LIFE OF THE ENLISTED SOLDIER
ON THE WESTERN FRONTIER
1815-1845

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

Stanley S. Graham, M. A.
Denton, Texas
August, 1972

In almost two centuries of performance, the American army has adjusted to changing technology. Periodically, it has placed more effective weapons and equipment in the hands of its troops. It has also made changes in its administration, training, tactics, and methods of resupply to conform better to new missions. The pay of its personnel has been adequate, although sometimes meager when compared with civilian wages. Equally important for the morale of its soldiery, the army has made occasional efforts to afford moral guidance and recreational facilities. In more recent years, military leaders have even been forced by civilian pressures to reorient their philosophy toward a more humanitarian approach in seeking methods to instill discipline.

In contrast to the relatively rapid changes occurring in the modern American army, the period between the end of the War of 1812 and the beginning of the Mexican War offers a definite period for a study of military life when reform came slowly.
During the time outlined, one observes changing policies in almost all phases of military life. Tactics and weapons and other equipment improved, with each modification serving to make a more efficient army. Leaders transformed modes of recruitment of personnel to encourage qualified men to enlist. When compared with other frontiersmen, the soldier received adequate food, clothing, and pay. Regulations allowed the establishment of libraries for his education and recreation. By the beginning of the Mexican War, Congress had recognized the importance of moral guidance. Temperance societies had infiltrated some posts, and provided a tool with which commanders could curtail drunkenness. The soldier's children even received an elementary education at the far-flung installations located away from civilization. Although few men received commissions, Congress had made provisions for noncommissioned officers to be appointed to the lowest officer grade.

In contrast to the mutability in many areas, officers clung tenaciously to the past in their methods to enforce discipline. They continued to espouse a philosophy that obedience could be attained by inculcating fear in the minds of potential violators of regulations. Enlisted men suffered from harsh, and sometimes brutal, chastisements for minor
infractions of rules. The punishments continued to be as excessively severe by the end of the period as they had been in 1815. As a result of the harshness and cruelty of punishments, and a lack of promotion possibilities, many soldiers deserted. Recruiters continually expressed displeasure that they were unable to attract qualified men into the enlisted ranks. With hindsight, an observer can see readily that while officers accepted changes, they failed to understand that the men they commanded were reluctant to defer and subordinate their personalities and desires for advancement in a system that thrived on oppression.

The vast majority of the materials researched in this study were found in the North Texas State University Library, the Library of Congress, the National Archives, and the state historical society libraries of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Missouri. While the personal and family papers of several early pioneers and army officers at these points of collection afforded significant bits of information about enlisted personnel, official records and newspapers proved most useful. Of the government documents, unit orderly books and expedition journals contained vast amounts of information about army life in general. In addition to the Niles' Register and the Army and Navy Chronicle, several
of the frontier newspapers also aided immensely in piecing together a general idea of how men of the pre-Mexican War army lived.
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PREFACE

Since World War II, the nation has grown increasingly conscious of the need for social and political reform. Although the clamor for change has not been as turbulent as in other periods of American history, the present movement has probably been more widespread. More recently, an unpopular war in Southeast Asia served to induct an influx of dissidents into the ranks of the army. The presence of the more vocal dissenters provided a catalyst to stir public concern over abuses and malpractices of military leaders and force a reorientation of their antiquated philosophy. The present efforts to improve the plight of the rank and file are still in progress, and thus, analyses of their effect must be left for future historians.

While protest has brought some change, the modern army continues to be a stratified system, but with decreasing rigidity in the separation of its castes, particularly when compared with conditions in the nineteenth century. Its classes are still readily identifiable, but mobility within the ranks is easier. Its methods employed to instill discipline no longer emphasize degradation and humiliation,
but rather stress rehabilitation. In short, the men in
the modern American army no longer suffer abuse, neglect,
and misunderstanding without hope of recourse. They are no
longer relegated to a permanent position in the enlisted
ranks.

In almost two centuries of performance, the army has
adjusted to changing technology. Periodically, it has
placed more effective weapons and equipment in the hands
of its troops. It has also made changes in its administra-
tion, training, tactics, and methods of resupply to conform
better to new missions. The pay of its personnel has been
adequate, although sometimes meager when compared with
civilian wages. Equally important for the morale of its
soldiery, the army has made occasional efforts to afford
moral guidance and recreational facilities. In more recent
years, military leaders have been forced by civilian pressures
to reorient their philosophy toward a more humanitarian
approach in seeking methods to instill discipline. In
contrast to the relatively rapid changes occurring in the
modern American army, the period between the end of the War
of 1812 and the beginning of the Mexican War offers a definite
time period for a study of military reform when it came
slowly.
In 1815, the nation's leaders adopted a policy which required the military occupation of more territory west of the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes. The increased number of posts, and their greater distances from the earlier-settled regions of the country, created new problems of transportation, supply, and administration. Each new vicissitude brought a need for modification of old procedures, and thus, many traditions soon fell by the wayside in an ever-changing frontier army. Many of the alterations affected the daily life and routine of the individual soldier.

During the period outlined, one observes changing policies in almost all phases of military life. Tactics and weapons and other equipment improved, with each modification serving to make a more efficient army. Leaders transformed modes for recruitment of personnel to encourage qualified men to enlist. When compared with other frontiersmen, the soldier received adequate food, clothing, and pay. Regulations allowed the establishment of libraries for his education and recreation. By the beginning of the Mexican War, Congress had recognized the importance of moral guidance and had added chaplains to the army's organization. Temperance societies had infiltrated some posts, and provided a tool with which commanders could curtail drunkenness. The soldier's
children even received an elementary education at the far-flung installations located away from civilization. Although few men received commissions, Congress had made provisions for noncommissioned officers to be appointed to the lowest officer grade.

In contrast to the mutability in many areas, officers clung tenaciously to the past in their methods to enforce discipline. They continued to espouse a philosophy that obedience could be attained by inculcating fear in the minds of potential violators of regulations. Enlisted men suffered from harsh, and sometimes brutal, chastisements for minor infractions of rules. The punishments continued to be as excessively severe by the end of the period as they had been in 1815. As a result of the harshness and cruelty of punishments, and a lack of promotion possibilities, many soldiers deserted. Recruiters continually expressed displeasure that they were unable to attract qualified men into the enlisted ranks. With hindsight, an observer can see readily that while officers accepted many changes, they failed to understand that the men they commanded were reluctant to defer and subordinate their personalities and desires for advancement in a system that thrived on oppression.

While historians have afforded relatively thorough coverage of the life and routine of the officers and their
families, writers have neglected the enlisted men and their dependents. Although regulations forbade the writing of private letters or reports relative to military operations, many officers maintained daily journals or diaries. In addition each commander kept a book to indicate all orders issued and received. While a unit was on campaign, one officer recorded a daily account of activities. Subsequently, commissioned personnel, their descendants, and other writers have used the many personal and official accounts to produce numerous articles and books about the period. Although the accounts evolving from the utilization of journals and diaries are plentiful, they seldom mention the details of the life and routine of the enlisted men.¹

Owing to a scarcity of accounts by the soldiers themselves, an assumption must be made that few enlisted personnel kept diaries, and an even smaller number wrote memoirs in later years because of their inability or lack of interest. In addition to a shortage of material, those few writings by former enlisted men are generally reminiscences recorded

years from the events described. In many instances the efforts are abundant with factual discrepancies; therefore, comparisons of the existing private accounts, coupled with official documents and historical studies, revealed only in a general way the life of the common soldier stationed in the western frontier army.

The vast majority of the materials researched in this study were found in the North Texas State University Library, the Library of Congress, the National Archives, and the state historical society libraries of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Missouri. While the personal and family papers of several early pioneers and army officers at these points of collection afforded significant bits of information about enlisted personnel, official records and newspapers proved most useful. Of the government documents, unit orderly books and expedition journals contained vast amounts of information about army life in general. In addition to the Niles' Register and the Army and Navy Chronicle, several of the frontier newspapers also aided immensely in piecing together a general idea of how men of the pre-Mexican War army lived.
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CHAPTER I

GENERAL POLICY AND ORGANIZATION
OF THE ARMY

In November, 1814, the United States Senate sent a resolution to Secretary of War James Monroe asking for his recommendations on the size of the nation's military establishment. Among several other suggestions, Monroe advised Congress to set a limit on the size of the peacetime army at forty thousand men. He also wanted to enlarge the engineer and ordnance corps. The secretary expressed a fear that Great Britain intended to continue in its efforts to destroy the American political system.¹

Contrary to Monroe's suggestions, however, within two months after the end of the War of 1812, Congress reduced the authorized strength of the regular army from over sixty-two thousand men to a force not to exceed ten thousand privates and noncommissioned officers. With the troops at their disposal, military officials found need to consolidate the almost fifty wartime regiments into eight of infantry

¹U.S., American State Papers, Military Affairs, 1:514-517.
and one each of riflemen and light artillery. They also retained thirty-two batteries of heavy cannon, which were organized into eight battalions. As a means to provide control over the line regiments, officials divided the country into nine military departments with each one headed by a brigadier general. Over these geographical subdivisions, the 1815 arrangement placed the first five under the command of a major general in a northern division. Departments six through nine comprised a southern division. Only eight and nine encompassed territory west of the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes. Army headquarters, in the District of Columbia, supervised the overall operations.2

The 1815 reduction left the army's supply system in chaos, and wholly dependent on civilian contractors. The nation's land force had no unitary methods of administration, training, or tactics. Other than attempting to maintain a line of posts in advance of settlements, and blocking British traders' incursions from Canada, the United States had no discernible frontier policy. Only after John Caldwell Calhoun became Secretary of War in 1817 did the nation

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begin to pursue a prudent course of action in regard to western defense.\(^3\)

Calhoun continued to follow an earlier policy of maintaining forts in advance of the line of settlement, but he also sought to extend the military frontier much further north and west than had been previously undertaken. He pushed a reluctant Congress to provide for the more efficient operation of the army's logistical system. In April, 1818, lawmakers ended the military establishment's dependency on inefficient and expensive civilian contractors. They enacted legislation setting up commissary and quartermaster departments to direct the purchase and distribution of subsistence and all other supplies. In addition, they approved the formation of a medical department to care for the health of the troops.\(^4\)

To gain loyalty of the Indians in the West and to provide better protection for frontier settlers, Calhoun directed the erection of forts further up the Mississippi, Missouri, and Arkansas rivers. In 1817, he dispatched two

\(^3\) Edgar Bruce Wesley, Guarding the Frontier; A Study of Frontier Defense from 1815 to 1825 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1935), p. 76.

rifle companies to construct Fort Smith, near the present Arkansas-Oklahoma border. Over the next two years, he moved the Rifle and the Sixth Infantry regiments up the Missouri to establish a cantonment near present-day Omaha, Nebraska. His long range plans called for a subsequent move of the troops at Cantonment Missouri far up the river to its confluence with the Yellowstone. In 1819, the far-sighted Calhoun sent the Fifth Infantry Regiment to begin construction of Fort Snelling, near present-day Minneapolis, Minnesota.\(^5\)

In 1821, Congress thwarted the Secretary of War's plan for further extension of the military frontier. It drastically curtailed moneys appropriated for defense. To save even more revenue, legislators also reduced the size of the army to approximately six thousand men. They forced the consolidation of the corps of artillery and the ten light batteries organized in 1815 into four regiments. The reduction of the army also led to the disbandment of one infantry and the Rifle regiments. Ordnance was integrated into artillery. For the immediate supervision of the regiments stationed at widespread posts, lawmakers retained only an eastern and a

western department. The two divisions and seven of the
nine departments organized in 1815 were deactivated.\(^6\)

Owing to the reduction of the army, Calhoun began
following a policy of abandoning older interior posts as
settlers overtook them. He also started the practice of
establishing posts in Indian Country to protect and control
the eastern tribes as officials moved them to locations
designated on the edge of the prairie. Thus, in the 1820's
the army abandoned a few posts and established others in
Indian Country. In 1822, the First Infantry Regiment moved
some of its troops stationed at Natchitoches, Louisiana,
about thirty miles westward, and began building Cantonment
Jesup. To restrain the Osage Indians from fighting the
Cherokees, the Seventh Infantry constructed Cantonment
Gibson up the Arkansas, near its confluence with the Neosho,
in 1824. The same year, troops from Cantonment Jesup pushed
flatboats up the Red River and established Fort Towson, in
present-day southern Oklahoma. They provided protection for
the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians against the Plains tribes.\(^7\)

\(^6\)U.S., Statutes at Large, 3:615-616.

\(^7\)Robert Walter Frazar, Forts of the West: Military
Forts and Presidios and Posts Commonly Called Forts West of
the Mississippi River to 1898 (Norman: University of Oklahoma
Press, 1965), pp. 60-61, 120, 125. In 1832, the War Depart-
ment directed that all cantonments be called forts.
Calhoun's successor, James Barbour, followed the same general policy of trying to man a few essential forts on an exterior line, but he also concentrated some units at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. He planned to employ these troops as a reactionary force to move quickly to a troubled area. In 1827, the Sixth Infantry Regiment evacuated Fort Atkinson and moved back down the Missouri to a point twenty-five miles below its junction with the Kansas River where it established Cantonment Leavenworth. The previous year, Barbour had declared Fort Crawford at Prairie du Chien, Michigan Territory, an interior post and ordered it abandoned. The Winnebago Indians had interpreted the post's evacuation as a retreat by the white man. After the suppression of an uprising in 1827 and 1828, Secretary of War Peter B. Porter directed that Fort Crawford be reoccupied, and also ordered the construction of Fort Winnebago at the portage of the Fox and Wisconsin rivers.8

To cope with the highly mobile plains and prairie Indians, frontiersmen and Santa Fe traders began to pressure their congressmen for a mounted force rather than depend on

immobile infantrymen, who were better suited to man fixed installations. In 1822, the first wagon train traveled to Santa Fe to open more than two decades of flourishing trade between St. Louis and Northern Mexico. The 1827 decision to evacuate Fort Atkinson and to establish Cantonment Leavenworth had been partially influenced by the rising need for a military post on the Missouri-Mexico trade route. The following year, the House of Representatives' Committee on Military Affairs returned a study on the feasibility of using volunteer gunmen to shield the western settlers against Indian depredations. In 1829, Major Bennet Riley, with four dismounted companies of the Sixth Infantry Regiment, provided the first military escort over the Santa Fe Trail. The officer reported that had his unit been mounted, it would not have lost much of its equipment and public animals to marauding Indians.9

Although frontiersmen, merchants, and army officers continued to stress the need for mounted troops, Congress did not act until the Black Hawk War. In 1832, heeding a

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request from President Andrew Jackson, national legislators authorized the formation of a battalion of mounted rangers of six companies of one hundred privates each for employment in the defense of the western frontier.\textsuperscript{10}

In late 1832, despite expected reaction from supporters of the mounted ranger battalion, Secretary of War Lewis Cass recommended that a regiment of dragoons be activated in the stead of the unconventional force. The most ardent opponent of Cass's proposal, Representative Joseph Duncan of Illinois, had been convinced several years earlier by Major General Edmund Pendleton Gaines, commander of the Department of the West, that a conventional military force was unsuited for a mission of chasing marauding Indians. By 1833, Duncan had not changed his mind. The Illinois congressman stated before a House committee that not only were conventional troops incapable of contending with the mobile prairie Indians, but more important, the civilian populace on the frontier considered the very name "dragoon" unacceptable since the title carried a connotation of military elitism.\textsuperscript{11}


During the early weeks of the Second Session of the Twenty-Second Congress, legislators argued the merits of dragoons versus rangers. In the end, the supporters of the Cass ratiocination prevailed. The Secretary of War's ideas, based on the more economical dragoon organization, appealed to a frugal Congress. First, the three-year enlistments proposed for the conventional unit cost much less than the one-year terms applicable to the rangers. Second, by arming the cavalrymen with rifles, one could assign them a secondary mission as infantry in time of need. Finally Cass offered an entreatment to tradition-conscious citizens by the revival of the cavalry arm in the United States Army.  

Gunmen, 20th Cong., 1st sess., 1 April 1828, H. Doc. 234. U.S., Congress, House, Register of Debates, 22d Cong., 1st sess., 16 February 1833, p. 1727. The name dragoon evolved in medieval times. The mounted soldiers of that age wore a picture of a dragon on their helmets. Over the years the word changed to dragoon and came to connote heavy cavalry. On the contrary, the United States mounted soldiers have always been considered as light cavalrymen who fought either on foot or on horseback. Albert Gallatin Brackett, History of the United States Cavalry, from the Formation of the Federal Government to the 1st of June, 1863; to Which is Added a List of All the Cavalry Regiments, with the Names of Their Commanders, Which Have Been in the United States Service Since the Breaking Out of the Rebellion (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1865), p. 159.

12 U.S., American State Papers, Military Affairs, 5:18-19. U.S., Statutes at Large, 4:652. The regiment had a total of 714 enlisted men and 33 officers. Officers in the headquarters included the colonel, a lieutenant colonel, a major, and an adjutant selected from one of the companies. The staff
On March 2, 1833, Congress authorized the recruitment of a regiment of dragoons to replace the extravagant and inefficient ranger unit. Without an extended period of training, the mounted troopers commenced campaigning immediately after activation. In the summer of 1834, the newly constituted regiment made a dramatic march to the Rocky Mountains and returned. Although the campaign succeeded in its objective of inculcating upon the indigenous Indians of the Central Great Plains the consequences of raids on white frontier settlements, and the recently removed tribes from east of the Mississippi River, the hardships experienced on the operation affected the health of the officers and men with disastrous results.13

Enlisted personnel consisted of the sergeant major, a quartermaster sergeant, and two chief buglers. Each of the ten companies, commanded by a captain, had two other officers, a first and a second lieutenant. Enlisted personnel included four sergeants, of whom one acted as the first sergeant, four corporals, two buglers, a farrier and blacksmith, and sixty privates.

George Catlin, noted naturalist and author, accompanied the unit on its 1834 campaign. In his accounts of the hardships and sufferings experienced by the men throughout the march, Catlin estimated that one-third of the 450 troopers who departed from Fort Gibson in early summer died within four months. Actually, only about one-half of the regiment completed the entire journey, but Catlin exaggerated the number of fatalities. Most of the deaths resulted from what contemporary doctors termed intermittent fever, a type of malarial infection and dysentery. At the same time, the accepted cure for the disease probably caused as many deaths as the malady itself. A patient, already dysenteric, received a large dose of calomel which acted as a purgative. In disagreement with Catlin, however, medical personnel at Fort Gibson reported 277 cases of intermittent and remittent fevers during the last half of 1834. Of the large number of patients treated only 49 died.\(^{14}\)

Following the 1834 campaign, the army recruited replacements to refill the depleted ranks of the Regiment of Dragoons. Officials then dispersed the unit at three posts along the

western frontier, from Fort Des Moines on the north in present-day Iowa to Fort Gibson on the south. At their new duty stations the mounted companies aided Indian agents to settle differences among the various tribes and the United States. The regiment also patrolled the entire frontier line, in addition to conducting summer forays into the Great Plains.  

The relative success of the Regiment of Dragoons in maintaining peace along the frontier encouraged Congress to sanction a second mounted regiment in 1836. The Second Regiment of Dragoons served dismounted in the Seminole War in Florida until 1841. Unfortunately, the full potential of the unit failed to materialize in the southern wastelands. Owing to the insistence of Western congressmen for additional military protection on the frontier, an infantry unit replaced the dragoons in the Florida swamps. Thereupon, in 1841, the army dispatched the cavalry unit to the West. Soon the regiment earned an image of "... that epitome of military impudence."  

