his radio addresses , causing many citizens to suggest his behavior , particularly his language , was inappropriate for someone of his rank and stature . Some even suggested Butler acted like a military dictator , even charging that he wrongfully used active @-@ duty Marines in some of his raids . Major R. A. Haynes , the federal Prohibition commissioner , visited the city in 1924 , six months after Butler was appointed . He announced that " great progress " had been made in the city and attributed that success to Butler .

Eventually Butler 's leadership style and the directness of actions undermined his support within the community . His departure seemed imminent . Mayor Kendrick reported to the press , " I had the guts to bring General Butler to Philadelphia and I have the guts to fire him . " Feeling that his duties in Philadelphia were coming to an end , Butler contacted General Lejeune to prepare for his return to the Marine Corps . Not all of the city felt he was doing a bad job , though , and when the news started to break that he would be leaving , people began to gather at the Academy of Music . A group of 4 @,@ 000 supporters assembled and negotiated a truce between him and the mayor to keep him in Philadelphia for a while longer , and the President authorized a one @-@ year extension for him .

Butler devoted much of his second year to executing arrest warrants , cracking down on crooked police and enforcing prohibition . On January 1 , 1926 , his leave from the Marine Corps ended and the President declined a request for a second extension . Butler received orders to report to San Diego and he prepared his family and his belongings for the new assignment . In light of his pending departure , Butler began to defy the Mayor and other key city officials . On the eve of his departure , he had an article printed in the paper stating his intention to stay and " finish the job " . The mayor was surprised and furious when he read the press release the next morning and demanded his resignation . After almost two years in office , Butler resigned under pressure , stating later that " cleaning up Philadelphia was worse than any battle I was ever in . "

= = Military retirement = =

When Commandant of the Marine Corps Major General Wendell C. Neville died July 8 , 1930 , Butler , at that time the senior major general in the Corps , was a candidate for the position . Although he had significant support from many inside and outside the Corps , including John Lejeune and Josephus Daniels , two other Marine Corps generals were seriously considered , Ben H. Fuller and John H. Russell . Lejeune and others petitioned President Hoover , garnered support in the Senate and flooded Secretary of the Navy Charles Adams 's desk with more than 2 @,@ 500 letters of support . With the recent death of his influential father , however , Butler had lost much of his protection from his civilian superiors . The outspokenness that characterized his run @-@ ins with the Mayor of Philadelphia , the " unreliability " mentioned by his superiors when opposing a posting to the Western Front , and his comments about Benito Mussolini resurfaced . In the end , the position of Commandant went to Fuller , who had more years of commissioned service than Butler and was considered less controversial . Butler requested retirement and left active duty on October 1 , 1931 .

= = Later years = =

Even before retiring from the Corps , Butler began developing his post @-@ Corps career . In May 1931 , he took part in a commission established by Oregon Governor Julius L. Meier . The commission laid the foundations for the Oregon State Police . He began lecturing at events and conferences and after his retirement from the Marines in 1931 , he took this up full @-@ time . He donated much of his earnings from his lucrative lecture circuits to the Philadelphia unemployment relief . He toured the western United States , making 60 speeches before returning for his daughter 's marriage to Marine aviator Lieutenant John Wehle . Her wedding was the only time that he wore his dress blue uniform after he left the Marines .

= = = Senate campaign = = =

Butler announced his candidacy for the U.S. Senate in the Republican primary in Pennsylvania in March 1932 as a proponent of Prohibition , known as a " dry " . Butler allied with Gifford Pinchot , but was defeated in the April 26 , 1932 primary election with only 37 @.@ 5 % of the vote to incumbent Senator James J. Davis 's 60 % . A third candidate received the remainder of the votes . According to biographer Mark Strecker , Butler then moved politically to the far left , voting for Norman Thomas of the Socialist Party for president in 1936 .

