WAR DEPARTMENT

THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE

WASHINGTON

IN REPLY REFER TO AG 051.1 (1-10-40)EX.

MDD/iw - 1070

January 15, 1940.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
120 East Nineteenth Street,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Madam:

This is in response to your letter of January 10, in which you request to be informed as to the average age of soldiers in the Union Army during the Civil War, and with reference to some reliable cases of youths under the age of 18 who served in that Army.

The War Department has never undertaken the compilation, from the official records in its possession, of statistics showing, by age at date of entry into service, the total number of soldiers who participated in any of the wars in which the United States has engaged. Reference may be made however, to an estimate based upon a report of the Statistical Bureau of the United States Sanitary Commission for the year 1866, which was prepared after examination of the muster rolls of a large number of volunteer organizations including the records of 1,000,000 men, both volunteer officers and enlisted being included. According to that report the average age of Civil War soldiers was 26, and .99 per cent of the total number were under 18 years of age, 12.73 per cent were 18 years of age, and 86.28 were over 18.

As to specific cases, a record has been found showing that one soldier, a member of Company D, 79th Ohio Infantry Volunteers, was 10 years of age at date of enlistment, October 31, 1862; another soldier, a member of Company C, 27th Pennsylvania Infantry Volunteers, was 12 years of age at date of enlistment, June 1, 1861; another, a musician of 22d Michigan Infantry Volunteers was 13 years of age at date of enlistment, May 1, 1863, and still another, a member of Company F, 21st Pennsylvania Cavalry Volunteers was 14 years of age at date of enlistment, January 5, 1864.

The War Department cannot undertake to say that there were not other enlistments at the same or earlier ages than those mentioned above. Moreover, it is well known that many men gave ages at enlistment older than their actual ages, for the purpose of passing recruiting officers, and consequently in such cases the official records cannot be relied on in determining the true age of those soldiers.

Very truly yours,

E. Adams

Major General,
The Adjutant General.
By:

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