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In addition to the authorization of two mounted regiments to the army's organization in the 1830's, Congress and the War Department made other adjustments. In 1837, Secretary of War Joel Roberts Poinsett reconstituted the immediate command structure similar to the system employed after the War of 1812. He divided the country into two military divisions, the commanders of which supervised seven lesser departments. The following year, Congress added an infantry regiment to the seven then on active duty. By 1840, the army's strength exceeded eleven thousand men. It had eight infantry regiments, two of dragoons, and four of artillery. 17

In 1838, General Gaines, Western Division commander, urged the retention of the basic policies adopted by Calhoun while he had been secretary of war. In addition to a report to Congress, he issued instructions to his officers outlining their responsibilities as members of one of the primary forces which served to settle the frontier. Gaines insisted that leaders on each expedition keep a journal and record

all features observed of the topography of the terrain over which they traveled. To insure rapid communications between frontier posts, he emphasized the importance of constructing roads to connect all strongpoints. By 1840, Congress apparently began to see the wisdom of Gaines's point of view, because committees in both the Senate and the House of Representatives made studies of the feasibility of extending the military frontier to the Pacific Ocean. Before the supplements to Calhoun's old policy could be implemented, the Whigs won control of Congress in 1844, and then in 1846 the Mexican War intervened.18

With the change in administration in 1841, Congress began to search for ways to pare military spending. In 1842, President John Tyler signed a legislative measure which ordered the reduction of the number of privates in dragoon, infantry, and artillery companies. In addition to the decrease in the size of all regiments, the bill directed that the Second Regiment of Dragoons revert to its secondary role as dismounted infantry. Although the act was promulgated, the unit had barely disposed of its horses before the next

Congress repealed the curtailing legislation. In conjunction with the legislative action, Secretary of War John Canfield Spencer instructed that the two division headquarters be disbanded, and added two departments, which encompassed all the region west of the Mississippi River. In 1844, as with the remounting of the Second Regiment of Dragoons, the Tyler administration reversed itself, and reestablished the two division headquarters. By the beginning of the Mexican War, the Whigs had reduced the army to less than eight thousand enlisted men. 19

By 1845, the regular army had proved to be one of the most important elements in the vanguard of the westward movement. Civilian and military leaders had initiated an effective frontier policy. It provided protection for white settlers against retaliation by Indians, who were concerned over encroachment upon their lands. In addition to shielding settlements from raids, army regiments kept peace between

the indigenous tribes of the Great Plains, and the more recently removed groups from east of the Mississippi River. At the height of the Santa Fe trade, military detachments had been occasionally deployed to act as escort. In each of those operations, the presence of the soldiers had been instrumental in safe trips for the caravans. Upon request from governmental agents, the army had varying degrees of success in enforcing the laws of the land. Soldiers had reluctantly labored to build roads for better lines of communication between posts. Probably most important for the development of the frontier economy, each installation offered a market for merchants and other settlers. While other frontiersmen endeavored to tame the wilderness in a spontaneous way, the directed efforts of the army served as the most effective tool for organized attempts at conquest of the hostile West in the period prior to the Mexican War.
CHAPTER II

ENLISTMENT

During the period from 1815 until 1845, a small regular army served the United States. For the first year after Congress reduced the military peace establishment to slightly less than ten thousand men on March 3, 1815, only twenty of the army's authorized 132 companies of artillery, infantry, or riflemen served on the frontier west of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River. ¹ While the army's total enlisted strength varied from a low of less than five thousand in 1822, to a high of more than ten thousand in 1841, seldom was more than 40 per cent of its personnel garrisoned at western frontier stations. Military and civilian leaders placed more emphasis on the construction, manning, and maintenance of coastal fortifications, and on the sending of troops to seemingly endless Indian wars in Florida, than to problems in the West. Only with the impending annexation of Texas in 1845 did the President order

the greater portion of the regular army to posts west of the Mississippi River.  

The men who filled the ranks of the regular army volunteered individually for service. Although the army was small, recruiters experienced great difficulty in wheedling a sufficient number of men with generally acceptable moral, mental, and physical qualifications to enroll in its always dwindling ranks. Between 1815 and 1845, the military peace establishment's personnel procurement system underwent several modifications in efforts of leaders to increase its efficiency. By the beginning of the Mexican War, the army's recruiting structure bore little resemblance to its decentralized and disorganized system of 1815.

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3 U.S., American State Papers, Military Affairs, 1:432-433, 2:261-263. General Regulations for the Army; or, Military
In the "Rules and Regulations of the Army for 1813," the War Department directed that each of nine military districts, into which the United States had been previously divided geographically, should also serve as a recruiting district. The commanding officer of each area had the responsibility to establish a principal rendezvous, and as many minor depots as he deemed necessary.  

The army's first comprehensive regulations, in 1821, delegated even greater responsibility to colonels of regiments. From 1821 until 1825, although departmental superintendents selected the sites of principal rendezvous and assigned the units to areas in which they were to recruit, regimental commanders appointed the personnel who

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Institutes (Washington: Davis & Force, 1825), pp. 352-363. General Regulations for the United States Army (Washington: J. and G.S. Gideon, 1847), pp. 129-152. The 1847 regulations were a republication of the 1841 issue with few changes. An increase in the size of the regular army at the beginning of the Mexican War quickly exhausted the 1841 volumes.


5 Although the Checklist of United States Public Documents, 1789-1909, 3d ed. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1911), p. 1217, lists regulations as having been published in 1814, 1816, 1817, and 1820, those editions were reprints of parts of the 1813 issue, which was not at all comprehensive.
performed the work. The colonel selected one of his field officers, or sometimes a senior captain, to supervise the regiment's principal rendezvous. He also appointed lesser officers, and on rare occasions noncommissioned officers to head parties detailed to scour the country-side for recruits. The number of groups operating within a military division, district, or department, depended upon the immediate needs of the regiment assigned to any one area.

In 1825, a major step toward centralization of the army's recruiting system occurred. An extensive revision of regulations removed the primary responsibility of finding replacements from the shoulders of lower-level commanders and placed it directly on those of the general-in-chief. Thereafter, the army commander designated the sites of recruiting rendezvous, officers in charge of each, and general superintendents. He also caused the adjutant general to initiate a file that related only to matters about recruiting.

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7 Ibid., 2:261-262.

8 Regulations of 1813 and 1821 referred to recruiting main stations as "principal rendezvous." From 1813 until 1821, regulations specified that there be only one of these sites in each military district. In 1821, the War Department
In addition to providing for coordinated direction of recruiting installations and activities and the maintenance of correlated memorabilia at army level, the 1825 and subsequent regulations directed regimental commanders to establish a similar service in their units when need dictated it. Sometimes the general recruiting service could not induce enough qualified men to enlist. When this happened, regimental commanders, with the approbation of departmental headquarters, outlined a geographical area in which an officer from a critically understrength company recruited for replacements. The regiment reported the special detail's progress directly to the adjutant general on a monthly basis. When efforts failed to fill a unit's personnel needs, army increased the number to one per regiment. The 1825 regulations changed the title to "recruiting rendezvous," and selected the number of sites based on a yearly need. By 1831, official documents referred to rendezvous as "recruiting stations." To direct the overall operations, the adjutant general appointed superintendents for the two departments. Most of the time the Western department remained closed; thus, most of the recruiting took place in the East. U.S., American State Papers, Military Affairs, 1:432-433, 2:261-262. Regulations for the Army, 1825, pp. 352, 353. Regulations for the Army, 1847, pp. 130-131. U.S., National Archives, Old Army Records, Adjutant General Letters, Orders, and Circulars Sent Relative Recruiting, 1825-1882, Records Group 94, Entry 467.

9 Regulations for the Army, 1825, p. 352. Regulations for the Army, 1847, pp. 140-141.
headquarters directed a superintendent of recruiting to levy disposable recruits from one or more of the stations in his department, and send them to the undermanned companies. The practice of utilizing regimental parties continued past 1847, as is indicated by regulations published that year.¹⁰

Besides altering the method of selection of supervisory personnel, and the location of recruiting sites, occasional revisions to regulations changed other aspects of the army's replacement system. For example, the 1813 and 1821 regulations directed that officers should enlist personnel only for their own regiments. Once an individual took the oath of enlistment, he could not be transferred from one corps to another without the assent of both commanders concerned. Only the War Department could make an exception to this rule.¹¹


Beginning in 1825 with the establishment of a general recruiting service, officers assigned to it no longer enlisted personnel exclusively for their own regiments. Thereafter, regulations directed that newly-recruited men be sent to artillery and infantry companies having the greatest need for filler personnel. After 1825, the army usually found most of its replacements through the utilization of its general recruiting service. Regiments began to take on a national temperament rather than the provincial complexion of the past.\footnote{12}

The men who filled the ranks of the regular army came from many walks of life, and enlisted for many reasons. In times of economic recession, the army generally experienced little difficulty in replenishing its ranks, but during periods of economic boom, men developed a reluctance to accept military discipline in return for unneeded material security.\footnote{13} A few men enrolled because they liked regimentation, 


\footnote{13}Following the Panic of 1819, recruiters had little difficulty in finding sufficient enlistees to replace losses
but most accepted a term of obligation for other incentives.\footnote{Francis Paul Prucha, Broadax and Bayonet; The Role of the Army in the Development of the Northwest, 1815-1860 (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1953), pp. 34-51 passim.}

Most recent historians who have made studies of the military establishment in the period after the War of 1812 have generally concluded that the men who enlisted were in regular regiments. In 1821, a reduction of the army also provided a source of manpower to replenish the ranks of those units retained on active duty. As the economy began to improve after 1821, however, the army's desertion rate and need for recruits increased. By 1823, recruiters accepted the enrollment of 2,651 men, with the regiments losing 25 percent of that number through desertion. In 1824, while the number of men enlisting decreased to 2,387, approximately one-third that number took "French leave." The following year, losses from desertion equaled 50 percent of the 1,751 soldiers recruited. In 1826, the number of men found to enlist dwindled to 1,260, and the percentage of desertions in relation to the total enrolled rose to more than 50. With the exception of a spiraling desertion rate, a similar pattern may be discerned after the Panic of 1837. The number of men recruited each year was 4,243 in 1838; 2,791 for 1839; 1,967 for 1840; and 1,389 in 1841. After April, 1842, the army closed its recruiting service owing to a reduction of its authorized strength by Congress. U.S., American State Papers, Military Affairs, 3:688-689, 4:285. U.S., Congress, Senate, Report from the Secretary of War in Answer to a Resolution of the Senate in Relation to Desertion in the Army, 21st Cong., 1st sess., 17 February 1830, U.S., National Archives, Old Army Records, 6th U.S. Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, 1817-1824, Records Group 391, Entry 1207. General Order 24, 17 February 1826, Colonel Roger Jones to Major General Edmund Pendleton Gaines, 12 March 1827, Jones to Captain Edwin Vose Sumner, 11 December 1839, Jones to Lieutenant Colonel Ichabod Bennet Crane, 30 April 1842, Adjutant General Letters Relative to Recruiting, RG 94, Entry 647.
foreigners, drunkards, down-andouters, and, for the most part, dregs of society. On the other hand in defense of the men who filled the ranks of the army, Francis Paul Prucha, historian at Marquette University, has probably most accurately assessed the situation. He agrees that while for the most part the individuals who enlisted were of poor moral character, "there was a core of men with integrity and dedication to duty who prevented collapse" of the military establishment. 15

To carry the defense of men who served in the ranks of the army a little further, one must ask if the common soldier reflected the mores of the society from which he came. While historians have readily criticized enlisted personnel for having relied excessively on alcohol to find relief from boredom in a lonesome and strenuous frontier environment, they have at the same time neglected to compare the military man's shortcomings with those of his civilian

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counterpart. In such a study one discovers that intemperance permeated all levels of civilian society, as well as all ranks of the military service.  

One may ask after a study of the period, what motivated individuals to accept a term of obligation in the army? In 1856, the adjutant general reported that patriotism had enticed an increasing number of native-born citizens to offer their services during the Mexican War. On the other hand, in the thirty years of peace preceding the conflict, 

16 In her study, The English Traveller in America, 1785-1835 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1922), pp. 37, 74-77, 169, Jane Louise Mesick told of the impressions of one group of foreign visitors and its comments about the intemperance of Americans in general. In 1828, when the American Temperance Society met for the first time, one leader claimed that not only were 200,000 of the nation's approximately 12,000,000 inhabitants paupers, they were chronic alcoholics as well. In a letter reprinted in the Arkansas Gazette, 23 May 1826, Susan Crowder of South Carolina observed that most of the men who were considered respectable in her state and Alabama were really drunkards. She accused both political and military leaders, and even included "good old" Baptists and Presbyterians. In one study, The British Traveler in America, 1836-1860 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), p. 13, Max Berger described the visitors as a heterogenous lot from English middle and upper middle classes who did not understand the average American. Another foreign traveler thought westerners were more intemperate than easterners. James Edward Alexander, Transatlantic Sketches, Comprising Visits to the Most Interesting Scenes in North and South America and the West Indies; with Notes on Negro Slavery and Canadian Emigration, 2 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1833), 2:35.
men with similar desirable moral, mental, and physical qualifications as those volunteering during the war had seemed reluctant to enlist.\footnote{In 1856, the adjutant general reported to Congress that of the more than 200,000 men who tried to volunteer at the beginning of the Mexican War, the overwhelming majority had been native-born citizens, motivated primarily by patriotism. U.S., Congress, Senate, Adjutant General's Report, Statistics of the Recruiting Service, 34th Cong., 1st sess., January, 1856, p. 628. U.S., National Archives, Old Army Records, Register of Enlistments in the United States Army, 1798-1914, Records Group 94, Microcopy 233, Rolls 14-21.}

Besides an absence of apparent patriotism in time of peace, many individuals with ambition for advancement felt that their chances of promotion from the enlisted ranks were too slight to warrant beginning a military career as a lowly private. Graduates of the United States Military Academy at West Point provided the vast majority of officers for the army. Of approximately 1,700 officers commissioned from 1815 through 1845, 1,151 had been academy graduates. Only 21 men received commissions from the enlisted ranks.\footnote{Prucha, Sword of the Republic, pp. 323-324. Russell Frank Weigley, History of the United States Army (New York: Macmillan Company, 1967), pp. 133-172 passim. Francis Bernard Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, from Its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1902, 2 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902), 1:149-1,069 passim.}

Although a lack of patriotism and the futility of hoping to be promoted from the rank and file dissuaded many
individuals from pursuing a military career, one other unmeasurable factor probably acted as a far greater deterrent—the American's antipathy toward regimentation. Many of the men who enlisted, despite a lack of enthusiasm for rigid discipline, soon found their new environment to be unbearable. Having lived in a society where the average citizen considered himself equal with his neighbors, an American, the native-born in particular, refused to accept a subservient role as a member of a military caste. Recruits not only found rigid lines of rank distinction in the execution of their everyday duties, but also in their social associations as well. While Americans may have seemed to enjoy and accept the slight degree of regimentation and rank distinction in local militia companies, they had an aversion toward the unyielding system epitomized by the regular army. Foreign visitors, who did make comments about the character of the American soldier, seldom failed to point out the native-born citizens' antipathy toward regimentation.¹⁹

In 1839, the War Department permitted a surgeon to make a survey to determine the reasons why individuals enlisted into the army. Although not broad enough in scope to give a cross section of the entire army, his findings did reflect some of the motivations which led men to turn to a military way of life. In one company of fifty-five men that the surgeon interviewed, nine out of ten subjects had enlisted because of problems over women. Forty-three had been drunk, or partially drunk, at the time they took their oaths of enlistment, and of these, thirteen had changed their names. Approximately one-third of the entire group had been comfortable materially, with a higher than average education. Four had been lawyers, three doctors, and two ministers.  


20 Army and Navy Chronicle, 13 June 1839.
The few better educated individuals who wrote of their army experiences in later life, and the reasons why they had enlisted, primarily reminisced about dreams of romantic adventure. One of the officers who recruited to fill the ranks of the newly activated Regiment of Dragoons in 1833, Captain Philip St. George Cooke, wrote in later years that he had succeeded in gaining the attention of potential cavalrymen's imagination "... with the thought of scouring the far prairies on fine horses, amid buffalo and strange Indians; so much so, that they scarce listened to any discouraging particulars ... ."21 James Hildreth, recruited by one of Cooke's fellow officers, told of having been charmed by thoughts of military life on the Plains with no idea of the degrading labor expected from soldiers.22

21 Philip St. George Cooke, Scenes and Adventures in the Army; or, Romance of Military Life (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1859), p. 201.

22 James Hildreth, Dragoon Campaigns to the Rocky Mountains, Being a History of the Enlistment, Organization, and First Campaigns of United States Dragoons; Together with Incidents of a Soldier's Life, and Sketches of Scenery and Indian Character (New York: Wiley & Son, 1836), p. 14. Although not detracting from the worth of the observations of Hildreth's book, former research editor of the Oklahoma Historical Society, Joseph Bradfield Thoburn, stated his doubts as to the authorship of it. He based his assumption on a belief that the descriptions originated from the pen of a professional military man, other writings with a similar style, and the fact that Hildreth was discharged for disability prior to the beginning of the campaign narrated. "Dragoon
In the summer of 1833, Nathan Sturgis Jarvis, an army surgeon at the frontier outpost of Fort Snelling, near present-day Minneapolis, Minnesota, wrote of two youthful adventurers from New York, with dreams similar to those expressed by Hildreth. When the two arrived at Jarvis's post, their personal appearance and apparent physical condition indicated that they had endured great hardships. They had rowed a canoe up the currents of the Mississippi River and had suffered from a shortage of food and clothing. One was without shoes. While both expressed hope of seeing more wilderness, only one admitted that his primary objective was to fight Indians. The post recruiting officer had little difficulty in persuading the potential warrior to enlist. The other lad decided not to enroll, but accepted local employment as a woodchopper for wages of fifty cents a day. 23

Although the New York wanderer had not designed his plight deliberately and enlisted as a means out of an uncomfortable situation, many men who sought security in the ranks

of the army did. In November, 1840, the adjutant general wrote to the commander at Detroit, Michigan, to be wary of accepting men who tried to enlist during the winter months. The official, Brigadier General Roger Jones, warned that he had received reports that other regiments stationed along the Canadian border had been plagued with men enlisting merely to acquire a supply of warm clothing for winter wear. Once they received their issue, they deserted. Earlier in the year, Jones had directed Captain Edwin Vose Sumner, superintendent of dragoon recruiting at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, to cease issuing great coats to recruits unless they were to be marched to one of the northern posts in late fall or winter. He hoped that the curtailment would trim expenses, but more importantly, it would discourage desertions. 24

As the 1839 surgeon’s survey indicated, drunkenness involved a large percentage of enlistees. Some had been incapable of caring for their affairs as a result of their

24 Jones to Lieutenant Colonel Alexander C.W. Fanning, 4th Artillery Regiment, 23 November 1840; Jones to Sumner, 3 September 1840, AG Letters Relative to Recruiting, RG 94. In 1838, the army established a central depot for dragoon recruiting at Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The post served as a rendezvous where fledgling dragoons were instructed in basic tactics and drill, and were familiarized with their weapons, before being sent to their regiments.
conviviality. For such men, the army offered a haven. Many who enlisted while under the influence of intoxicants later indicated their regret by seeking a release through court action. In 1840, a New York court ordered one man discharged as he had been completely drunk when he took his oath of enlistment. Not all won, however. In 1844, another New York court refused to consider ordering the release of an individual who claimed that he had been inebriated at the time of his enlistment.²⁵

Although few foreigners who visited the United States paid compliments to the character of its soldiers, an occasional transient guest did comment on the practical side of enlisting in the American army. One English traveler made his observations shortly after questioning a former British noncommissioned officer. The man admitted that as a sergeant in the American army he had little work and trouble when compared to the one of his native land. While he thought that punishment in the army of his adopted land excessive, he contributed much of that state of affairs to an ineffective officer corps, which failed to exert a steady command over the troops.²⁶

²⁵Niles' Register, 4 July 1840, 7 September 1844.
Although much of the evidence is circumstantial, a study of the records of men who enlisted in the American army revealed that many could have been deserters from the British military service. The United States offered a refuge with its easily available land and high wages, not to neglect to mention accessible means of transportation. During the period immediately after a deserter entered the country, the military establishment provided an excellent place for a fugitive to hide while he became accustomed to the land. In 1834 alone, of 2,000 British soldiers stationed in Canada, 663 deserted.²⁷

How many of the fugitives from the British army in Canada found their way into the ranks of the United States military service is a matter of conjecture. The problem was not new, however. Shortly after the termination of the War of 1812, the British minister in Washington protested to Secretary of State James Monroe that an American sergeant had attempted to seduce some English soldiers to desert from

Canada. Monroe wrote to Acting Secretary of War Alexander James Dallas that he had expressed a willingness to negotiate an agreement for the reciprocal surrender of deserters. Although Monroe made a gesture to settle the problem, the British government refused to consider such a treaty.  