= = = Bonus Army = = =

During his Senate campaign , Butler spoke out forcefully about the veterans bonus . Veterans of World War I , many of whom had been out of work since the beginning of the Great Depression , sought immediate cash payment of Service Certificates granted to them eight years earlier via the World War Adjusted Compensation Act of 1924 . Each Service Certificate , issued to a qualified veteran soldier , bore a face value equal to the soldier 's promised payment , plus compound interest . The problem was that the certificates (like bonds) , matured 20 years from the date of original issuance , thus , under extant law , the Service Certificates could not be redeemed until 1945 . In June 1932 , approximately 43 @,@ 000 marchers ? 17 @,@ 000 of whom were World War I veterans , their families , and affiliated groups ? protested in Washington , D.C. The Bonus Expeditionary Force , also known as the " Bonus Army " , marched on Washington to advocate the passage of the " soldier 's bonus " for service during World War I. After Congress adjourned , bonus marchers remained in the city and became unruly . On July 28 , 1932 , two bonus marchers were shot by police , causing the entire mob to become hostile and riotous . The FBI , then known as the United States Bureau of Investigation , checked its fingerprint records to obtain the police records of individuals who had been arrested during the riots or who had participated in the bonus march .

The veterans made camp in the Anacostia flats while they awaited the congressional decision on whether or not to pay the bonus . The motion , known as the Patman bill , was decisively defeated , but the veterans stayed in their camp . Butler arrived with his young son Thomas , in mid @-@ July the day before the official eviction by the Hoover administration . He walked through the camp and spoke to the veterans ; he told them that they were fine soldiers and they had a right to lobby Congress just as much as any corporation . He and his son spent the night and ate with the men , and in the morning Butler gave a speech to the camping veterans . He instructed them to keep their sense of humor and cautioned them not to do anything that would cost public sympathy . On July 28 , army cavalry units led by General Douglas MacArthur dispersed the Bonus Army by riding through it and using gas . During the conflict several veterans were killed or injured and Butler declared himself a " Hoover @-@ for @-@ Ex @-@ President @-@ Republican " .

= = = Lectures = = =

He became widely known for his outspoken lectures against war profiteering , U.S. military

adventurism , and what he viewed as nascent fascism in the United States .

In December 1933 , Butler toured the country with James E. Van Zandt to recruit members for the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) . He described their effort as " trying to educate the soldiers out of the sucker class . " In his speeches he denounced the Economy Act of 1933 , called on veterans to organize politically to win their benefits , and condemned the FDR administration for its ties to big business . The VFW reprinted one of his speeches with the title " You Got to Get Mad " in its magazine Foreign Service . He said : " I believe in ... taking Wall St. by the throat and shaking it up . " He believed the rival veterans ' group the American Legion was controlled by banking interests . On December 8 , 1933 , he said : " I have never known one leader of the American Legion who had never sold them out ? and I mean it . "

In addition to his speeches to pacifist groups , he served from 1935 to 1937 as a spokesman for the American League Against War and Fascism . In 1935 , he wrote the exposé War Is a Racket , a trenchant condemnation of the profit motive behind warfare . His views on the subject are summarized in the following passage from the November 1935 issue of the socialist magazine Common Sense :

I spent 33 years and four months in active military service and during that period I spent most of my time as a high class muscle man for Big Business , for Wall Street and the bankers . In short , I was a racketeer , a gangster for capitalism . I helped make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914 . I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in . I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street . I helped purify Nicaragua for the International Banking House of Brown Brothers in 1902 ? 1912 . I brought light to the Dominican Republic for the American sugar interests in 1916 . I helped make Honduras right for the American fruit companies in 1903 . In China in 1927 I helped see to it that Standard Oil went on its way unmolested . Looking back on it , I might have given Al Capone a few hints . The best he could do was to operate his racket in three districts . I operated on three continents .

= = = Business Plot = = =

In November 1934 , Butler claimed the existence of a political conspiracy by business leaders to overthrow President Roosevelt , a series of allegations that came to be known in the media as the Business Plot . A special committee of the House of Representatives headed by Representatives John W. McCormack of Massachusetts and Samuel Dickstein of New York , who was later alleged to have been a paid agent of the NKVD , heard his testimony in secret . The McCormack @-@ Dickstein committee was a precursor to the House Committee on Un @-@ American Activities .

