

WAR DEPARTMENT

THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE

WASHINGTON

IN REPLY
REFER TO A.G. 314.83
(1-23-26) ORD

February 12, 1926.

Miss Ida M. Tarbell,
120 East 19th Street,
New York, New York.

Dear Madam:

On January 27, 1926, I acknowledged the receipt of your letter requesting certain information concerning the Union forces in the Civil War period, particularly the Army of the Potomac up to about May, 1864. I stated that it might be found impracticable to answer some of your questions, but would do all that I could to comply with your request. Notwithstanding your generous letter of February 1st asking me not to attempt to respond to any of the questions that can not readily be answered from documents at hand, I have proceeded with the purpose of answering as many of the questions as possible. Following is the result.

1. As to the make-up of the Army of the Potomac in March, 1864. I find no roster of that army for that time that could conveniently be sent you. However, full rosters of it for November 20, 1863, and May 5, 1864, are printed in the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Series I, the former in Volume XXIX, Part I, pp. 667-677, and the latter in Volume XXXVI, Part I, pp. 106-119. The make-up of the army on either of those dates did not differ largely from that of March, 1864. Major General G. G. Meade was in command of the Army of the Potomac on both of those dates. General U. S. Grant was with it on the latter date, being then in command of all of the Union forces of the United States.

2. It is impracticable for me to state (a) the number of soldiers that went into General Grant's Virginia campaign in May, 1864, that had been with the Army of the Potomac from its first organization, or how many of them, even approximately, had previously been at either of the Bull Run battles, or in the Peninsula Campaign or in the Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville battles, or (b) what officers in the Union Army in May, 1864, had been with it from the start.

3. As to the voting of soldiers in 1864. At the Presidential election of 1864, facilities were afforded by the War Department for the voting of soldiers in the field, directly or by proxy, under the laws of the several loyal states. General Orders, No. 265, War Department, A.G.O., dated October 1, 1864, promulgated regulations governing the voting of soldiers. I find no other regulations governing the method of taking the soldier vote in that election. I am sending you a copy of that order under separate cover.

4. As to the Confederate Major General John B. Gordon's facing negro soldiers near the position of Custer's command on the day of General Lee's surrender at Appomattox, C.H., April 9, 1865. I have found nothing among the official records showing expressly that when General Gordon's command made its final halt at Appomattox it was facing negro soldiers, but I have found nothing to preclude such a possibility. Official reports are found tending somewhat to show that such was possible. The Confederate General Gordon was on that day in command of General Lee's Third Army Corps, and Brevet Major General George A. Custer was in command of the Third Division of Major General P. H. Sheridan's Union cavalry. It appears that the flag of truce raised there preliminary to the surrender of the Confederates was delivered by General Gordon's command to General Custer, and that there were several regiments of colored infantry in the immediate vicinity. In his report of events of that day General Sheridan states that one division of the 25th Corps (a part of the colored corps) arrived about daylight that day at Appomattox Depot. That force was doubtless the Second Division, 25th Corps, consisting of the First, Second and Third Brigades. The indications are that most of the regiments in those brigades were near the front line at Appomattox on that day, at least the 8th, 41st, 45th and 116th Regiments United States Colored Infantry. It is not improbable that some of them were in front of a part of Gordon's Corps. (See in the Official Records, Series I, Vol. XLVI, Part I, the index under the names of the officers mentioned, and under "Union Troops-Colored,"- name of each regiment.)

With reference to your suggestion that you be referred to sources for approximate answers to your questions, I regret to say that I do not know of any sources of information on questions marked herein as No. 2 other than the numerous and widely separated lists of the officers of the Civil War in the Regular and Volunteer Armies. I doubt that any such computations have been made. To make them would involve an examination of the record of every officer in the Civil War previous to May, 1864. The most convenient sources to you for such basic information would be the annual Army Registers for the years 1861-1864, for Regular Army officers, the Volunteer Army Register, 1861-1865, for Volunteer officers of regiments and companies, and Heitman's Historical Register, for Regular Army officers, general officers and staff officers of all grades, which works are more fully described below.

I am pleased to cite below some publications that may be of value to you in any study of the Union Army during the Civil War, especially the personnel thereof.

Official Record of the Union and Confederate Armies (Serials 1 to 130), and the accompanying Atlas.

Heitman's Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, (2 vols.). Contains list of all Regular Army officers and all staff officers to March 2, 1903, besides considerable statistical information. Prepared by a private compiler from official records; printed in the Government Printing Office.

Volunteer Army Register, 1861-1865. (In 8 vols.) Contains lists of volunteer officers by states.

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Statistical Record of Armies of the United States (Civil War),
by Frederick Phisterer. Contains useful lists and tables.
Compiled from official records in the War Department.

Political History of the Civil War by Edward McPherson. Contains
copies of acts of Congress and other valuable information.
A private publication.

Army Registers for the years 1861-1866. Contain lists of offi-
cers.

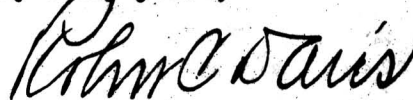
Final Report of the Provost-Marshal-General (Brigadier General
James B. Fry) dated March 17, 1866. Reprinted in the Offi-
cial Records, supra, page 599, et seq. Relates mainly to
the raising of troops; contains valuable lists and tables,
analyses and comments.

The works herein mentioned can doubtless be consulted in large li-
braries in New York City. Some of those issued by the Government can be ob-
tained from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office.

I am sending you under separate cover several printed documents that
may be of use or interest to you, together with a copy of General Order No.
265, hereinbefore mentioned.

Regretting my inability to be of more material service to you at
this time, I am,

Very truly yours,



Major General,
The Adjutant General.