As the dilemma caused by defections grew more acute during the Upper and Lower Canadian rebellions of 1837, American leaders stressed more need for restraint in accepting British deserters into the army. In 1838, both the adjutant general and the general-in-chief published orders warning recruiters to be especially careful not to enlist fugitives from the British army. The two directives also instructed commanders of units along the Canadian border to assure that American soldiers did not crossover the boundary and encourage defections to the United States.  

A study of the register of enlistments in the United States army indicated that the percentage of men enlisting, who claimed English, Scottish, Welsh, or Irish birth, increased

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rapidly in both percentages and numbers after 1828. Once officials lifted the restrictions against accepting men of foreign birth, more naturalized citizens volunteered each succeeding year. For example, of the 2,105 men who enlisted in 1830, 387 or 18.4 per cent admitted to birth in one of the provinces in the British Isles. The percentage remained at approximately twenty until 1834, the year of the large number of desertions from the British army in Canada. In that year, 756 or 28 per cent of the 2,698 men enlisted admitted to Welsh, Scottish, English, or Irish birth. 30

While the number and percentage of Britishers volunteering for service in the American army continued to climb, and reached 36.5 per cent of the total in 1845, recruits claiming Canadian birth followed a different trend. Throughout the 1820's and 1830's, seldom did enlistees from north of the border equal more than 1 per cent of the total. In the two years following the abortive rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada in 1837, however, the number spiraled almost sixfold. By 1840, the percentage declined to where it had been in the years prior to the rebellions. During the peak of Canadian enlistments, Frederick Marryat, a British

30 Register of Enlistments in the U.S. Army, 1821-1830, RG 94, Microcopy 233, Reels 18, 19.
officer, who traveled extensively in the western United States, verified official figures somewhat. On a trip from Green Bay to Fort Winnebago, near present-day Portage, Wisconsin, Marryat estimated that almost every one of the one hundred recruits he accompanied were Canadian patriots.  

The enlisting of men of foreign birth posed a constant problem for recruiters. While the army generally accepted naturalized citizens, it declined to enroll aliens. For a short period during the War of 1812, Congress lifted bans against enlisting non-citizens, but as soon as the danger presented by the conflict subsided, it reimposed exclusions that had been in effect since 1802. Although the official policy did not again change from 1815 until 1844, recruiting officers continually disregarded regulations. Many administered the oath of enlistment without closely examining an individual's status in respect of citizenship. Others deliberately enrolled aliens. In many instances, men recruited could speak or understand very little English. The laxity of recruiters in the execution of their duties occasionally resulted in sanctions against a neglectful officer. More

rarely a disillusioned soldier sought to win his release from the army through court action.\textsuperscript{32}

Had recruiters obeyed statutory requirements, they would have had little difficulty in determining which volunteers were aliens. Persons who migrated to the United States prior to 1798 could be admitted to citizenship after only five years' residence. During the period from 1798 until 1802, Congress imposed a fourteen-year requisite, including the time from entry, declaration of intention, and petition. The statute of 1802, and supplemental ones in 1804, 1813, and 1816, established a procedure for all aliens to obtain a certificate of report and registry at the time of entry. After two years' residence an individual wishing to be naturalized declared his intention, and renounced any former allegiance before any state or federal court of record. Upon petitioning for citizenship after having lived in the country for five years, the alien presented his certificate of report and registry, and his declaration of intention. By provisions of augmenting legislation in 1824,

Congress afforded minor aliens, who had resided under United States jurisdiction three years prior to their twenty-first birthday, to be eligible for naturalization without having made a declaration of intention. The five-year residence requirement still applied to them, however. Recruiting officers could have easily asked for naturalization certificates from men claiming foreign birth.  

While congressional statutory limitations prohibited the enlisting of aliens by provisions of an act in 1815, army regulations did not mention the matter until 1825. In that year, a revision directed recruiters not to enlist persons of foreign birth unless sanctioned by general headquarters. The regulations licensed the acceptance of reenlistees, musicians, and aliens who had served honorably during the War of 1812.

In 1827, a concerned adjutant general, Roger Jones, asked the Western and Eastern department recruiting superintendents for their opinions and suggestions about the effects of restrictions against the enlisting of foreigners. Major William Davenport of the Western Department informed


34 Regulations for the Army, 1825, p. 354.
Jones that officers in his area of responsibility paid little attention to the regulations anyhow. Lieutenant Colonel Enos Cutler of the Eastern Department stated that had recruiters in his district not adhered to the regulations, they could have easily doubled their quotas over the past two years. Both officers agreed that the paragraph directing general headquarters permission to enlist men of foreign birth should be rescinded. They also concurred that in strictly military matters naturalized citizens made as efficient soldiers as native-born ones. In 1828, officials took the advice of Cutler and Davenport. General Order 43 directed that recruiters no longer needed formal consent of general headquarters to enroll qualified foreigners who were citizens. 35

In 1833, the army again imposed similar limitations on officers recruiting for the newly authorized Regiment of Dragoons. After Congress provided for a mounted regiment to cope with the wily Indians of the Great Plains, military leaders hoped to attract a more desirable group of enlistees than had been possible in the past. The general order

establishing the requisites for enlistment in the dragoons denied any person except native-born citizens the privilege of enrolling in the ranks of the elite unit. Generally, officers recruiting for dragoons during the first three years of the regiment's existence abided by the spirit of the order. From 1833 through 1835, of the 734 men enlisted for duty with the unit, only 34 admitted to foreign births. By 1838, the army amended regulations to permit the enlistment of any citizen, native or naturalized, into any regiment. Finally in 1844, the War Department implied consent for the enlisting of aliens. Secretary of War William Wilkins instructed Adjutant General Jones that "... all free white male persons, ... who have a competent knowledge of the language of the country, may be enlisted."36 The following year, men claiming foreign birth comprised over 50 per cent of the total accepted by the army.

Prior to 1834, neither regulations nor official correspondence mentioned that recruits should be able to speak and understand English. This requirement would have been practical earlier, and probably would have prevented

incidents such as the one that occurred at Fort Crawford, Michigan Territory, in the early 1830's. During an inspection by regimental commander Colonel Zachary Taylor, one stocky German soldier of the First Infantry Regiment failed to align himself properly when ordered to do so. John H. Fonda, a member of the same unit who recorded the incident many years later, recalled that the man did not understand enough English to comprehend the simplest drill command. Upon spotting the unaligned soldier, Taylor assumed that he had willfully disobeyed orders. Thereupon, he marched up to the recruit, grabbed his ears, and shook him violently. The reaction of the soldier to the "wooling," one of Taylor's favorite methods of making on the spot corrections of minor infractions of military good order, shocked everyone present. As soon as Taylor released the German's ears, the man struck the officer such a severe blow that he fell to the ground. Rather than punish the recruit, however, the colonel ordered that he be left alone and he would make a good soldier. Fonda reminisced that the man was not punished. Not only did he develop into an excellent soldier, he spoke English fluently before his discharge. 37

37 The first reference of recruiters being instructed not to accept men who could not understand English may be found in a letter from Jones to Lieutenant Colonel Icabod Bennet Crane, 16 August 1836, Adjutant General Letters.
Not all officers concurred with the opinions expressed by Cutler and Davenport relative to the efficiency of men of foreign birth. During the 1830's, Jones continually warned recruiters not to enlist aliens or naturalized citizens who lacked a competent knowledge of English. In July, 1840, while visiting posts in the West, Inspector General George Croghan reported that in one regiment over 90 per cent of the most recent 110 replacements spoke and understood only German or Dutch. While commanders complained, recruiters continued to interpret regulations loosely in efforts to meet their quotas. 38

At the same time that Croghan criticized the practice of enlisting men who were incompetent in the use of English,


the commander of the First Dragoon Regiment also expressed extreme displeasure over the same matter. Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny wrote to the adjutant general that of the last one hundred recruits assigned to his unit, less than one-half understood English sufficiently to comprehend the simplest commands. He stated further that the few good foreigners he had been fortunate enough to receive did not make up for the many bad ones.  

With such a fuss as was made over the enlisting of men of foreign birth, one must wonder about the percentage accepted each year. The incompleteness of enlistment records for the period from 1815 until 1821 preclude an accurate assessment of the number of aliens or naturalized persons entering the army. A survey of the available records indicated that slightly less than 20 per cent of the recruits enrolled during the first six years after the end of the War of 1812 were of foreign birth.  

For the period after 1821, however, more exact figures are available. From June, 1821, through December, 1823, the number of naturalized citizens enlisting exceeded 27 per

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39 Jones to Sumner, 23 November 1840, Adjutant General Letters Relative to Recruiting, RG 94, Entry 647.  
40 Register of Enlistments in the U.S. Army, 1815-1821, RG 94, Microcopy 233, Reels 14-17.
cent. This figure remained about the same until after 1825 regulations required the sanction of general headquarters to enroll non-native-born persons. Subsequent to the restrictions imposed from 1825 through 1827, the figures dipped to well below 10 per cent. In 1828, after officials removed the limitations placed on recruiters by the 1825 regulations, the percentage of naturalized citizens enlisting increased each year. By 1834, it reached 40 per cent level and remained at that point through 1843. After the 1844 amendment implied consent to enlist aliens, the number of non-native enrollees accepted by the army zoomed to 53 per cent the first year.41

In 1815, a soldier of English birth sought his release from the American army on grounds of being an enemy alien. Contrary to the argument of the plaintiff, a federal district judge held that a person, who had voluntarily offered his services and had been accepted as a soldier, could not question the legality of his enlistment. From 1815 until 1841, not one other soldier applied for discharge on grounds of alienage. In 1841, however, the Supreme Court of Norfolk County, Virginia, directed the release of Private George

Cottingham, because as a subject of the Queen of England he owed his loyalty to her. The following year a lower state court in New York rendered a similar ruling. After these two decisions, nearly four hundred men asked for and received their discharges on grounds of alienage.42

The adjudications by the Virginia and New York courts began to cause concern among army officers. An article in the Army and Navy Chronicle best expressed the attitude of the newspaper's readers. The writer thought that if the Virginia court's decision were let stand, at least 20 percent of the entire army and navy would seek discharges. Although officers expressed a preference of native-born citizens for soldiers, recruiters had not been able to fill the ranks with such individuals. Since aliens were available as a source, they should be utilized.43

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43 Circular, 12 February 1842, Jones to Crane, 30 April 1842, Jones to Major Clifton Wharton, 23 May 1842, Jones to Lieutenant Newman S. Clarke, 8 August 1842, Adjutant General Letters Relative to Recruiting, RG 94, Entry 647. Army and Navy Chronicle, 9 December 1841.
The opinions related by the newspaper article and concerned officials seems to have been noticed by both federal and state judges. In 1843, a federal district court in New Orleans and state appellant courts in Virginia, New York, and Florida reversed lower courts that had ordered the release of soldiers who could prove their alienage. Thus, in 1844, with the way cleared by the judiciary, the War Department amended regulations to permit army recruiters to enlist unnaturalized residents without awaiting congressional corroboration. 44

During the same period that military and civilian leaders puzzled over the feasibility of enlisting aliens, changes to statutes and army regulations also sought to resolve questions developing over acceptable physical standards, age limits, and a practical length for voluntary periods of service. Of the three areas, modifications to the length of service requirement occurred least frequently. In 1815, Congress reaffirmed the necessity of maintaining five-year periods of enlistment. At the insistence of military leaders, however, lawmakers reduced the term of

voluntary obligation to three years in 1833. The shorter term along with a pay increase supposedly helped to reduce desertions over the next several years. In 1837, although cognizant of the good resulting from shorter terms of service, Major General Alexander Macomb, commanding-in-chief, stressed the need for a resumption of five-year enlistments to Congress. His change of view came from a realization that men could not be recruited, sent to their units, and trained in three years. In addition to a lack of time to make efficient soldiers, the shorter terms increased recruiting expenditures. Lawmakers complied with Macomb's wishes in 1838, and extended the term of voluntary enlistment to five years. Congress did not again legislate on the matter until the beginning of the Civil War. In the summer of 1861, a federal statute reduced terms of service in the regular army to three years.\(^45\)

Whereas the length of enlistments seldom changed, physical standards frequently varied, particularly minimum height. Since regulations prior to 1825 merely specified that an enlistee be "able bodied, active, and free from disease," or some similar vague prerequisite, each recruiter

set his own criterion. Although federal statutes pre-
scribed a minimum height of 5 feet 6 inches, neither the 1813
nor the 1821 regulations mentioned the matter. Both permitted
the acceptance of "... a recruit for the want of size,
provided he be strong, active, well made, and healthy."\(^{47}\)

Not until 1825 did the army directives specifically
set a minimum height for recruits. With the exception of
reenlistees and musicians, regulations directed that
artillerymen be at least 5 feet 8 inches as compared to 5
feet 6 inches for infantry recruits. Men of shorter stature
could not effectively perform as members of gun crews.
Although need for efficiency dictated minimum heights, a
lack of qualified volunteers often resulted in waivers to
imposed limitations. For example, after the 1825 regulations
reduced the possibilities for enrolling naturalized citizens,
the number of men accepted declined drastically. Jones found
need to instruct Cutler to send all disposable recruits from
the Eastern Department to the artillery regiments without
regard to size. For more than a year after the issuance of
the 1826 order, recruiters sent replacements who were under

\(^{46}\) U.S., American State Papers, Military Affairs, 2:262.

minimum height to all corps. In 1829, a constant want for qualified volunteers compelled officials to reduce the size of recruits for the artillery to 5 feet 6 inches.\footnote{Regulations for the Army, 1825, p. 354. Jones to Cutler, 16 May 1826; Jones to Lieutenant Colonel Willoughby Morgan, Eastern Department recruiting superintendent, 25 September 1829, Adjutant General Letters Relative to Recruiting, RG 94, Entry 647.}

Upon activation of the Dragoon Regiment in 1833, neither Congress, nor the standards of enlistment for the unit, specified a minimum or maximum height for recruits. Directives merely stated that men received for dragoon duty be capable of performing the "... duties and active service of mounted soldiers.\footnote{Order 15, 11 March 1833, Hq. US Army, reprinted in the Niles' Register, 23 March 1833.}"

Throughout the 1830's, the adjutant general's office instructed recruiters to ignore minimum size limitations, and to enlist any able-bodied men. Although officials continued to accept individuals of stature less than set by regulations, not until 1838 did an amendment lower the height to 5 feet 5 inches. Two years later as the need for men to fight an Indian war in Florida increased military leaders further reduced the acceptable size of recruits. This time they lowered it to 5 feet 3 inches. In 1842,
after the Florida fiasco ended, a Whig Congress drastically reduced the authorized strength of the army. For the next two years, the War Department closed all recruiting stations, except those operated in the regiments. After the reduction in force satiated its manpower needs, the army decided to raise the minimum height to 5 feet 5 inches. In 1844, Secretary of War Wilkins directed the change. The Mexican War again created a sudden need for a large number of volunteers. Thus, in 1847, regulations set the minimum height at 5 feet 3 inches. 50

In contrast to the problem caused over the minimum height of recruits, the army found no need to establish an upper limit. Few men over 6 feet tried to enlist. Between 1815 and 1845, the average height of persons who were accepted averaged less than 5 feet, 8 inches. Occasionally, commanders complained that they had been discriminated against when recruiters sent men of the minimum height. In April, 1834, Zachary Taylor wrote Jones that his recruits over the past year had been shorter than those sent to the Fourth Infantry

50 Jones to Sumner, 1 July 1833, Jones to Lieutenant Colonel William Sewell Foster, 18 June 1834, Captain Samuel Cooper to Lieutenant Colonel Enos Cutler, 7, 17 September 1836, Jones to Lieutenant Colonel Josiah H. Vose, 23 March 1840, Wilkins to Jones, 12 March 1844, General Order 25, 20 July 1838, Adjutant General Letters Relative to Recruiting, RG 94, Entry 647. Regulations for the Army, 1847, p. 134.
Regiment. The adjutant general disputed Taylor's contention, and quoted him statistics to prove the colonel's accusation incorrect. Jones stated that the average height of Taylor's grenadier companies in his First Infantry Regiment exceeded those of the Fourth by one and a quarter inches. A few months afterwards, the adjutant general wrote Taylor and informed him that the commander of the Fifth Infantry had registered a similar complaint about the First.  

After the activation of the Dragoon Regiment in 1833, the adjutant general emphasized the exigency for recruiters to exercise caution in selection of men for the unit. General Order 15 implied that individuals of excessive size should be rejected. Weighty men would obviously create difficulties in a mounted unit. For example, after one of his tours to the West, Inspector General Croghan commented about one dragoon who weighed in excess of 250 pounds. He wondered which horse carried such a load. 

51 A and B companies of an infantry regiment were called grenadiers. The mission of these light infantrymen on the flanks of the regiment traditionally required that they be of greater physical strength than the other companies. Register of Enlistments in the U.S. Army, 1815-1845, RG 94, Microcopy 233, Reels 14-21. Jones to Taylor, 1 January, 23 April 1834, Adjutant General Letters Relative to Recruiting, RG 94, Entry 647.

Over the years as physical requirements varied, the minimum and maximum ages for enlistment in the regular army did not change. The upper age remained at thirty-five, except for reenlistees. Both statutes and regulations prohibited the enlisting of youths less than twenty-one without the consent of guardian, master, or parent. After 1821, officials directed that permission for minors to enroll be in writing.

Although regulations required written consent for men under twenty-one years of age, all concerned government agencies received enquiries protesting the acceptance of minors into the army. In some instances, recruiting officers failed to exercise rational judgment in determining if an individual was of age. On the other hand, minors sometimes perjured themselves and swore that they were over twenty-one. Some even signed statements that their parents, guardians, or masters no longer had control over them. A few even enlisted under the precise letter of the law, and then when they grew dissatisfied with military life, sought release through civil action.