In November 1934 , Butler told the committee that one Gerald P. MacGuire told him that a group of businessmen , supposedly backed by a private army of 500 @,@ 000 ex @-@ soldiers and others , intended to establish a fascist dictatorship . Butler had been asked to lead it , he said , by MacGuire , who was a bond salesman with Grayson M ? P Murphy & Co . The New York Times reported that Butler had told friends that General Hugh S. Johnson , former head of the National Recovery Administration , was to be installed as dictator , and that the J.P. Morgan banking firm was behind the plot . Butler told Congress that MacGuire had told him the attempted coup was backed by three million dollars , and that the 500 @,@ 000 men were probably to be assembled in Washington , D.C. the following year . All the parties alleged to be involved publicly said there was no truth in the story , calling it a joke and a fantasy .

In its report , the committee stated that it was unable to confirm Butler 's statements other than the conversations with MacGuire . No prosecutions or further investigations followed , and historians have questioned whether or not a coup was actually contemplated . Historians have not reported any independent evidence apart from Butler 's report on what MacGuire told him . Schmidt says Maguire was an " inconsequential trickster . " The news media dismissed the plot , with a New York Times editorial characterizing it as a " gigantic hoax " . When the committee 's final report was released , the Times said the committee " purported to report that a two @-@ month investigation had convinced it that General Butler 's story of a Fascist march on Washington was alarmingly true "

and " ... also alleged that definite proof had been found that the much publicized Fascist march on Washington , which was to have been led by Major . Gen. Smedley D. Butler , retired , according to testimony at a hearing , was actually contemplated " . The individuals involved all denied the existence of a plot , despite evidence to the contrary . The media ridiculed the allegations , although a final report by a special House of Representatives Committee confirmed some of Butler 's accusations

The McCormack @-@ Dickstein Committee confirmed some of Butler 's testimony in its final report . " In the last few weeks of the committee 's official life it received evidence showing that certain persons had made an attempt to establish a fascist organization in this country ... There is no question that these attempts were discussed , were planned , and might have been placed in execution when and if the financial backers deemed it expedient . "

= = Death = =

Upon his retirement , Butler bought a home in Newtown Square , Pennsylvania , where he lived with his wife . In June 1940 , he checked himself into the hospital after becoming sick a few weeks earlier . His doctor described his illness as an incurable condition of the upper gastro @-@ intestinal tract that was probably cancer . His family remained by his side , even bringing his new car so he could see it from the window . He never had a chance to drive it . On June 21 , 1940 , Smedley Butler died in the Naval Hospital in Philadelphia .

The funeral was held at his home , attended by friends and family as well as several politicians , members of the Philadelphia police force and officers of the Marine Corps . He was buried at Oaklands Cemetery near West Chester , Pennsylvania . Since his death in 1940 , his family has maintained his home as it was when he died , including a large quantity of memorabilia he had collected throughout his varied career .

= = Honors and awards = =

= = = Military awards = = =

In addition to the Medal of Honor and his other American military decorations , Butler received several awards from other countries including the Haitian National Order of Honour and Merit and the French Order of the Black Star .

= = = Other honors and recognition = = =

The USS Butler (DD @-@ 636) , a Gleaves @-@ class destroyer , was named in his honor in 1942 . This vessel participated in the European and Pacific theaters of operations during the Second World War . She was later converted to a high speed minesweeper .

The Boston , Massachusetts , chapter of Veterans for Peace is called the Smedley D. Butler Brigade in his honor .

Butler was featured in the 2003 Canadian documentary film The Corporation .

In his book My First Days in the White House , Senator Huey Long of Louisiana stated that , if elected to the presidency , he would name Butler as his Secretary of War .

His childhood home at West Chester , The Butler House , was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 .

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