Acknowledgments

As an avid, some might say obsessive, reader of Acknowledgments pages, I am daunted by the lyricism so many historians display in recognizing their debts both intellectual and personal. The lack of poetry found here, however, in no way diminishes the genuine gratitude I feel toward the people and institutions that have helped this book come to fruition.

This book is the culmination of work begun under the keen guidance of Jeff Adler, Bob Zieger, Bob McMahon, and Louise Newman. Jeff Adler offered unusually astute editorial and substantive advice, even though the topic and the approach of this project moved in directions that neither of us could have possibly guessed when I began it. Throughout, he never doubted the significance of my work or that it would be completed. For that, I am forever appreciative. Bob McMahon and Louise Newman have been constant sources of support. Bob Zieger brought his encyclopedic knowledge of the 1930s to his reading of drafts of this project at all stages. While factual errors and sloppy argumentation may remain in this book, Bob has stopped most of it in its tracks. (Of course, any such errors or sloppiness left over are my responsibility, and mine alone.) Always a cheerful supporter, Bob also has been a great mentor to me as a writer. His editorial pen is tough but nearly always right. The book is infinitely better thanks to Bob. I am proud to count him as a friend and mentor.

A wonderful group of scholars interested in veterans' issues has left its imprint on this study. Jennifer Keene played an enormous role in the development of the project. She offered to read drafts at every stage and gave very valuable suggestions along the way. What started as a “cold” e-mail to the person who wrote Doughboys, the Great War, and the Remaking of America has become a great personal and intellectual friendship. Her generosity to an unknown writer and her continual support throughout my career set Jennifer apart as a true role model in scholarly collegiality. G. Kurt Piehler embraced this project while directing the Center for the
Study of War and Society at the University of Tennessee. Kurt's efforts in advancing my work and career have been extraordinarily kind and supportive. Mike Neiberg, Nancy Gentile Ford, and David Gerber provided thoughtful commentary on my work in its early stages that helped shape it significantly. Bruce Vandervort and Donald Critchlow, editors of the Journal of Military History and the Journal of Policy History, respectively, and the anonymous reviewers of those journals helped refine my thinking a great deal. I am grateful for their support and encouragement.

At both the research and writing stage, numerous institutions and individuals provided financial and archival assistance. The Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association made a research trip to the Hoover archives possible through a Robert R. McCormick Tribune Foundation travel grant. While I was there, the staff, most notably Matthew Schaefer, cheerfully led a novice through the archives. The Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute provided travel assistance to me on two separate occasions, the second time through an Albert M. Greenfield Research Fellowship. It is no stretch to say that without this assistance, this book would not exist. At the FDR archives, Mark A. Renovitch and Karen Anson were extremely helpful guides. More recently, Karen aided in the photo reproductions found in the book. A special note of thanks goes to archivist Bob Clark. Bob happily helped this research in countless ways. And, after many visits to Hyde Park over the years, I am glad to now count him as a friend. Joseph Hovish and Howard Trace, curators of the American Legion Library at the Legion National Headquarters in Indianapolis, helped tremendously as I navigated their archives and located photographs for the book. I am extremely grateful for their assistance and the American Legion's cooperation. Bowling Green State University's Department of History and College of Arts and Sciences provided invaluable time off for the writing of the manuscript. Scott Martin, the department chair, and then Dean Don Nieman graciously agreed to grant me course releases for a semester off in my first year as a faculty member—no small concession.

Special mention goes to the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Headquarters and the publisher and editor-in-chief of VFW magazine, Richard Kolb. Rich literally sat in a dark and cold headquarters building after a brutal Kansas City ice storm in order to let me have access to their materials. He has had a hand in this project since its inception. More recently, Rob Widener, the art director of VFW magazine, has helped with the reproduction of the wonderful cartoons that graced the old Foreign Service magazines. This book owes its existence to the good men and women of the VFW.
Many friends over the years have helped in ways large and small over drinks and coffee, kvetching at the proverbial water cooler, in small reading groups, and by simply being good, cheerful friends. Chris Nicely kept me sane throughout graduate school with his humor, his irreverence, and his total lack of ties to academic life. Mark Hove and Jason Parker heard more than they wanted to about this project and were great friends and colleagues at UF. At East Stroudsburg University, Mike Gray and Don Dellipriscoli were indispensably positive friends, supporters of my career, and wonderful colleagues during my first fulltime academic position. At BGSU, the fellow members of the junior faculty reading group—Becky Mancuso, Amílcar Challú, Tiffany Trimmer, Jessie Abel, David Haus, and Scott Martin—all provided thoughtful comments on chapter drafts. Leigh Ann Wheeler, Andy Schocket, and Gary Hess have been supportive colleagues. Ruth Herndon and Becky Mancuso are my departmental neighbors and have become great friends; both offered moral support and encouragement through the bleakest days of writing (and they get pretty bleak in the northwest Ohio winter).

Debbie Gershenowitz has been everything one could wish in an editor. At her instigation, we met at a Society for Military History conference in 2003 and discussed my work. As we talked, she gave a broad ray of hope that I might be on to something. As the years passed, her support of my work only grew. Throughout the writing of the manuscript, Debbie provided very keen and prompt editorial advice. She allowed space when space was what was needed and applied pressure when that was in order. Working with NYU Press and with Debbie has simply been a pleasure.

Finally, my family has nourished and supported me in so many ways during this project. My parents, Ramon and Adda Ortiz, never lost faith in my abilities or doubted that this book would be published—and, given my extended adolescence, believe me, they had every reason to lose faith! In elliptical ways that elude simple description, my father’s career as a physician in the Veterans’ Administration hospital system was the seedbed of my interest in veterans’ issues. I am indebted to both of my parents for so many things but foremost for their unyielding love. And finally, and most important, it is to my wife, Renée, and my daughter, Bianca, that I dedicate this book. They make daily life a constant source of warmth, love, and joy. Renée good-naturedly made it through the writing of the manuscript, putting up with all of my surly, churlish “writing” moods and the long absences that went along with the project. She read more passages and chapters than I can count and always made insightful suggestions,
all while caring for a toddler. How? I really don’t know, but I am forever grateful to her for all she has done. Some of Bianca’s first words were “Daddy’s working.” But, she, too, put up with an absent-minded and distracted father with unbridled joy and unconditional love. Every single day with her has been a blessing. Words cannot express my gratitude and love for you both. This book is for you and is possible only because of you.