54  U.S., American State Papers, Military Affairs, 1:669. Jones to Cutler, 29 August 1826, 9 November 1827, 12 May 1836,
In cases where recruiters failed to follow established procedures, regulations directed that they be held responsible for their neglect. For example, in 1815, a Massachusetts father won his minor son's release from the army by a writ of habeas corpus. After the lad's discharge, the father again went to the York County Court and received a favorable judgment by which a recruiter, Captain Alexander Worster, had to pay damages and cost of the suit totaling $115.27. In 1817, the House of Representatives refused to reimburse the former officer because of his neglect in accepting the minor's word that he had been of age to enlist.\footnote{U.S., American State Papers, Military Affairs, 1:669.}

During the same period that Worster experienced difficulties in Massachusetts, another recruiter, Brevet Colonel Thomas Sidney Jesup, encountered similar circumstances in Connecticut. Near the end of the War of 1812, the state
legislature endeavored to reinforce its rights at the expense of the federal government. In January, 1815, lawmakers passed a measure that permitted local officials to ban recruiting parties from village or city streets and other public places. Besides licensing local governments to restrict the movements of recruiters, the statute also provided for a twelve-month prison term and a $500 fine for any person who aided or enlisted a minor without proper consent.

As soon as he received notification of the provisions of the Connecticut law, Jesup wrote Adjutant and Inspector General Daniel Parker expressing his concern. He hoped that many persons would not abuse the intent of the act. Within one week after he warned Parker, Jesup sent a dispatch to army headquarters accusing friends of a Private Gordon B. Wood of perpetrating a fraud. The intimate associates of the soldier sought his discharge on grounds that he had been under the legal age limit at the time of his enlistment. Jesup claimed that the man had been of proper age. The alleged minor had deserted two times, and had even been

56 Jesup to Secretary of State James Monroe, 20, 21, 23, 31 January, 1 February 1815, Jesup to Parker, 28 January 1815, Jesup Papers, Vol. 2.
returned in one instance by his father in hope of begging clemency. If the individual had been under legal age at that time, the father could have obtained a writ of habeas corpus and won his release. Parker refused to be swayed by Jesup's argument and ordered Wood discharged. In this case, Jesup was not held responsible to reimburse the government for any monetary losses, nor was a civil suit brought against him for damages.  

Although regulations gave special importance to pecuniary penalties being placed on officers who carelessly received minors into the army in violation of regulations, the problem remained a constant one. On several occasions it reached epidemic proportions. By 1821, an economic recession had brought such a rash of minority enlistments that the adjutant and inspector general found a need to publish a circular warning recruiters of the consequences of accepting men under twenty-one years of age without proper consent.  

After the 1825 regulations curtailed the number of foreign-born recruits who could enlist without general headquarters'

57 Jesup to Parker, 28 January 1815, Jesup Papers, Vol. 2.
58 Circular, AG & IG Office, 1 January 1821, U.S., National Archives, Old Army Records, 6th U.S. Infantry Regiment Letters
approval, recruiters seeking to fill their quotas seemed to grow careless. The number of minors in the ranks increased. In August, 1826, the adjutant general warned the department superintendents to bring the matter to the attention of officers in their areas of responsibility. Although amendments to the regulations did again permit the unrestricted enlistment of naturalized citizens in 1828, difficulties over minors illegally enrolling continued to plague recruiters. Officers who persisted in being neglectful paid a penalty for their oversight. For example, in June, 1836, the adjutant general asked the treasury department to halt the pay of an officer who had enlisted seven minors. Officials records note numerous similar incidents.59

In cases where recruiters enlisted individuals in accordance with the letter of the law, army authorities reluctantly gave permission for discharges. In 1826, rather than allow the release of a minor after he had been apprehended as a deserter, the adjutant general directed the supervisor of the New York City recruiting station to court-martial him. Jones hoped that finding an individual guilty of swindling

59 Jones to Cutler, 29 August 1826, Jones to Lewis, 30 June 1836, Adjutant General Letters Relative to Recruiting, RG 94, Entry 647.
the public and perjury would tend to discourage other
unqualified persons from fraudulently enlisting. 60

A few years later the adjutant general again refused
to order the discharge of another minor. This time the
lad had been legally enrolled. Jones directed the recruiting
supervisor at Newark, New Jersey, that since the minor had
been enlisted according to regulations, the parent's only
recourse was through civil action. Similarly, in 1840, an
individual named R.S. Anderson questioned Secretary of War
Joel R. Poinsett about the army refusing to discharge a
soldier claiming minority, but who had legally been enlisted.
The secretary replied that the man could not be released
from his obligation unless he provided a substitute at no
expense to the government. 61

If the army had legal claims to the services of an
individual, generally officials would not release him on
grounds of minority unless directed by the War Department or
the courts. In attempting to discern developing principles
of minority adjudication, one would find that both state and

60 Jones to Cutler, 29 August 1826, Adjutant General
Letters Relative to Recruiting, RG 94, Entry 647.

61 Jones to Captain William Walton Morris, 13 June 1839,
Adjutant General Letters Relative to Recruiting, RG 94,
Enter 647. Poinsett to Anderson, 20 April 1840, Letters Sent
by the Secretary of War, RG 107, Microcopy 6, Roll 22.
federal courts displayed inconsistency. Normally, however, through 1846, various judiciaries remanded underaged soldiers who had enlisted with their masters', guardians', or parents' consent to the army's jurisdiction for completion of their terms of obligation. On the other hand, if permission had not been given, the same courts would order the discharge of minors at the insistence of parents or persons in loco parentis without regard to the youths' desires.62

In addition to age, physical stature, and citizenship, the army placed several other prerequisites for acceptable standards of recruits. While blacks had been utilized by militia units during the War of 1812, regular army regiments would not receive them. After the end of the conflict, officials published occasional notices to recruiters not to accept Negroes or Indians into the army. Although regulations excluded these two minority groups from military service, both performed duties in capacities other than soldiering. Indians served as scouts. Blacks provided a source for mechanics, teamsters, blacksmiths, brick and stonemasons, boat crewmen, carpenters, servants, and laborers in the quartermaster, engineer, and ordnance departments.

In 1842, over seven hundred slaves and free Negroes were employed by the army.\(^{63}\)

Regulations also directed that men with any known infirmity, such as "ulcerated legs, scalded head, rupture, ... scurvy, ... habitual drunkard, or ... epileptic fits" be excluded from enlisting.\(^{64}\) As with the imposition of pecuniary penalties for neglect in receiving minors into the army, personnel procurement directives held recruiting officers accountable to reimburse any costs incurred by the government for payment of bounties or issue of clothing to disabled individuals. To insure that recruiters enrolled only able-bodied men, regulations required that an army surgeon or surgeon's mate examine each potential recruit prior to the administering of the oath of enlistment. Many times a shortage of military medical personnel necessitated the utilization of civilian doctors. After 1834 to pare excessive spending, the adjutant general curtailed the

\(^{63}\) General Order, 23 February 1820, U.S., National Archives, Old Army Records, 6th U.S. Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, 1817-1824, Records Group 391, Entry 1207.

\(^{64}\) Regulations for the Army, 1825, p. 354.
employment of non-military medical personnel. Higher-level officials accepted an idea that any intelligent man should be able to recognize obvious disabilities. Those infirmities recruiters failed to discern at the rendezvous and stations would be found at the regiments. At each unit a surgeon made thorough examinations of newly assigned recruits upon their arrival. Based on the doctor's report, a board of officers determined the suitability of each man. Since the army held recruiting officers pecuniarily liable for enlisting unfit individuals, many employed civilian surgeons at their own expenses to examine all volunteers offering their services. 65

Not only did the army attempt to curtail the enlisting of disabled persons, it also restrained officers from recruiting men known to have been guilty of desertion from

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65 Order 59, 24 September 1829, Jones to Lieutenant Colonel Icabod Bennet Crane, recruiting superintendent, 16 August 1834, Jones to Lieutenant Colonel A. Cummings, 2d Infantry Regiment, 20 November 1834, Jones to Captain Edwin Vose Sumner, dragoon recruiting service, 28 March 1835, Jones to Cutler, 3 July 1837, Jones to Lewis, 29 May 1837, Captain Lorenzo Thomas to Captain Albert S. Miller, 3 March 1841, Adjutant General Letters Relative to Recruiting, RG 94, Entry 647. Regulations for the Army, 1825, p. 354. Max L. Heyman, Jr., Prudent Soldier; A Biography of Major General E.R.S. Canby, 1817-1873; His Military Service in the Indian Campaigns, in the Mexican War, in California, New Mexico, Utah, and Oregon, in the Civil War in the Trans-Mississippi West, and a Military Governor in the Post-War South (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1959), p. 54.
any army. Officials reasoned that if a soldier abandoned his obligation in one military service, he would be as undependable when exposed to a difficult situation in another. In 1833, in addition to prohibiting the enlisting of deserters, Congress barred all persons who had been previously convicted of a criminal offense. By the exclusion of former deserters and criminals, military leaders anticipated receiving men of higher moral and social levels.\textsuperscript{66}

Officers and enlisted men assigned to recruiting details used unique methods to gain the interest of potential recruits. Some relied on devious devices. Others purposely designed misleading advertisements. On the other hand, many did attempt to present straightforward programs. Because so many recruiters had deceived men into enlisting by 1847, officials had become so sensitive about the army's image that they revised regulations to warn recruiters to "be careful not to allow any man to be deceived or inveigled into the service."\textsuperscript{67}

In the decade after the end of the War of 1812, recruiting officers in Eastern urban areas advertised by placing handbills in public places. Their announcements

\textsuperscript{66} Regulations for the Army, 1825, p. 354. U.S., Statutes at Large, 4:647.

\textsuperscript{67} Regulations for the Army, 1847, p. 133.
played on individual security, good treatment, and assurance of physical comforts and excellent medical care. 68

Although instructions to recruiters warned against the use of devious methods to influence men to enlist, high-level military and political leaders continually received complaints about some young, naive soul having been deceived. Non-commissioned personnel seemed particularly prone to rely on exaggerations, and in some cases plain fabrications. In 1833, the adjutant general found need to instruct the colonel of the First Artillery Regiment to investigate the conduct of his sergeant major. The senior noncommissioned officer had enlisted a recruit by promising him that he would be stationed in Baltimore permanently. Instead, shortly after the youth had been administered his oath of enlistment, he found himself on a troop levy to the West. Jones finally ordered that the soldier be discharged. 69

68 Bearss, Fort Smith, p. 78.

69 Jones to Lieutenant Colonel John De Barth Walbach, 1st Artillery Regiment, 23 July 1833, Jones to Cutler, 22 October 1836, Jones to Lieutenant Weightman Key Hanson, 7th Infantry Regiment, 24 February, 7 March 1837, Jones to Lieutenant John Randolph Barent Gardenier, 1st Infantry Regiment, 10 April 1837, Jones to U.S. Representative Edward Curtis of New York, 14 May 1838, Thomas to Miller, 24 March 1841, Adjutant General Letters Relative to Recruiting, RG 94, Entry 647.
An example of a recruiting officer's advertising for recruits in a newspaper may be found in an 1833 edition of the *Missouri Republican*. Captain Reuben Holmes urged men who were disposed to enroll in the newly activated dragoon regiment to see him at Jefferson Barracks. Other recruiters used more colorful methods to attract potential enlistees. In 1836, when officers of the recently authorized Second Regiment of Dragoons began to search for recruits, the adjutant general suggested that one company be formed first and dressed in full uniform. This colorful array could be moved about the country to make an impression on possible recruits. He commented further that "in former times, . . . good musick [sic], handsome uniform, and soldierly deportment . . . in the recruiting service, were indispensable for success." In 1839, a sergeant in Plattsburgh, New York, marched through the streets of the city with a band. The editor of a newspaper remarked that he hoped the recruiter had "been successful, for we could spare a goodly number of loafers."

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70 *Missouri Republican*, 1 October 1833.

71 Jones to Major General Alexander Macomb, 22 August 1836, Adjutant General Letters Relative to Recruiting, RG 94, Entry 647.

72 *Army and Navy Chronicle*, 25 April 1839.
A most important incentive to encourage men to enlist was by offering money for their services. From 1802 until 1833, Congress authorized the army to pay a twelve-dollar bounty for a promise to serve a five-year term. A recruit received six dollars after his oath of enlistment, and then the remainder of the premium upon mustering into his regiment. Because of a tendency for many men to desert after they received the first payment of their bounty, Congress decided to end the paying of allowances to recruits. In 1833, lawmakers provided for the awarding of bonuses to reenlisting privates and musicians only.\textsuperscript{73}

Another practice discontinued in 1833 was the awarding of a two-dollar premium to officers for each person they enlisted. The temptation of monetary gain led to fraud and other undesirable consequences. For a short period between 1837 and 1847, however, regulations did permit payment of a two-dollar award to any civilian or soldier who brought an able-bodied person to a rendezvous, and if the individual enrolled. In 1843, during the Whigs' program of retrenchment, Congress repealed the award.\textsuperscript{74}

\textsuperscript{73}U.S., Statutes at Large, 2:135, 4:647.

\textsuperscript{74}Ibid., 4:647. U.S., Congress, Senate, Report from the Secretary of War in Answer to a Resolution of the Senate in Relation to Desertion in the Army, 21st Cong., 1st sess., 17 February 1830, S. Doc. 62. Jones to regimental commanders,
From 1815 until 1845, one of the major changes in replacement procedures occurred in the disposition of recruits after enlistment. Prior to 1825, individuals enlisted for a particular regiment. An officer or sergeant from the unit moved newly recruited personnel to their duty station. In 1825, as the recruiting service assumed a more national character, officials realized the need for some basic training before young soldiers joined their units. They felt that in addition to providing recruits with elementary military knowledge, instructions conducted at rendezvous also offered a means to curtail vices that often resulted from idleness. A factor considered most important by officials was that the training be rigid in order to detect disabilities early in an individual's service. Military leaders believed that two months' training was sufficient to acquaint untrained men "with the first duties of police, . . . schools of the soldier and company, [and basic] . . . infantry tactics."\(^75\)

By 1837, amendments to regulations resulted in other alterations to recruit indoctrination procedures. Instead

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13 July 1837, Amendment to regulations, 12 July 1843, Adjutant General Letter Relative to Recruiting, RG 94, Entry 647.

\(^{75}\) *Regulations for the Army*, 1825, p. 355.
of sending men destined for infantry regiments directly to the frontier, the army established a basic training center at Fort Monroe, Virginia. Artillery recruits received training at the same depot. In addition to the center at Fort Monroe, the army continued to give training to some men at its recruiting stations and rendezvous.  

The year following the designation of an infantry center, the War Department selected Carlisle Barracks as the cavalry training depot. A cadre retained mounts at the post for use in instructing trainees in the rudiments of horsemanship. In addition to basic equestrian skills, non-commissioned officers taught the recruits in the care and use of their weapons. Since the army did not adopt a program of marksmanship until 1858, prior to that time recruits could not begin to develop one of the most important skills of a soldier during their introductory period to army life. In spite of its shortcomings, the innovation of basic training at depots certainly served to better prepare men from eastern urban areas with some of the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the challenges of a completely new way of life. Most important, it afforded them protection

76 General Order, USA, 24 June 1837, Adjutant General Letters Relative to Recruiting, RG 94, Entry 647.
from the hazards and hardships of frontier life while they received their training. 77

Although the quartermaster issued most of a recruit's clothing at depot, recruiters usually had given them a few necessary items. Since regulations prohibited the bringing of civilian clothing to depots or on marches to regiments, most recruits disposed of their civilian clothes in any expedient manner. One exception to the rules permitted the use of civilian shirts or shoes until a man received his full issue. 78

In 1833, James Hildreth wrote of his enlistment and trip from New York to join his company and the Dragoon Regiment at Jefferson Barracks, a few miles south of St. Louis, Missouri. While his commander had the foresight to issue his men a full complement of clothing in the East, the captains of three other companies had neglected to do so.


78 Regulations for the Army, 1825, pp. 352-353. Order 18, AGUSA, 8 February 1833; Jones to Sumner, 2 August 1838, Adjutant General Letters Relative to Recruiting, RG 94, Entry 647.
Upon their departure from various eastern cities, the officers informed their recruits that military clothing would be available when they arrived in St. Louis. The enlistees carried few items of wear, except the minimum needed for the voyage. Articles promised and items issued proved to be quite different. The men arrived at Jefferson Barracks in an almost threadbare condition. Because contractors had been unable to meet their delivery schedules, the almost naked soldiers remained without clothing for several weeks before they received their uniforms. 79

By 1845, regulations had changed in efforts by military leaders not to place recruits in the position that Hildreth's comrades had found themselves. As soon as an individual enlisted, the recruiting officers directed the soldier to cut his hair short, bathe, and dress in a full uniform. Whereas in previous years regulations permitted a recruit to retain his civilian shirts and shoes until he mustered in his regiment, the 1841 and 1847 regulations specifically directed that a newly enlisted soldier dispose of every item of non-military clothing. 80

79 Hildreth, Dragoon Campaigns to the Rockies, pp. 37-38.
80 Regulations for the Army, 1847, p. 136.
Shortly after recruits completed their two months' training period, levies placed them in packets for movement to their regiments. Officers returning to duty after a leave of absence, or expressly assigned to the task, accompanied the replacements to their regiments. If non-commissioned officers were unavailable to accompany a packet, the escort commander appointed one of the more soldierly and mature privates to act as lance corporal or sergeant, depending on the size of the levy. Those men destined for infantry companies could expect to be sent to any part of the United States. The soldiers assigned to one of the four artillery regiments remained in Atlantic or Gulf coastal installations, or possibly traveled to an Indian war in Florida. Except for the period of Black Hawk's uprising in 1832, artillery units did not serve in the West prior to the Mexican War. 81

For the first few years after the activation of the First Dragoons in 1833, men enlisted for that regiment traveled only to the West. Its companies were stationed at three posts located in present-day Oklahoma, Kansas, and Iowa.

With the activation of the Second Dragoons in 1836, soldiers joined that regiment in Florida for the next five years. In 1841, the army deployed both mounted units along the western frontier in efforts to cope with highly mobile Indians of the Great Plains. 82

Since the greater portion of recruits enlisted from the Middle Atlantic states and Virginia, those transported to the West usually passed through Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and down the Ohio River. Occasionally troops assigned to units stationed in the Great Lakes region moved by boat over those bodies of water to their destinations. From 1815 through 1845, the army had water routes available to all of its posts west of the Mississippi River. In many instances, however, seasonal conditions limited navigation on many streams. Those in more northern regions froze-over during the winter months. Posts located in less humid areas could only be reached by water after melting snow in the Rocky Mountains filled river channels to an overflow. And then in unseasonably dry weather streams fell below navigable levels, including those normally able to handle boat traffic all year. Prior to 1819 the primary mode of boat travel had been by keel or flatboats, which moved along with the currents 82

Ganoe, History of the Army, pp. 173, 175, 178-195 passim.
of the river. To move upstream, the crew either used a cordell or poled the boat against the currents. By 1820, a phenomenal increase in the number of steamboats on western waters had changed the primary means of passenger travel. 83

The interior route most used to the West began at Pittsburgh. Troops reached the city by many modes of transportation. In the period immediately after the War of 1812, when large bodies of soldiers moved to the West, they marched overland to the point of embarkation, and then rode keel or flatboats down the Ohio River. In 1815, the Seventh Infantry Regiment used this method in deploying from Plattsburgh, New York, to its posts on the upper Arkansas River. Four years later, the army decided to use the Sixth Infantry Regiment to support an expedition up the Missouri. Officials directed the commander to move his unit by water from Plattsburgh to Newburgh, New York. The regiment then marched overland to Pittsburgh. From the western Pennsylvania city,

the troops floated down the Ohio on ten flatboats, propelled by oars and sails when the current failed to carry them along. Officers escorting small packets of recruits utilized overland coaches to points of water embarkation.  

The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 provided a water route from the Atlantic coast across New York to the Great Lakes. From Buffalo, passengers boarded lake steamers to their destination. In 1833, with the completion of the Ohio and Erie Canal, and the Main Line in Pennsylvania two years later, two routes provided water access to the Ohio River from the Great Lakes or the Atlantic Ocean. The canal in Ohio traversed from Cleveland through the heart of the state to Portsmouth. In Pennsylvania, the Main Line system provided a means for boat travel up the Susquehanna and Juniata rivers.

84 Colonel John Miller, 7th Infantry Regiment, to Secretary of War Alexander J. Dallas, 7 April 1815, Colonel Henry Atkinson, 6th Infantry Regiment, to Secretary of War John Caldwell Calhoun, 27 March 1819, U.S. National Archives, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, 1803-1860, Records Group 107, Microcopy 221, Rolls 64, 80. Atkinson to Calhoun, 3 March 1819, U.S., National Archives, Old Army Records, 6th U.S. Infantry Regiment Letters Sent and Received, 1817-1824, Records Group 391, Entry 1202. Orders, 19 April, 8 May 1819, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391. Henry Hunt Snelling, Memoirs of a Boyhood at Fort Snelling, edited by Lewis Beeson (Minneapolis: Privately Printed, 1939), p. 2. Elkanah Babcock, A War History of the Sixth U.S. Infantry, from 1798 to 1903, with Rosters and Memorials of the Cuban and Philippine
to the eastern slope of the Allegheny Mountains near Hollidaysburg. At that point a series of locks provided a portage to lift both passengers and boats over the mountain. On the western side of the barrier, another canal followed the Conemough and Allegheny rivers to Pittsburgh. 85

Although the army shipped regiments, and subsequent replacements to Florida by ocean transportation immediately after the War of 1812, not until the 1830's did officials begin to see the economy of using such means to move troops from the East to posts in the lower Mississippi Valley. In 1835, the quartermaster general recommended that recruits levied from eastern depots for regiments in the West should be shipped from New York to New Orleans. After it did begin to route troops through the lower Mississippi River port, the quartermaster exercised care not to dispatch recruits during periods of threat from fever. Within a short time men destined for posts as far north at St. Louis traveled from New York to New Orleans, and then up the Mississippi River. 86


86 Jones to Cutler, 12 November 1835, 3 January, 18 December 1837, Jones to the surgeon general, 22 April 1839 Jones.
In selecting the interior routes, boat rides on western rivers subjected passengers to many hardships and hazards. Often the side-wheeler steamboats grounded on sand bars or shoals in the streams. On some occasions, the extraction of a boat took several days. While the vessel's crew conducted salvage operations, sometimes a shortage of rations resulted. At other times a lack of clean, fresh water forced passengers to drink from a muddy river. To keep the larger pieces of sediment from entering their mouths, the men used their handkerchiefs over the top of drinking containers to strain out the larger particles of trash. A common occurrence was for wooden bottom boats to strike snags or sawyers in always changing river channels and sink. In a few instances, ships' boilers exploded from too much pressure. The initial blast killed some men, and if the boat sank, the river currents also took its share of lives.  

87 to Kearny, 4 November 1842, Adjutant General Letters Relative to Recruiting, RG 94, Entry 647.

Although soldiers faced constant danger and hardship in the frontier army, recruiters seldom had difficulty finding sufficient volunteers to replace annual losses. During periods of economic prosperity, men with desirable moral, mental, and physical requisites seemed reluctant to enlist. On the other hand, when the nation's economy passed into stagnation and recession ensued, vacancies in the ranks could easily be filled with individuals possessing many of the characteristics which military leaders believed elevated the army's image.

What officials did not seem to understand, or at least did not admit, was that while they offered seemingly generous material rewards to potential enlistees, many ambitious young men were interested in something more. They refused to enter, and even if they did, refused to stay, in a subservient role expected in the military caste structure. Except for a short period after the War of 1812, and three or four years during the 1830's, military academy graduates received all commissions given by the army. Of those few bestowed upon non-West Pointers, less than 2 per cent went to active duty enlisted men. In the American society where men did not have to stand for rigid regimentation confined to prison-like frontier military posts without hope of
promotion, which intelligent individual would subject himself to the life of an enlisted soldier?
CHAPTER III

DUTY AT WESTERN POSTS

At the conclusion of the War of 1812, the War Department left a greatly reduced regular army deployed throughout the United States and its territories. Less than 20 per cent of the regiments of the military establishment were stationed in three western locations, however. On June 28, 1815, Major General Andrew Jackson issued an order to his southern division that provided for two companies of the Rifle Regiment at Natchitoches, Louisiana, to guard the southwest frontier. He sent eight companies of the same regiment to Prairie du Chien, Michigan Territory. Officials planned to use this force as part of a series of positions to be constructed later to block incursions by traders from Canada into Indian Territory. Jackson stationed the Eighth Infantry Regiment in vicinity of St. Louis, Missouri Territory.¹

Prior to 1834, except on rare occasions, recruits assigned to regiments stationed west of the Mississippi

¹Niles' Register, 27 May 1815, 28 June 1815. Secretary of War Alexander Joseph Dallas to General Jacob Brown, 22 May 1815, U.S., National Archives, Records of the Secretary of War, Letters Sent by the Secretary of War Relating to Military Affairs, 1800-1889, Records Group 107, Microcopy 6, Roll 8.
River most likely found their companies in garrison all year. In 1834, military leaders ordered the first periodic foray into the Great Plains. They hoped to impress upon the wild Indians the possible consequences of continued depredations on white settlers and the recently removed tribes from the East. After 1834, the troops usually went into quarters in the late fall and did not return to the field until early summer when the grass reached a sufficient growth stage to sustain horses and other animals. Although westward migration never seemed to slacken, still less than 50 per cent of the army's strength manned thirteen posts on the frontier by 1844.²

During the period from the purchase of Louisiana until the Mexican War, civilian and military leaders pursued a policy of maintaining a line of posts in advance of settlement. Officials hoped the presence of troops would provide

a buffer zone to prevent a confrontation between concerned Indians and encroaching whites. After the removal of Eastern tribes began in the 1820's, the army assumed responsibility to protect them from the predatory savages of the Great Plains. As the need for additional bases of operations increased, Congress authorized the construction of more temporary and permanent installations.  

The classification of garrisons in the West depended upon their planned permanence, or the generic term popularly applied to them at the time of their establishment. Beginning in 1817, with the founding of Fort Snelling near the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers, official correspondence referred to the new post as a cantonment. Contrary to the anticipated permanence of the upper Mississippi Valley installation, the title carried implications of being temporary. Both the 1821 and 1825 regulations prescribed an area in which troops "cantoned" at the end of a campaign as one only for a short period of rest. The soldiers lived in temporarily constructed huts, or requisitioned civilian housing. In February, 1832, the Secretary of War clarified the matter. He directed that thereafter all cantonments would be called forts. After the term "cantonment" fell

3 Frazar, Forts of the West, pp. xx-xxii.
into disuse, the prefix "camp" to a base's name evolved to imply the impermanence of an installation.\(^4\)

Between 1832 and 1861, all permanent posts west of the Mississippi River, except Jefferson Barracks, became known officially as forts. In theory, the term "fort" suggested a strongly fortified and well-organized position that could easily be defended. Few western posts would have met this criterion. An observer could have discerned little physical difference between a camp and a fort. In both types of installations, one would find in most cases a haphazard collection of structures constructed without a thought of a master plan for defense. The real difference resulted over their permanence. Not until as late as 1878 did the army officially designate military posts of a permanent nature to be forts, and those for temporary use to be camps.\(^5\)

When an individual reported to a new duty station in the West, he usually found a military post, whether permanent


\(^5\) Frazar, Forts of the West, pp. xxii-xxiii.
or temporary, to be a self-contained community economically and socially. Civilians settled at some of the more remote garrisons in Indian territory only because of their affiliations with the army. These persons moved with the military frontier and earned their livelihoods by supplying food and services to the soldiers. Accordingly, the fort or camp developed as a central institution on the frontier.  

While the regiments remained in garrison, or for that matter camp, the daily routine of the troops changed little over the years. A bugle call or the beat of a drum served as a means to communicate the almost always unvarying procedures. The signals seemed to some individuals to break the monotony of an extremely dull life in isolation. Whereas a drum conditioned infantry and artillerymen to move to their formations, the staccato of a bugle regulated the life of the mounted soldiers.  

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The regularly scheduled signals began with *reveille* at the first light of day. As soon as the bugler or drummer sounded the last note or beat, the troops fell out in front of their barracks, or tents, for the first of five roll calls conducted each day. In case of inclement weather, squad leaders made individual reports. Regardless of the method used, the first sergeants relayed verbal accounts of the results to their company commanders. If a unit had an unauthorized absence, the captain informed the adjutant. The *reveille* reports served as the source for the daily morning reports to be submitted by each company to post or regimental headquarters prior to eight o'clock.\(^8\)

Immediately after the first roll call, squad leaders supervised the putting of the barracks in order. Troopers assigned to mounted regiments watered their horses, and cleaned the stables before caring for their personal areas of police. At the same time the post guard utilized the prisoners to place the sentinels' quarters in acceptable condition for the new detail soon to come on duty.\(^9\)


\(^9\)Regulations for the Army, 1825, p. 40. Robinson, Organization of the Army, 1:96-97.
As soon as the men completed tending to their mounts and cleaning and arranging their barracks, they took care of their own personal needs. Squad leaders supervised the daily personal hygiene practices. Regulations instructed that soldiers crop their hair closely, and never let it extend below the ear lobe. Only dragoons were permitted to wear mustaches. Corporals also inspected their privates to insure that they washed their faces and hands and brushed their hair. During the summer months, the troops changed their linen three times a week, and twice during the same period when the weather turned cooler.\textsuperscript{10}

From twenty to thirty minutes prior to the sounding of peas on the trencher for breakfast, surgeon's call directed the first sergeants to march their "sick, lame, and lazy" to the dispensary. At the medical facility, the company top noncommissioned officers turned their ailing soldiers and accompanying reports over to the unit or post surgeon. Thereby, they surrendered responsibility for the personnel to dispensary officials. This rigid ritual served

an important purpose. Later claims for disability depended on old sick reports. Those men too sick to march to the dispensary were visited by the surgeon after he attended to the ailing unable to reach the medical facility. Posts without physicians or surgeons' mates contracted local civilian doctors. The troops at western posts which did have its complement of military medical personnel considered themselves fortunate. Since medical theorists of the time believed that climatic and topographical conditions affected the health of people, the surgeon general burdened his department with an additional duty of making meteorological observations between 1819 and 1843. 11

Depending upon the season of the year, sick call varied, falling between six-thirty and seven-thirty each morning. Breakfast followed the call for attendance of the ailing by thirty minutes. Prior to messing the troops, the first sergeants made their second roll call of the day. As soon as the companies began to march into their dining halls, married men with families on post could return to their quarters. Company officers periodically inspected the meals

of private families to ascertain that they not only ate at the prescribed hours, but also that they had properly prepared their food.\textsuperscript{12}

Regulations placed great emphasis on the preparation of food. Since regiments' tables of organization did not authorize regularly assigned cooks, first sergeants detailed different men periodically to perform the task. In 1818, with that fact in mind, Surgeon General James Lovell urged Secretary of War John Caldwell Calhoun to request Congress to make several changes to the army ration. He believed that one cause of scurbotic and dysenteric ailments, which so commonly plagued the ranks at various times, could be traced to improper food preparation. Lovell thought that if the soldier's daily dietary fare consisted of components which could be easily made palatable, he would remain a healthier individual. He said that the usual enlistee had been overly dependent on a female to prepare his daily meals.\textsuperscript{13}


Regulations clearly reflected official concern over messing and culinary matters. They stressed the importance of skill in cooking to insure both healthiness and palatability. Since bread and meat were the staple items of a soldier's diet, regulations contained several paragraphs on the procedure for their preparation. Commanders and quartermaster supervisors needed to inspect the post bakery frequently to assure that the processing of flour into bread followed outlined procedures. Directives emphasized the importance of not permitting the troops to eat fresh bread. If conditions did not allow sufficient time for it to grow stale, it should be toasted before feeding it to the men to render it "wholesome and nutritious."\(^{14}\)

Instructions to cooks directed that they let fresh meat bleed and cool before preparing it. They could boil, roast, or bake it, but could never fry it. If fresh meat were to be issued to the troops in advance of its preparation, it was to be half-boiled. In case time did not permit the completion of the partial cooking process, it was to be exposed to a very thick smoke for a few minutes.\(^{15}\)

\[^{14}\textit{Regulations for the Army, 1825}, pp. 46-47.\]
\[^{15}\textit{Regulations for the Army, 1825}, p. 47.\]
In addition to directions for the preparation of bread and meat, regulations also discussed the ingredients for a good soup and the selection of water to be used in it. Since medical personnel thought soup to be the most healthful form in which to serve food, they recommended that the men receive it at least once a day. Although it contained meat, the soup also consisted of a generous amount of vegetables under a notion that excessive consumption of meat caused scurvy. With a continuing concern for health, the regulations discussed drinking water. When available only rain or river water would be used, and not that of springs, wells, or ponds.  

Although garrisons may have been located on the banks of streams, obtaining drinking water almost always presented a problem at western posts. In northern areas, the streams froze over in severe winter weather. There the men obtained water by cutting through the ice. Terrain barriers presented another hardship. The builders of military posts generally located them on high river banks to avoid floods and pestilence found in lower, more marshy areas. When troops hauled filled

16 Ibid., pp. 47-48. Surgeon John Gale to Lieutenant Colonel Willoughby Morgan, 7 February 1820, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207.
water containers to a post from a nearby stream, steep inclines sometimes served as formidable obstacles to fatigue details.\footnote{Everett Dick, Vanguards of the Frontier, A Social History of the Northern Plains and Rocky Mountains From the Earliest White Contacts to the Coming of the Homemaker (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1941), p. 77.}

Congress first prescribed the components of the army ration in 1790. Subsequent statutes in 1802 and 1812 finally set down the items of the American soldier's diet that remained his basic fare throughout the nineteenth century. Under provisions of the 1812 enactment, each ration consisted of three-quarters of a pound of pork, or one and one-quarter pounds of beef, eighteen ounces of flour or bread, and a gill of whiskey, rum, or some other spirituous liquor. Salt, vinegar, soap, and candles were issued in bulk per one hundred men.\footnote{U.S., Statutes at Large, 2:672. The allocation of each item for every one hundred rations was two quarts of salt, four quarts of vinegar, four pounds of soap, and one and a half pound of wax candles.}

The components fixed by law proved to have certain drawbacks. In 1818, lawmakers delegated the President authority to change parts of the ration as the "... health and comfort of the army and economy ..." required.\footnote{Ibid., 3:427.}
hoped the additional leeway would serve to curtail expenditures, permit the utilization of locally available substitutes, and offer variety to soldiers' frontier-like diets. Immediately after the passage of the statute, the chief executive directed that bacon be issued in lieu of beef or pork, and twenty ounces of corn meal instead of flour or bread. He also added eight quarts of beans or rice to each one hundred rations as a permanent change.\(^{20}\)

Regulations of 1825 brought the next major alteration to the army ration. One paragraph in the new directive permitted commanders to substitute fresh beef twice weekly for the various brine-preserved meats. An additional modification allowed the replacement of soft bread or flour with twelve ounces of hardtack. This particular change saved on transportation costs, and also provided additional space for rations when troops moved out on an extended campaign.\(^{21}\)

In 1830, because of the concern of military and civilian leaders over "... the habitual use of ardent spirits by the troops, ... [and its] pernicious effect upon their

\(^{20}\text{Ibid., 3:427, U.S., National Archives, Old Army Records, Quartermaster Resume of Legislation Regarding the Army Ration, 1776-1914, Records Group 92, Entry 1347.}\)

\(^{21}\text{Regulations for the Army, 1825, pp. 308,311.}\)
health, morals, and discipline, . . ." the Secretary of War ordered the commissaries to end the issuing of distilled liquors as a part of the ration. 22 Instead of the alcoholic component, the War Department instructed that the troops be paid the contract price for the deleted items. In 1832, an army general order substituted four pounds of coffee and eight pounds of sugar for each one hundred men rather than continue the monetary commutation. Although officials did end the issue of ardent spirits as a component of the ration, statutory provisions did not exclude the giving of a soldier a daily gill of whiskey as long as he was engaged in fatigue type labor. The army continued the issue of the liquor as a reward for heavy work until 1865. 23

Although seldom fatal, scurvy prevailed as one of the chief ailments among troops stationed at northern posts. This condition resulted from a deficiency of vitamin C during the winter months. In 1843, officials made a special effort to protect the health of troops from the threat of scurbotic discomforts. A change to the subsistence regulations

22 Order 72, AGUSA, 8 December 1830, Adjutant General Orders and Circulars, RG 391, Entry 44.

23 Order 100, AGUSA, 5 November 1832, Adjutant General Orders and Circulars, RG 391, Entry 44. Quartermaster Resume of Legislation Regarding the Army Ration, RG 92, Entry 1347.
authorized medical officers to add supplements, such as fresh vegetables, pickled onions, sour kraut, molasses, and extra vinegar, to the soldiers' diet. The commissary of subsistence at each post determined the quantity of each item to be issued contingent upon his transportation capabilities and the immediate availability.\textsuperscript{24}

One of the most perplexing problems faced by army quartermaster and subsistence officers was the resupply of far-flung outposts. In September, 1818, the army made an attempt to improve its supply situation, and at the same time the health of its troops. A general order instructed commanders at posts west of the Mississippi River, and also in the vicinity of the upper Great Lakes, to plant kitchen gardens where at all feasible. The directive made provisions for the commissaries of subsistence to purchase at contract prices any vegetables, grain, and forage in excess of the troops' immediate needs. Officers of a post having extra produce received 15 per cent of the total, and the enlisted personnel equally shared the remaining 85 per cent according to muster roll.\textsuperscript{25}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[24]{Quartermaster Resume of Legislation Regarding the Army Ration, RG 92, Entry 1347.}
\footnotetext[25]{U.S., National Archives, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, 1803-1860, Records Group 107, Microcopy 221, Roll 82. Regulations for the Army, 1825, pp. 311-312.}
\end{footnotes}
Initially, the cost of purchasing farming utensils, seeds, and fencing had been paid by government disbursing officers. In June, 1820, army headquarters directed that any expenses incurred in cultivation operations would be sustained by the participants. Afterwards officers and men contributed in advance all the money required for the essentials of farming.\(^{26}\)

Although the idea for each post to raise its own subsistence never proved completely satisfactory, it did provide sufficient amounts of food and forage in some years to relieve an always overburdened supply system. While failure sometimes resulted from unfavorable weather conditions, in many instances the troops moved out on a campaign or changed posts at a critical point of the planting or harvesting season. Occasionally, the officers and troops seemed apathetic to being farmers rather than soldiers. In one instance, the surgeons at several posts advised their commanders that the cutting of prairie hay for forage was prejudicial to the health of the troops. In another case, civilians living near Fort Howard, Michigan Territory, halted the cultivation of several tracts near the post by

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\(^{26}\) General Order, Headquarters Army, 4 June 1820, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207.
placing ownership claims to the property. They forbade further use of the land without rental fees.²⁷

In 1819, the first year that the army turned agrarian, troops at Fort Smith, Arkansas Territory, experienced little success. The men lacked draft animals and equipment with which to work the soil. The post did not even have a mill available if grain had been produced. The following year, however, the commissary officer assumed responsibility for the operations, and production flourished. By 1822, when Major William Bradford relinquished command of the fort, he reported that a surplus of one thousand bushels of corn had been accumulated by the commissary. During the same

year, the commander at Fort Snelling reported that 210 acres of wheat, corn, oats, and potatoes had been planted.  

Probably the largest and most productive operation developed at Fort Atkinson on the upper Missouri, near present-day Omaha, Nebraska. In October, 1820, General Henry Atkinson issued an order to inform the men of the Sixth Infantry and the Rifle regiments they had harvested 250 tons of hay, 8,839 bushels of corn, 2,213 bushels of potatoes, and 486 bushels of turnips. They had also sent 700 hogs to the commissary. The post had its own milk supply in a dairy of 62 cows. By 1823, the total production had increased even more. From the 517 acres under cultivation, the troops gathered more than 20,000 bushels of corn, 6,000 bushels of potatoes, and 2,000 bushels of turnips. They cut 250 tons of hay. In addition to their horticultural efforts, the soldiers had built a 120 by 30 feet barn, and a storage building measuring 50 by 20 feet. They had increased the post cattle herd to 382, excluding the oxen used as beasts of burden. Overall, the operations grew out of

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proportion to the immediate needs of the troops stationed at the fort. 29

Many influential leaders began to express their chagrin over the reduction of soldiers into farmers. The flood of complaints finally had an effect on army headquarters. In early 1833, the adjutant general issued a circular which relieved commanders from the necessity of engaging in general agricultural operations. Since the only cultivation requirement was that each company maintain a kitchen garden, the new directive permitted the soldiers to turn their attention to matters other than farming. 30

In 1838, the War Department directed the commander at Fort Leavenworth to experiment with raising forage for the dragoon animals at the post. From the one thousand acres of corn under fence, the army expected to gather from twenty to forty bushels an acre. The inspector general reported in 1842 that the efforts had shown no profits, nor could


30 Prucha, Broadax and Bayonet, p. 125.
they hope to as long as soldiers provided the labor. Although the experiment continued until the eve of the Mexican War, quartermaster and subsistence officers made contracts for delivery of food, forage, and wood for less than the cost and time involved in coaxing soldiers into performing the irksome toil. 31

Since farming operations failed consistently to provide regiments with their material necessities, supply officers turned to more dependable methods to replenish always dwindling stocks of rations, wood for fuel, and forage. For the replacement items, the commissary general of subsistence advertised in newspapers nationwide. He indicated the quantity of various components desired, packaging instructions, the date of expected delivery, and the address for interested individuals to send their bids. 32


Prior to the establishment of a commissary department in 1818, the War Department merely let bids to civilian contractors to replace rations at an average cost for each. Between 1815 and 1818, the army paid from 14-1/2 to 36 cents for each soldier's daily food allotment at posts west of the Mississippi River and in the upper Great Lakes. In 1818, after commissary officers assumed responsibility for receiving bids on individual components of the ration, the expense of feeding each soldier dropped approximately eight-tenths of one cent daily. As subsistence officers gained in experience, the annual expenditures on soldiers' food decreased rapidly. By 1827, the estimated cost of a trooper's daily fare ranged from 6.8 to 11.6 cents. In 1845, the average price of a ration was 12-1/2 cents.\[^{33}\]

While the local markup on supplies moved up and down relative to seasonal availability, it generally exceeded the quoted prices at St. Louis and New Orleans markets.

Exceptions can be found in many instances where local farmers or merchants undersold the commercial centers. For example, in 1827, inhabitants around Fort Leavenworth contracted to sell salt pork at 75 cents a hundred pounds. The same amount brought five dollars in New Orleans. Another case which defied the general rule resulted at Fort Crawford. While the market price for a bushel of corn was 38 cents in the lower Mississippi Valley port, farmers in the vicinity of Prairie de Chien sold theirs for 30 cents. 

In most instances, however, the prices at the commercial centers were less, but transportation charges forced them

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above those for like goods locally. In 1814, to ship one hundred pounds from New Orleans to Louisville, approximately fifteen hundred miles upstream, freight handlers asked four and one-half dollars. While the rate had decreased by more than ten times by 1840, transportation cost still dictated that the prices of most goods from outside markets would exceed those of commodities produced nearby their points of disposal. Owing to competition for less cargoes going upstream from New Orleans, and in order to have something of a pay load on the return trip, in many instances boat owners charged less per hundred weight than they had on downstream traffic.35

During the late spring and summer months, troops had few problems supplementing their diets. At most western installations, the men hunted wild game and buffalo, fished, and gathered wild fruits and berries. In June, 1819, while the Rifle Regiment was in temporary camp, its food supply became critically short. The contractor had been unable to meet his delivery dates. To relieve the situation, the detachment commander dispatched two rifle companies away

from the cantonment to find their subsistence from the countryside, and send excess game and other food to the garrison. By August, one of the companies had killed three hundred deer, gathered five barrels of honey, and conveyed innumerable other bits of foraged goodies to camp. Before the end of the year, a department order permitted soldiers to hunt game as far as eighty miles from their posts. Other directives warned, however, that justice would be observed in relations with the Indians.  

When temporary shortages of foodstuffs did occur at posts, some civilian and military families took advantage of their neighbors. In September, 1815, the commandant of the Detroit garrison found need to publish a price list for produce sold on post. Anyone not abiding by the provisions of the order was not permitted to sell to the soldiers and their families. Even by present-day standards, the prices were rather high. A bushel of potatoes or onions brought one dollar, eggs sold for 37 cents a dozen, and butter 37-1/2 cents a pound. A soldier giving more than the posted prices would be punished by the officer of the day. On another

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occasion in 1835, the commander of Fort Towson, Indian Territory, set a limit of 6-3/4 cents per quart of milk and 25 cents for a pound of butter during the season of good grass for soldiers and their families who sold dairy products in excess of their own needs. Disobedience to the order threatened an offender with loss of permission to retain animals on post.37

Sometimes troops resorted to malicious devices, not only as a means to supplement their diets, but also as a form of amusement. To find food, the men made raids on outlaying farms. In 1834, one private told of a foraging expedition that he and two of his friends made on a local farmer's pigsty in the vicinity of Fort Gibson. After snatching three sucklings, the thieves butchered and hid the meat until nightfall. After they were sure that danger of detection had passed, the culprits brought their delicacies into the barracks for a feast.38

Court-martial records contain numerous trials of men involved in stealing and slaughtering both military and


38 Hildreth, Dragoon Campaigns to the Rockies, pp. 97-98.
civilian animals. In 1833, a tribunal convicted a corporal and the men on his work detail for butchering and selling a beef belonging to a farmer nearby Fort Leavenworth. The following year, civilians near Jefferson Barracks complained of chicken thievery, blaming it on soldiers from the post. In 1835, a court-martial acquitted a corporal accused of permitting the men on his detail to go a short distance from their place of duty to kill a calf owned by an officer of the post. Such incidents occurred regularly wherever soldiers were stationed.  

Soon after breakfast, the company first sergeants addressed themselves to another of their important daily duties—guardmounting. At the same time that fatigue call sounded at 7:30 in the summer, and 8:30 during the winter, soldiers assigned to guard duty received their first alert. While other noncommissioned officers marched the remainder of the troops to daily fatigue, the first sergeants, superintended by company officers, used an allotted ten minutes to make a cursory inspection of their units' sentry details. 

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40 The 1821 regulations set noon as the time for guard-mount. The 1825 regulations established the earlier time. The
Ten minutes after the first one sounded, a second guardmounting call indicated the men detailed to the duty should report to the parade ground. Each first sergeant marched his troops to the assembly point, where he assembled them in to the left of any soldiers already in formation. While the officers of the day and of the guard conducted a minute inspection, the first sergeants remained in the rear of the guardmount with extra men. The top noncommissioned officers used these replacements as substitutes for any individual unfortunate enough to be rejected by the inspecting officers. The neatest and most knowledgeable private at the guardmount was honored by selection as the colonel's orderly. Upon acceptance of a sufficient number of soldiers for the detail, the officer of the day instructed the sergeant of the guard to march the select group to the guardhouse for their twenty-four-hour tour of duty. The first sergeants returned to their companies with the super numeraries and rejected privates.  


Although an arduous assignment, guard duty was considered as an honor by the troops. Men selected for the strenuous task remained under arms nearly one-half of the night, sometimes in the most adverse weather and under dangerous conditions. The officer of the day visited each sentinel on post at least two times during a twenty-four-hour period. He made his rounds once before sunset, and again between midnight and daylight. The commander of the guard visited the men on posts more often as necessity dictated. Under normal conditions sentinels walked two hours on post, and spent four in the guardhouse. In freezing weather, or at times when an attack threatened, regulations directed that men exposed to such conditions be relieved at least once every hour. Whether on post or off, during the night no soldier on guard was permitted to sleep. Anytime the sergeant detached a relief to change with sentinels on post, the entire guard fell out under arms for an inspection and roll call. They remained in the formation until the relief coming off post returned to the guardhouse.42

In addition to general orders which applied equally to all guards on duty, each sentry had special instructions about the peculiarities of his individual post. Very

42 Regulations for the Army, 1825, pp. 79-80.
explicitly, regulations directed that sentinels know both sets of orders. In case a general or any other officer authorized to inspect the guard requested to make the "grand rounds," any instructions they may have passed to men on posts were to be promptly relayed to the guardhouse.\footnote{Other than generals the only other officers permitted to inspect guards on post were the officer of the day and commanding officers of the installation or regiments. When these commissioned personnel appeared at the guardhouse to make their "grand rounds," the commander of the guard provided them with an escort. \textit{Regulations for the Army}, 1825, pp. 79, 82-83. \textit{Regulations for the Army}, 1847, pp. 109, 112-114.}

During the hours of darkness, sentries used a countersign or oral exchange of secret words to identify personnel permitted to enter or leave a military installation. Although not a fail-safe device, the use of a challenge and password did discourage many unauthorized persons from attempting to enter or leave a military compound. Unless the danger of Indian attack threatened a cantonment, sentinels ceased to challenge after daylight.\footnote{\textit{Regulations for the Army}, 1825, p. 82. \textit{Regulations for the Army}, 1847, pp. 109, 112-114.}

Guard duty could be an unpleasant task, particularly at northern forts during the winter. The necessity of placing posts at outside locations exposed the men to severe cold
without benefit of suitable winter clothing. Although some individuals used their own purchased or fabricated wearing apparel, frostbite still resulted frequently. 45

Under provisions of regulations, each man was issued ammunition to be maintained and retained by him. Soldiers stored their firearms materials in the barracks with their other equipment. Each evening at the retreat roll call, an officer inspected the rounds. Any soldier unable to account for his ball and powder paid for it. When an individual went on guard he loaded his weapon. Upon dismounting, he discharged his rifle, musket, or carbine, at a target erected for that purpose. If a mark were not up for the troops to improve their marksmanship, they drew the rounds from their pieces, and turned the ammunition over to the quartermaster sergeant for replacement. 46

While the first sergeants marched their guard details to inspection, the other noncommissioned officers escorted


46 Regulations for the Army, 1825, p. 55. Regulations for the Army, 1847, p. 30.
the men remaining behind in the companies to working parties. If a unit had recently received recruits, a company officer supervised two or three sergeants in drilling new troops. The number of hours that the men practiced the school of the soldier varied between units at the discretion of the commanders. Usually, however, regimental headquarters directed company officers to drill their recruits two or three times daily for one to two hours each session.\[47\]

During the period when noncommissioned officers introduced the basic movements and small unit formations to recruits, commanders limited the extra duties on which trainees could be assigned. For example, in July, 1831, the officer commanding a detachment of the Third Infantry Regiment at Camp Phoenix, Indian Territory, directed that no recently arrived replacement was to be put on any hard duty before he had time to recover his health. The same officer permitted them to be drilled three one-hour-sessions daily, and to work in company gardens and on general police details. In 1833, the commander of the Sixth Infantry

\[47\] Order 55, 5 May 1833; Order 87, 7 July 1833; Order 142, 7 December 1833; Order 128, 6 November 1834; Order 22, 5 March 1835; Order 78, 5 September 1835, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued, RG 391, Entry 1208. Order 10, 19 May 1828; Order 19, 13 July 1828; Order 18, 27 July 1831, 3d Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1095. Hildreth, *Dragoon Campaigns to the Rockies*, pp. 59, 41-42.
Regiment at Jefferson Barracks called for two periods of recruit drill to last slightly more than one hour each. In the same order that ordained the training sessions, the officer emphasized that trainees would not be placed on any duty which interfered with their basic training.48

In 1833, James Hildreth, an early enlistee in the Regiment of Dragoons, stated that drill began for the newly activated unit two days after the first men arrived. He complained that if an individual was not on guard, he would participate in continuous marching exercises. Only one sergeant in his company knew enough of the basic movements to instruct the troops. Although the drill lacked in excellence, three men still found themselves selected for an "awkward squad." The problem had been to step off on their right foot invariably. After one week of constant torment, one of the men deserted. In a like manner to the treatment of the three uncoordinated soldiers, any recruit who joined a unit expected harassment from men with longer periods of service. Hildreth wrote that the more good-naturedly a person reacted to the rough treatment, the

48 Order 18, 27 July 1831, 3d Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1095. Order 53, 5 May 1833, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued, RG 391, Entry 1208.
better the situation developed for him. Usually after one
year in garrison or after one summer campaign, the old
soldiers favorably received a recruit. 49

The training of more experienced troops followed a
different trend than that of newly enlisted soldiers.
Regulations merely directed regimental commanders to insure
that their units were proficient in the "exercises and
movements prescribed for the arm of service to which
." . . . " they belonged. 50 Prior to 1865, the army did not
publish a training or technical manual to teach enlisted
men their specific duties. Thus, commanders arbitrarily
dictated the standards of drill expected of noncommissioned
officers and privates. Since basic movements interrelated
so well with tactics, commanders ordered the conduct of the
school of the soldier and company when occasions permitted.
During the colder months and the planting or harvesting
seasons, drill usually halted altogether. As soon as the
troops cultivated their crops for the last time, a period
of intensive training began. 51

49 Hildreth, Dragoon Campaigns to the Rockies, pp. 29-30, 38-42.

50 Regulations for the Army, 1825, p. 32.

51 August Valentine Kautz, Customs of Service for Non-
Commissioned Officers and Soldiers as Derived from Law and
To insure that noncommissioned officers remembered their basic movements, their instructions preceded that of their companies. In 1821, the sergeants and corporals of the Sixth Infantry and the Rifle regiments at Fort Atkinson met at post headquarters for two drill sessions daily. To provide for more enthusiasm, regimental bands played for the training soldiers. The following year, the Sixth Infantry Regiment drilled its noncommissioned officers only once a day. A few years later, the commander of the Third Infantry Regiment even directed that his sergeants and corporals should spend some of their leisure time to study drill and tactics. He refused to consider a private for promotion until he knew the school of the soldier and company thoroughly.  


52 Garrison Order, Fort Atkinson, 15 May 1821; Order 121, 16 May 1822, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued, RG 391, Entry 1208. Order 49, 11 July 1833, 3d Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1095. By provisions of an act on March 3, 1815, each infantry and light artillery regiment had two musicians in each of its ten companies, and two in the headquarters. In 1821, Congress reduced the number of musicians in artillery regiments to two in each of the
The 1813 regulations instructed that regiments would use the drill system that had been approved by the War Department. The army did not have uniform system, however. In May, 1792, Congress had adopted the tactics of General Frederick William Augustus Baron von Steuben. Contrary to the intentions of Congress, by the beginning of the War of 1812 regular officers instructed a different drill in each regiment. They acted on their own authority, and selected the system they thought most effective. Many used the French Tactics of 1791. Others followed the instructions outlined in the English Tactics of 1788. In 1813, the House of Representatives attempted to remedy the situation. It passed a resolution recommending the adoption of Adjutant General William Duane's Handbook for Infantry, translated from the French. Neither the President nor Congress nine companies. Infantry remained unchanged. In 1832, the adjutant general issued instructions that ten musicians be added to each artillery and infantry regiment. The artillery had no chief musicians, so the new directive permitted them to appoint one sergeant as master of the band, and one corporal to assist. These men mustered in their respective companies, and served in the line in case of conflict. In 1833, Congress authorized the Regiment of Dragoons a chief musician and two chief buglers in its headquarters, but no other musicians. Each of the ten companies had two buglers. Not until 1861, did Congress add bands to mounted regiments. U.S., Statutes at Large, 2:481-482, 3:224-225, 3:615, 4:652, 12:280. Order 13, 5 April 1832, Adjutant General Orders and Circulars, 202.
sanctioned the 1813 system as it did not extend beyond company drill. 53

Thus, throughout the War of 1812, officers of the army utilized whatever system of drill and tactics they thought most effective. For example, in 1814, General Winfield Scott trained his and General Eleazer Wheelock Ripley's regiments from a translated version of the French Tactics of 1791. The force disciplined by Scott won several notable victories, which many historians attributed directly to the effectiveness of the system employed. 54

In 1814, Congress sent a resolution to the President requesting that the tactics perfected by Scott be modified and adopted for the entire army. Armed with congressional authority, the War Department directed the formation of a four officer board to outline a system of tactics based on the French one of 1791. From 1815 through 1855, the army used the Winfield Scott drill and tactics for infantry with several periodic modifications. Each of the changes served

to adapt features better suited to the characteristics of the American soldier and terrain.\(^55\)

The first major revision occurred in 1824. Scott again sat as president of a review board. The result of this council appeared in 1825. The French published a different version of their drill system in 1831. Four years later, Scott again headed a board to review and to make recommendations for modifications of infantry tactics. Both the French and English systems of exercise relied heavily on the Prussian drill of Frederick the Great. Scott again changed his drill manual in 1839 when an improvement in weapons forced further modifications. Brevet Lieutenant Colonel William Joseph Hardee had inserted minor vicissitudes in 1845, but his tactics did not replace those of Scott completely until 1855.\(^56\)

Prior to 1829, artillerymen had to rely on a comprehensive, four-volume work compiled by a former French general entitled Treatise Upon Artillery. Although a board headed by Scott drafted the army's first System of Exercises and


Instructions of Field Artillery in 1826, Congress did not authorize its publication until three years later. This work, however, pertained only to heavier, fixed cannon.

Then in 1839, Captain Robert Anderson translated a French service regulation entitled Instruction for Field Artillery, Horse and Foot. For the next two years, the army continued to use the two earlier books, and gave a set of detailed instructions, which explained the firing of cannon from 6 to 24-pounders.  

Upon activation of the Regiment of Dragoons in 1833, the general-in-chief of the army, Alexander Macomb, ordered that five thousand copies of A System of Tactics: or, Rules for the Exercise and Manoeuvres of the Cavalry and Light Infantry and Riflemen be published. This instructional material had first been drafted by the 1826 Winfield Scott board, but since the regular army had no cavalry it had not been printed. It, as well as a subsequent so-called "Poinsett Tactics" adopted in 1841, was merely a translation of French manuals. Both the 1829 and 1841 maneuver arrangements left a cavalry unit's flank exposed for long periods.

during a change in direction of an attack. Platoons marched in an impractical four column formation when part of a regimental task force. Thus, when the troops were placed in line for an attack, their depth doubled their front. Withstanding criticism, however, the 1841 tactics continued in use until 1861. At that time the American army turned to small unit strategy of utilizing a single rank for the attack based on the British system. 58

An example of the type training given to the troops on a periodic basis may be perceived by making a random examination of any drill regulation. The Cavalry Tactics of 1841 outlined 250 lessons for the school of the dismounted and mounted trooper, and the school of the platoon. The 70 sessions for a dismounted soldier and the 120 while mounted were conducted conjointly, requiring at least four

months for inexperienced men. The school of the platoon and its 60 lessons needed another two months. After the expiration of about 180 days training, companies began to work in squadrons. When the four platoons in the dual-company formations could maneuver together efficiently, the final phase of cavalry training commenced. All ten companies drilled in five squadrons, practicing the evolutions of a regiment. Since recruit training at the dragoon depot had exposed recruits to the basic elements of trooper and platoon training, only refresher type drill needed to be repeated each year. Ideally, a training cycle began in the fall, when the companies moved into winter quarters. It was completed by the time the units returned to the Plains for their early summer campaigns. 59

In 1833, during the first few months after the creation of the Regiment of Dragoons, officers in the unit had little printed material for instructions in cavalry drill. Captain Philip St. George Cooke, one of the commanders and later a major general in the Union Army, wrote that during the first training sessions conducted for the officers, the

entire regiment had only two tactics manuals available. The commissioned personnel had little or no previous cavalry training; therefore, while the officers drilled, the enlisted men suffered and felt degraded on fatigue details constructing horse stables.  

The number, composition, and type of daily details which departed at the morning work formation varied with the seasons of the year. Between 1826 and 1845, Colonel George Croghan, the inspector general, seldom reported that soldiers at western posts received sufficient military training. He almost invariably denounced the practice of constantly utilizing the men for fatigue details. In several instances, he could not make an inspection of the troops in ranks, because over 75 per cent assigned would be involved in performing work tasks away from the posts.  

The soldiers not only toiled on fatigue details within their own companies, they also provided labor for the different supply officers. In 1826, the quartermaster officer at Fort Howard had so many enlisted men assigned to him for details that he asked permission to hire a civilian

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60 Philip St. George Cooke, Scenes and Adventures in the Army; or Romance of Military Life (Philadelphia: Lindsey and Blakiston, 1859), pp. 221, 224.

clerk to control and to route daily work requirements. One
work detail involved the cutting of ice from the streams
during the winter to be preserved in insulated storage houses
for issue during the warmer months. Other tasks included
dairying, farming, gardening, caring for livestock, road
and bridge building, stevedoring, constructing and repair-
ing barracks, and cutting wood for fuel just to list a few.62

Only non-effective privates could be employed as
permanent clerks or mechanics unless provided for in the
statutes or army general orders and circulars. On the other
hand, first sergeants could utilize qualified men to assist
them in company clerical duties on a part-time basis.
Soldiers selected by first sergeants to work in orderly
rooms could miss only one tour of roster duty. Regulations
permitted the relieving of mechanics, such as tailors,
gunsmiths, artificers, and cobblers, from regular details
to alter, mend, or repair soldiers' equipment and other
necessities. Under no circumstances were the specialists
to perform work that would be for the benefit of officers.
Each officer present in his company could, with the consent
of a private, hire him as a waiter. Soldiers employed in
such a capacity were exempt from all ordinary roster duty

except guard once a month. They, as well as company clerks, presented themselves for all drill formations, reviews, musters, and inspections. 63

With the above exceptions, regulations emphasized that all regular details should be equally performed. To assure that each man received fair treatment, each first sergeant maintained a company roster, which divided enlisted personnel into three categories—sergeant, corporal, and private. The chief musician kept the duty record of drummers or buglers. The rosters had two columns under which two types of details were registered. Under one, the first sergeant indicated each time an individual had fulfilled a duty obligation, which required the carrying of arms. Interior guard exemplified this type of duty. Other examples encompasses security details such as honor, police, or court-martial guards. All reconnoitering and foraging detachments also fell under service with arms. Work parties and their escorts outside camp, although carrying weapons because of danger from Indian attack, did not fall in this category, but under the roster's second column. This subordinate tour of service consisted of all regular fatigue

63 Regulations for the Army, 1825, pp. 37-38.
details, whether on post or outside. In both instances of rosters, regulations stressed that "the principle, longest off duty, the first on" should prevail.\(^{64}\)

While the troops drilled or performed their laborious details, the first sergeants remained in the company orderly rooms to care for administrative matters. During mid-morning, however, they received a daily call to report to higher headquarters. At the sounding of first sergeant's call, either a company's orderly sergeant or the "top hack" went to the sergeant major to receive written directives relevant to the unit. Information contained in the orders determined into which one of two classifications they fell. Those publishing directions for the establishment of a new post, unit march instructions, countersigns, individual personal requests, and other similar matters which did not concern the troops generally were called special orders. In contrast, a second group, general orders, specified post routines, details and times of performance, changes to laws and regulations, commendations, police instructions, and any other happenings of significance about which the troops needed to be aware. Once a noncommissioned officer received the directives relevant to his unit, he returned to his

\(^{64}\) Regulations for the Army, 1825, pp. 101-103. U.S., American State Papers, Military Affairs, 2:226.
orderly room and had them recorded in the company Order Book. Any item that required the attention of the men was read at several retreat formations. 65

Thirty minutes prior to the second and final meal of the day, recall signaled the troops to return to their barracks. Thus, roast beef was sounded at one or two o'clock each afternoon, depending on the season of the year. As with the morning meal, first sergeants made a roll call, their third of the day. Thirty minutes after dinner, fatigue call sent the soldiers back to drill or work details. 66

In mounted units, at one hour before sunset the bugler blew stable call to alert the troopers to care for their horses. Owing to the dependence of cavalry on its mounts, the care of the animals evolved as an exact art. In addition to watering and feeding their horses at the evening stable call, the men also dressed and cleaned them. Each trooper groomed his own mount, and a fatigue detail cared for the officers' animals. If a horse had been ridden, the soldier

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washed its legs and rubbed them dry with strips of burlap. After caring for the horse's body, a dragoon shoveled out its stall. He then fed it. The army preferred to use corn-on-the-cob because of the ease with which an inexperienced soldier could detect spoilage. While on campaigns, the companies carried shelled corn to conserve space. Owing to the tendency of oat husk to collect dust, quartermasters seldom purchased that type grain for feeding.⁶⁷

Evening recall sounded for all types of regiments thirty minutes prior to sunset. When the weather permitted, they all stood retreat and also participated in a parade immediately afterward. In addition, the first sergeants made their fourth mandatory roll call of the day. On evenings when the troops stood retreat, the companies fell out for cursory inspection twenty minutes prior to sunset. At ten minutes before the time to lower the flag, the band sounded adjutant's call to indicate that all units were to

⁶⁷The 1825 regulations set stable call after retreat. Order 71, 1 April 1843, Post Records, Fort Gibson Orders Issued, RG 393, Entry 4, directed that stable call be sounded one hour before sunset. Hildreth, Dragoon Campaigns to the Rockies, p. 96. Percival Green Lowe, Five Years a Dragoon ('49 to '54) and Other Adventures on the Great Plains, introduced by Don Russell (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p. 75.
form on the regimental parade ground. Once retreat had been played and the flag lowered, a routine parade was conducted.\footnote{Order 71, 1 April 1843, Post Records, Fort Gibson Orders Issued, RG 393, Entry 4. Regulations for the Army, 1825, pp. 42-44.}

After the troops returned to their barracks, squad leaders supervised them in securing their weapons in arms racks for the night. From retreat until approximately nine o'clock at night, the men had permission to visit on post. At darkness or shortly thereafter, tattoo notified all soldiers to return to their barracks for the fifth and final roll call of the day. As soon as first sergeants dismissed their companies, the squad leaders insured that their men went to bed, and then extinguished all lights. Although regulations made no reference to taps, an 1843 garrison order at Fort Gibson directed that such a call would follow tattoo by fifteen minutes.\footnote{Order 71, 1 April 1843, Post Records, Fort Gibson Orders Issued, RG 393, Entry 4. U.S., American State Papers, Military Affairs, 2:208-209. Regulations for the Army, 1825, p. 44. Robinson, An Account of the Organization of the Army, 1:99. He also makes reference to taps after tattoo. Camp Order 1 October 1819, 6th U.S. Infantry Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207.}

While many bugle or drum signals echoed across western garrisons periodically each day, not one foretold of
inspections. Regulations of 1813 described two kinds of formations at which the inspector general made critical examinations of units, but it contained nothing in the way of instructions for low-level commanders. In 1821, although instructions still pertained primarily to inspections by higher headquarters, commanding officers of posts and regiments were directed to conduct similar ones on a weekly basis. In addition to regular Sunday morning parades followed by inspections, officers needed to visit the troops' quarters much more frequently. In 1833, Secretary of War Lewis Cass moved inspection day from Sunday to Saturday. Sometimes prior to 1841, however, regulations shifted it back to Sunday.\textsuperscript{70}

In preparation for the commander's inspection, the troops thoroughly cleaned all articles of personal equipment, clothing, and weapons. They overhauled their bedding and dry-scrubbed the barracks floors. In addition to the living quarters, the men cleaned the kitchen and dining areas, and arranged the company's cooking utensils in special wall recesses. On inspection day, the commander gave particular

attention to the men's personal cleanliness and their equipment. 71

Although regulations came more and more to emphasize that commanders should diligently insist that their soldiers maintain personal cleanliness, pre-Mexican War military men lacked standards of hygiene compared to orthodox views held by the modern individual. Prior to 1835, regulations specified that men should bathe periodically only while aboard sea transports. Beginning in 1835, directives required soldiers to bathe at least once a week, and to wash their feet two additional times. To make the troublesome chore of enticing the troops to bathe themselves easier, many companies cut barrels in half for wash tubs. The men heated water in the kitchens and washed weekly in the dining rooms until tattoo. 72

Generally, the same standards of personal cleanliness applied to all corps of the army. One exception to the regulations permitted officers and men of cavalry regiments

71 Regulations for the Army, 1825, pp. 64-68. Regulations for the Army, 1847, pp. 25-28, 81.

to wear mustaches. By relying on their privilege to grow additional hair on their faces, dragoons devised a deception to circumvent punishment for appearing at inspections unshaven. When asked by an inspector about not having shaved, a stubbled individual merely informed the officer that he intended to raise a beard. No matter how apparent the subterfuge, an inspecting officer usually took a troopers stated intentions seriously, with provisions, of course, that the man let his beard grow for a satisfactory period of time.73

From indications of the results of commanders' inspections, today's environmental conscious society would have been stunned and anguished by the filth and refuse indiscriminately cast around military compounds. In 1823, for example, after the Sixth Infantry had been forced to evacuate flooded Fort Atkinson for tents on higher ground, the commanding officer sought to improve the deplorable, unsanitary conditions of the temporary camp. To assure that soldiers and their dependents used officially approved garbage sinks, he had police sentinels posted around the cantonment. Prior to the commander's ordinances, personnel had been tossing dirty wash

water and debris in the rear of the tents, or merely had
thrown it in the nearby bushes.  

In 1824, the commanding officer at Fort Atkinson
directed that the practice of soldier urinating against
the barracks would cease immediately. He had one noncommiss-
sioned officer and three privates detailed to a twenty-four
hour guard to enforce his edict. For one individual,
conviction for violation of the order cost him the whiskey
part of his ration for one month. In 1826, Colonel Josiah
Snelling of the Fifth Infantry Regiment threatened his
troops with confinement if caught throwing filth on the
parade ground, or for urinating against the barracks.

The clairvoyant directives which came from the prolific
pen of Lieutenant Colonel Josiah H. Vose of the Third
Infantry Regiment, the commanding officer of Fort Towson,
Indian Territory, afforded a keen insight into the problems
involved to maintain healthy conditions on a military post.
In July, 1832, he discovered during one of his periodic

74Order 157, 8 September 1823, 6th Infantry Regiment
Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207.

75Order 28, 25 January 1824; Order 50, 18 February
1824, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received,
RG 391, Entry 1208. Order 4, 6 January 1826, Company E,
5th U.S. Infantry Regiment Orderly Book, Burton Historical
Collection.
inspections that the unsanitary state of police in his command warranted forceful action. He issued a straightforward directive to correct the unwanted situation. He warned company cooks, soldiers' families, officers' waiters, and the troops in general, to discontinue dumping slop water, food waste, or filth of any sort on, or at the edge of, the fort. Vose described the police at Fort Towson as the poorest of any post on which he had been stationed.  

Less than two months later, Vose expressed glowing approval of the outside conditions on his post, but he chastised the troops about their personal hygiene and barracks cleanliness. He directed that men coming off fatigue details would wash themselves before entering their billets. The commander further insisted that all soldiers bathe at least once a week, and wash their feet more frequently. Within the matter of weeks Vose had the general standards of police at Fort Towson improved to a point that satisfied him.

Vose proved to be a perceptive individual who accepted new ideas if they were useful or practical. In 1835, he received correspondence from the post surgeon who suggested

76 Order 51, 26 July 1832, 3d Infantry Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1095.

77 Order 59, 1 September 1832, ibid.
that the troops should brush their teeth regularly. The medical officer stated that dental hygiene would improve the health of all persons practicing it. Vose instructed the sutler to stock a supply of toothbrushes, and then he required each soldier to purchase one and to use it.  

In addition to inspections by local commanders, regulations directed that generals commanding military departments should conduct occasional tours to check the status of subordinate units. The object of the critical examinations was to determine the state "... of discipline, police, instruction, service, and administration ..." of the regiments and technical branches. Regulations emphasized explicitly that all officers who were delinquent in their duties would be brought to trial and action taken "... to correct promptly all defects or neglects observed."  

At the end of every second month, beginning with February of each year, each company commander in the army mustered the members of his unit. Regulations directed that he inspect and report the condition of the men's weapons, clothing, and all other equipment issued to them, in addition to taking

78 Order 32, 11 April 1835, ibid.

79 Regulations for the Army, 1825, p. 61.
Since Congress provided for the payment of the troops at least every two months, paymasters scheduled paydays to coincide with musters. Although commanding officers invariably collected their men for roll call and inspection, on countless occasions the same troops waited several months for their pay.

In brief, the routine of frontier soldiers in garrison seldom changed over the years. As the army moved farther west, contacts with civilization became less frequent, but the daily life of the troops continued to follow an unvarying procedure. Whereas drummers conditioned infantrymen to move from one duty to another, buglers performed that function in the cavalry. From the first day a soldier reported for duty at some isolated outpost, until his termination of service, the staccato of a bugle or the tap of

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80 Ibid., pp. 165-166, 281-282. *Niles' Register*, 17 August 1816. Colonel Anthony Butler to Secretary of War James Monroe, 12 February 1815; Brevet Brigadier General Daniel Bissell to General Andrew Jackson, 2 July 1815, Letter Received by the Secretary of War, RG 107, M221, Roll 59. Order 8, 14 April 1831, Adjutant General Orders and Circulars, RG 391, Entry 44. Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny to Major Adam Duncan Steuart, 8 December 1835, U.S., National Archives, Old Army Records, 1st Cavalry Regiment (Dragoons) Letters Sent by a Detachment of Dragoons, August, 1834-June, 1837, 1841-1843, Records Group 391, Entry 630. Lieutenant Colonel Gustavus Loomis, 6th Infantry, to General Roger Jones, 24 April 1844, Fort Gibson, Letters Sent, RG 393, Entry 1.
a drum regulated his day day after day. His diet consisted of the same salt-preserved foods with few modifications. He continued to perform daily tasks which made him into a laborer rather than a soldier. In return for his lack of a chance to train at his profession, he received criticism from observers for his every shortcoming, no matter how minor. Although the American enlisted man did not receive a fair chance to develop as a proficient soldier, he successfully served as one of the primary tools of civilization to force back the wilderness, and provide the advance guard for settlement.
CHAPTER IV

PAY AND OTHER MORALE FACTORS

Historians have generally criticized the army's failure to provide its soldiers with satisfactory monetary compensation and basic and secondary cultural needs. The inadequacy of several essential factors, such as promotion, entertainment and education possibilities, material wants, and moral guidance, had an adverse effect on morale. Research reveals, however, that while cultural niceties accessible to the pre-Mexican War soldier at isolated posts failed to compare favorably with twentieth century measures of value, paradoxically, he did have an overall advantage in relation to other contemporary frontiersmen.

While the enlisted man's sparse chances of promotion within and from the ranks inhibited personal ambition, his pay and allowances equaled or exceeded pecuniary remunerations received by his civilian counterpart. His entertainment seldom, if ever, reached a level of sophistication found in eastern urban areas, or for that matter, the larger western cities, but it did surpass that found in nearby communities. In cases where the quartermaster failed to provide the soldier
with his basic material needs, the sutler willingly relieved him of his pay in return for limited luxury. Before the 1838 authorization of chaplains in the army, many military leaders on the frontier had already attempted to promote education and moral guidance for soldiers and their dependents. Missionaries had also offered their services free at several installations. Even after Congress added clergymen to the army's organization, an occasional commander, who had little inclination toward spiritual matters, refused to select a chaplain for his post. In every instance, the frontier soldier had his basic and secondary cultural needs satisfied to some degree.

The requisites may have been inadequate, particularly in the case of promotion possibilities, but effective leadership could have certainly molded a different core around which to have developed a professional military organization. Instead, officers remained the victims of medieval social tradition, and sought to sustain a rigid caste through hierarchical control. While they restricted the privileges and criticized the morals of enlisted men confined to the lower strata, commissioned personnel failed to abide by regulations and by arbitrarily imposed standards of accountability.¹

¹John Joseph Lenney, Rankers, the Odyssey of the Enlisted Regular Soldier of America and Britain. A Study of the Ups
One of the major criticisms leveled at the army over the years has been its failure to appoint men from the ranks as officers. Foreign visitors almost invariably questioned the American method of selection of personnel for commissions. Most of them remarked or implied that political and military leaders had deliberately precluded the consideration of men from the rank and file for appointments as officers. While many of the visitors thought the American method of commissioned personnel selection as reprehensible, they repeatedly praised the officers' character. On the other hand, the foreigners held that American leaders were somewhat less efficient than their counterparts in European armies. Before accepting the evaluations by visitors from abroad, one must remember that most of them presented views colored by their own biases. A majority of them came from upper middle class

backgrounds, and held field commissions in military castes similar to the one they judged.  

After the 1815 reduction of the army only slightly more than 5 per cent of its total officer strength had been appointed from the ranks. The selections had been made in wartime. Since West Pointers composed only 16 per cent of the army's officer corps, the remaining 79 per cent of commissioned personnel had been appointed directly from civilian life. From 1815 through 1845, of the 1,681 individuals commissioned, only 21 came directly from the rank and file. By the end of 1845, only four of the former enlisted men still served on active duty. During the same period, the number of men appointed to commissions from civilian applicants drastically decreased. In only five years did they exceed those accepted into the army from the graduates of West Point. In fact, by the beginning of the

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Mexican War over 76 per cent of the regular officer corps were products of the military academy.\(^3\)

In 1831, the House Committee on Military Affairs reported that the President needed no authority to appoint meritorious sergeants to be officers. Legislation on the matter would have been unnecessary because the chief executive already had the power to appoint and the Senate had the authorization to give its "advise and consent."\(^4\) A few years later, Major General Alexander Macomb, general-in-chief of the army, offered a solution to stifle criticism about enlisted men's promotion barriers. He proposed to Secretary of War Lewis Cass that instead of promoting a noncommissioned officer to act as sergeant major in each regimental headquarters, officials should appoint a sub-adjutant from the ranks. This particular grade would have left the holder in limbo between commissioned and enlisted status.\(^5\)


\(^5\)Macomb to Cass, 7 March 1836, reprinted in the *Arkansas Gazette*, 5 April 1836.
Occasionally enlisted men and some officers denounced the War Department's method of selecting individuals for commissions. The strongest censure probably came from the noncommissioned officers themselves and newspapers. In January, 1837, eighteen corporals and sergeants presented a memorial to Congress in which they lashed out at the policy of accepting only military academy graduates as officers. They thought such a policy "... doomed [an enlisted man] to serve out a servitude of years, despised and degraded by all his countrymen, not withstanding his qualifications and merits may be of a superior kind." An editorial and two letters in the *Army and Navy Chronicle* between 1837 and 1839 supported the appointment of enlisted men to commissions. The writers all thought such a step would be a great morale booster and would provide incentive for more and better enlistees.

Congress did not act, however, until the Mexican War and the expansion of the regular army suddenly increased the need for leaders. In 1847, lawmakers approved the appointment of qualified noncommissioned officers as brevet

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7 *Arkansas Gazette*, 14 December 1837, 21 February 1839, 11 April 1839.
second lieutenants. Consequently, during the Mexican War approximately 9 per cent of 677 new officer selections were corporals and sergeants. The act entitled meritorious privates to a two-dollar-a-month pay increase. After the exigency created by the conflict ended, however, not another enlisted man was commissioned until 1855. 8

During the same time period when noncommissioned personnel rarely received appointments to officer status, those individuals who excelled in soldiering often moved up rapidly in the enlisted grades. A modern conception that promotions came slowly within the enlisted ranks and that a man moved up to the next higher position by attrition of the older soldiers is erroneous. Numerous noncommissioned officers did retain their rank over long periods of time, but reductions occurred frequently for many others. In addition to vacancies resulting from demotions, many more came from expirations of service, desertions, and discharges

8U.S., Statutes at Large, 9:186, 10:575. Lenney, Odyssey of the Regular Soldier, p. 134. Don Russell, editor of the New Standard Encyclopedia, in his introduction to Percival Green Lowe, Five Years a Dragoon (1849 to 1854) and Other Adventures on the Great Plains (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p. xvi, gives a definition of brevet rank as "... a commission conferring upon an officer a grade in the army additional to and higher than that which he holds by virtue of his commission in a particular corps of a legally established military organization." This definition has its weaknesses; however, without a detailed explanation it was the best found.
for disability and misconduct. A high percentage of noncommissioned officers, however, remained in service for many years. In 1838, an officer at army headquarters estimated that of the 735 sergeants and corporals then on active duty, 110 had enlisted prior to or during the War of 1812. One of the problems with statistics resulted over whether these men had been reduced and again promoted, and, if so, how many? Permanence of rank varied with each individual and his personal conduct, not primarily soldiering ability.9

Over the years the number of noncommissioned officer positions slightly increased in relation to the number of privates which afforded better chances of promotion for the rank and file. For example, prior to 1821, an infantry or rifle company had four sergeants and four corporals in a total authorized strength of seventy-eight men. A similar type light artillery unit had the same number of noncommissioned officers, but counted ten less soldiers. On the other hand, batteries in the corps of artillery increased in number to 118 enlisted men; thus, they needed a larger number of

9Army and Navy Chronicle, 8 November 1838. That commanders based promotions on merit more than on seniority may be found in several regimental orders. An example may be found in Regimental Order, 2 July 1820, U.S., National Archives, Old Army Records, 6th U.S. Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, 1817-1824, Records Group 391, Entry 1207.
supervisory personnel. Each of these units had six sergeants, including a quartermaster noncommissioned officer, and eight corporals. 10

In 1821, Congress directed the consolidation of all the army's artillery into four regiments of nine companies with fifty-five men in each. The number of noncommissioned officers remained unchanged from the old light batteries. In addition to the modification of artillery, lawmakers reduced infantry companies to fifty-one enlisted men, and also the number of sergeants to three. In both type units then, promotion possibilities based on the ratio of noncommissioned officers to privates took an upswing with an overall decrease in the size of the army. 11

For a brief period between 1832 and 1833, the short-lived mounted ranger battalion had proportionally fewer supervisory personnel in relation to privates than older units. In its companies of 110 men, Congress had provided for only five sergeants and five corporals. Following the activation of the Regiment of Dragoons in 1833, the army disbanded the ranger battalion. The newly formed mounted

11 Ibid., 3:616.
companies consisted of sixty-nine enlisted men, but had only four sergeants and four corporals.  

From 1833 until 1842, the sizes of companies in all units remained the same. In the latter year, however, a Whig Congress reduced the army in its economic retrenchment efforts. While lawmakers decreased the overall total of enlisted men, they actually increased the ratio of non-commissioned officers in relation to the number of authorized privates. For example, under the new tables of organization, infantry companies lost one private each, but gained one sergeant. An artillery company was cut to fifty-two soldiers, and retained the same number of noncommissioned officers. The dragoon units received the largest overall reduction, but still retained its corporals and sergeants as provided in 1833. Each of the mounted companies lost eight privates. Despite the intermittent reductions in the overall strength of the army, the possibilities of promotions numerically increased within the enlisted grades.  

Regulations placed no time in service or grade limitations on enlisted advancement within the ranks. Various commanders from time to time did issue standing orders that

12 Ibid., 4:533, 652.
13 Ibid., 5:512.
the only privates they would consider for corporal status would be the ones who knew and could instruct the school of the soldier. By the same measure of achievement, individuals recommended for sergeant should be able to do the same with company drill. The final decision for promotions within the companies rested with regimental commanders, who usually respected the wishes of the company commanders. As far as conditions permitted, the officers selected sergeants from those men presently holding corporal's rank. In cases where a company lacked qualified men for promotion, the procedure would be to accept a more satisfactory individual from any other company in the regiment. To assure that no overages of the number of authorized non-commissioned officers occurred, regulations emphasized that a colonel could not promote anyone when a unit had a full complement of sergeants and corporals.14

As a means of trying to assuage criticism of its policy of not appointing men from the ranks to commissions, and also as a method for training young soldiers, regulations provided for a board of three of the highest ranking officers in each regiment to select outstanding privates to act as corporals. The group met every two months to consider

privates for appointment to an honorary rank. With the presentation of satisfactory proof that an individual's conduct had been exemplary and his performance of duty excellent, the three officer board could designate him to be a lance corporal. A soldier so selected wore a distinctive badge on his uniform, received the respect of a noncommissioned officer, and supervised any details composed of men junior to him including other "acting jacks." In cases where companies were stationed away from their regiment, they conducted their own boards and forwarded the results to higher headquarters for final disposition.\textsuperscript{15}

While research did not determine the typical soldier's military career, a study of service and courts-martial records did reveal striking differences, and yet similarities, in patterns of promotions, reductions, and conduct of several individuals. Examples of the rapidity with which some soldiers were promoted and then reduced may be found scattered throughout the official documents. One sergeant of the Sixth Infantry Regiment, Fielding G. Brown, had entered the army at the age of nineteen. Within eight months after his first enlistment, he had been promoted to sergeant. During his

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{U.S., American State Papers, Military Affairs, 2:207. Regulations for the Army, 1825, pp. 35-36.}
second term, Brown had been court-martialed and reduced to private for neglect of duty. The regimental commander had remitted the sentence, however, owing to the soldier's good character and outstanding record. In 1834, at the end of his third enlistment, Brown had permanently left the army after fifteen years service.16

Another individual who evidently excelled as a soldier, but permitted his impetuous disposition to rule his personal conduct, was Philip Warder. A native of Prince William, Virginia, he had first enlisted in the Seventh Infantry Regiment in 1829. After finding that he disliked military regimentation, Warder purchased his discharge by paying twenty-five dollars for a substitute approximately two years later. Within four months after his release, the former soldier enlisted in the Sixth Infantry Regiment. Warder made sergeant before he had been back in the army one year. In July, 1834, his company commander charged him for "... disputing his account with the sutler at the pay table in a violent and noisy manner, ..." refusing to accept his pay,

and impertinent insolence. In addition to his quarrel with the post merchant, Warder had vehemently criticized the Council of Administration in front of several officers for having neglected its duty in periodically reviewing and revising the sutler's prices. A court-martial convicted and reduced the sergeant to private, confined him to the guardhouse on bread and water for fifteen days, and directed that he forfeit one-half of his pay for two months.

On September 3, Warder's company commander recommended him for promotion to corporal, and the following month for sergeant. By February, 1835, and two courts-martial later, he was again a private. The following year he deserted, only to be apprehended after ten months' absence. In November, 1838, Warder reenlisted for five years, but before completing his term of service he deserted for good.

Several former enlisted men told of having been promoted to sergeant on their first enlistment, or of having known men who had moved up through the grades within a few months.

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17 Order 77, 17 July 1834, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued, RG 391, Entry 1208.
18 Ibid. Register of Enlistments in the U.S. Army, RG 94, M233, Roll 19.
19 Orders 99, 111, 137, 3 September, 1 October, 2 December 1834, Order 13, 12 February 1835, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued, RG 391, Entry 1208. Register of Enlistments in the U.S. Army, RG 94, M233, Roll 20.
In the early 1830's, John H. Fonda, a quartermaster sergeant in the First Infantry Regiment, had made sergeant during his three years of service. James Hildreth, a private in the Regiment of Dragoons from 1833 to 1834, told of several men who had been promoted to the noncommissioned grades within a few months after enlisting. Some of the individuals had prior service, but most did not.  

Once an order appointed a private to the noncommissioned officer grades, regulations contained protective clauses to prevent his arbitrary reduction. He could be demoted only after conviction by a court-martial or by the considered judgment of his regimental commander. In case of a reduction based on the colonel's decision, an individual had to have been incapable of satisfactorily performing his duty, or he had committed an act of misconduct.


Until 1835, a noncommissioned officer could have voluntarily resigned his appointment. For the good of the service, however, military and civilian leaders realized the need to halt the long established practice. Two years prior, Congress had changed its policy of paying bounties to men enlisting for the first time. Military officials had convinced lawmakers that individuals most likely to desert did so during their first year of service. Thus, under provisions of the 1833 statute, privates and musicians reenlisting for their second and subsequent "hitches" received monetary enticements to remain in the army. Many noncommissioned officers, with the approval of their commanders, took advantage of the change. They resigned their appointments shortly before the expiration of their terms of service, collected two months' extra pay, and then were promoted back to their former grades. Although an 1838 statute extended the payment of bounties to reenlisting non-commissioned officers, regulations continued to prohibit them from resigning at their own whim.22

While the wording of regulations abstractly protected an enlisted man's right in regard to promotions and reductions,

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in reality the system did not work that way. If a confrontation occurred between commissioned and enlisted personnel, either could request a court of enquiry to determine who had been correct in his actions. The tribunal issued its decision as to whether the allegations of a complainant warranted the formation of a court-martial. In cases involving danger to military good order and discipline, but not specific violations of regulations or standing orders, the inquisitions persistently favored persons in the highest authority on each occasion.  

On numerous occasions commanders issued warnings for noncommissioned officers to refrain from striking or maltreating any soldier "... unless for personal insolence or a positive disobedience of an order." In a greater percentage of allegations implicating corporals and sergeants for abuse of privates, the men with the chevrons almost always seemed to prove that they had been provoked. This

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24 Order, 19 January 1820, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders
condition held particularly true if a sergeant or corporal claimed to have been nettled while in the line of duty. Thus, no matter how emphatically regulations or standing orders gave lip service to protection of an individual's rights, nineteenth century military leaders invariably stressed that any questioning of authority, no matter how trifling, indicated danger to good order and should be promptly stifled.25

In the period between the War of 1812 and the Mexican War, monetary compensation for army service also favored commissioned personnel. Whereas enlisted men's basic pay increased in 1833 and 1838, officers continued to draw the same allowances as established in 1802. Even though enlisted personnel received the two pay raises, the difference between their wages and those of commissioned personnel remained far apart. In 1816, second lieutenants in the infantry and artillery expected a total emolument of $73.90 monthly. An officer of a similar grade in the dragoons received an equivalency of $97.40. The mounted lieutenant's greater

compensation resulted from $8.50 higher base pay and $16 for the care of two horses. 26

Until 1833, the army's monthly pay schedule for enlisted men established a scale of nine dollars for sergeant majors; eight dollars, sergeants and teachers of music; seven dollars, corporals; six dollars, musicians; ten dollars, artificers; and, five dollars, privates. Lawmakers finally sought to improve the condition of enlisted personnel and to curtail the rising desertion rate. In 1833, they set the base pay of sergeant majors at seventeen dollars a month, first sergeants at sixteen, other sergeants at thirteen, corporals at nine, musicians at eight, and privates at seven. To further discourage unauthorized absences, Congress directed that one dollar a month of each private's pay be retained for two years. Privates and corporals in mounted units also received an extra two dollars a month incentive pay. 27

26 U.S., Congress, House, Table Showing the Changes by Law in the Pay, Subsistence, Forage, etc., of Officers, Noncommissioned Officers, and Privates in the Army, from 1791 to the Present Date, 28th Cong., 1st sess., 2 April 1844, H. Doc. 219, pp. 7-8. The base pay for infantry and artillery officers was $25 a month, and that of commissioned personnel of the lowest two grades in the dragoons was $33.50. All of the lowest ranking officers received two rations a day valued at 18¢ each, and $16.50 to pay for a servant.

27 U.S., Statutes at Large, 2:133, 4:647.
In 1838, Congress again attempted to make a military career more attractive. It gave privates a one dollar raise and added two top enlisted positions to the army's grade structure. Although the lower ranking soldiers gained a monetary increase, their retained pay was raised to two dollars a month to be held until the expiration of an individual's term of service and included all enlisted grades. By provisions of the 1838 statute, Congress added a quartermaster sergeant and a chief musician to each regiment. This supplement permitted the promotion of two additional enlisted men and placed them in the same pay grade as the sergeant major.  

One critic claimed that "... enlisted pay could only appeal to men who wanted to leave real responsibility behind with their civilian clothes." While such statements are probably true in relation to present-day wage standards, the pre-Mexican War soldiers' pay compared favorably with that of their contemporary civilian counterparts. In computing the enlisted men's emoluments, the importance and material worth of medical care and subsistence must also

28 Ibid., 5:258.

be considered. At the same time that civilian workers may have received board in addition to monetary compensation for their labors, they provided for their own medical expenses. Other factors which gave impetus to a premise that soldiers' wages equaled those of civilians included provisions for extra pay for fatigue, care of clothing, reenlistment, commutation for the whiskey portion of the ration, and acts of merit.\textsuperscript{30}

In order to determine the wages of frontier soldiers in contrast with those of other similarly unskilled or semi-skilled workers, the author compared the expected monthly income of general and agricultural laborers and construction type craftsmen. Such choices resulted because these occupations reflected the kinds of workers needed to perform toilsome tasks at frontier posts. In addition, since the army recruited the largest percentage of its enlistees from an agricultural society, such labors or crafts represented the former endeavors of the greater number of soldiers. To make the comparison more valid, the examination considered only the wage scales of civilian workers in the proximity of troop concentrations at western posts.\textsuperscript{31}


\textsuperscript{31} Lenney, Odyssey of the Regular Soldier, pp. 46-47. U.S., Bureau of Census, Historical Statistics of the United
Prior to the late 1820's, military leaders found few civilians to perform menial and craftsmen tasks at the more isolated installations. In any case, the quartermaster would have been forced to search for laborers in urban areas such as St. Louis. He would have paid at least one dollar a day for the most unskilled individual. Since a great reservoir of manpower was readily available in the ranks of the army, leaders utilized the soldiers for construction and maintenance of military posts.32

By the early 1830's, settlers had begun to catch up with the military frontier. Consequently, more civilians sought employment at army posts. At some installations, the quartermaster hired an occasional free black, or contracted an owner for use of his slaves. Generally, however, this practice occurred more frequently in the Southeast, and particularly in Florida. The army had a standard scale for contract labor. In 1828, local civilians in the vicinity of Fort Snelling on the upper Mississippi received sixteen dollars a month. Five years later, the army advertised for thirty laborers to help construct part of

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32Prucha, Broadax and Bayonet, pp. 34-36, 104-120.
the road from Little Rock to Memphis. An advertisement in the Arkansas Gazette guaranteed six to eight months' employment for sixteen dollars a month. This sum did not include board.33

Wages were higher when the demand for workers exceeded the availability. As the number of persons living near a fort increased, the wage scale declined. Generally, the quartermaster department paid forty dollars a month to its clerks. Skilled craftsmen received more. A master carpenter asked ninety dollars a month, and a stonemason sixty. By 1850, the average monthly pay of farm workers with board in all states west of the Mississippi River varied from a low of eleven dollars a month in Arkansas to seventeen in Minnesota. A day laborer received from fifty-four to eighty-six cents.34


The difference between civilian and military wages decreased to the advantage of the soldier with the addition of various compensations. Beginning in 1819, Congress passed legislation to permit the payment of an allowance to soldiers employed in the building of fortifications, roads, and other constant labor. Although not specifically encouraging the utilization of enlisted men on construction projects except during times of emergencies, the measure provided for troops so employed for ten consecutive days to receive "... fifteen cents and an extra gill of whiskey or spirits each, per day...".

In addition to fatigue labor, soldiers occasionally supplemented their income through reenlistment. Prior to 1833, only men enlisting for their first time received a bounty of twelve dollars for a five-year term. Beginning

Property, and Revenue; the Detailed Statistics of Cities, Towns, and Counties; Being a Compendium of the Seventh Census; to Which are added the Results of Every Previous Census, Beginning with 1790, in Comparative Tables, with Explanatory and Illustrative Notes, Based Upon the Schedules and Other Official Sources of Information (Washington: Beverly Tucker, 1854), p. 164. In 1840, farm wages in Missouri were $10-12 monthly; Michigan, $7; Illinois, $8; Wisconsin, $8-10; and, Iowa, $12. U.S., Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Statistics, Bulletin 99, Wages of Farm Labor. Nineteenth Investigation, in 1909, Continuing a Series That Began in 1866, compiled by George K. Holmes (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912), pp. 16-18.

35 U.S., Statutes at Large, 3:488.
in 1833, the army discontinued giving a bonus to newly recruited individuals. Officials began awarding privates and musicians with a fourteen-dollar bounty for reenlisting for three years. In 1838, lawmakers extended the privilege to noncommissioned officers also and made the regular army term of obligation five years. Under the provisions of the later statute, an individual received three months' extra pay according to his grade. Although it was repealed during the same session that Congress enacted it, one section of the 1838 law included a provision which granted 160-acre patents to any soldier who served faithfully for ten consecutive years. Incidentally, increases for longevity did not become a part of an enlisted man's pay until 1854.\textsuperscript{36}

Of all the methods by which soldiers could add to their total income, they found that conservation of items of their clothing issue to be the most profitable. From 1816 onward, whenever a soldier required more clothing than the authorized quantity, the paymaster deducted the cost of the extra articles from the individual's pay. A trooper received cash for those items not issued to him each year. Between 1816 and 1845, the total cost of a soldier's basic clothing allowance varied between thirty and fifty dollars. In

\textsuperscript{36}Ibid., 2:672, 4:647, 5:258, 10:576.
addition to his initial issue, an individual received annual replacement for many of the articles which were subject to rapid wearout. These supplemental items usually totaled approximately two-thirds of the first year's allowance. On the first payday after the anniversary of a soldier's date of enlistment, he received his rebate for the unused portion of his authorized clothing for the preceding year.  

While regulations prescribed that pay calls be conducted bi-monthly, paymasters seldom made their appearances on schedule. On the contrary to the requirement and the actual condition, in some instances more than one year lapsed between paydays. In August, 1816, the editor of the "Niles' Register" reported that the troops at Detroit and Michilimachinac, Michigan Territory, had not been paid in fifteen months. Between 1817 and 1819, the paymaster made only three appearances. Prior to the Mexican War, the situation did not greatly improve. In 1835 and 1836, Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny had urgently requested the pay officer from St. Louis to come pay his three companies of dragoons at Fort Des Moines, located on the

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Mississippi River a few miles north of the Missouri state line. Kearny's men had been paid only once during the preceding year.\textsuperscript{38}

Although transportation facilities and means had improved greatly between 1815 and 1845, by the eve of the Mexican War commanders at frontier posts still registered frequent complaints over the excessive length of time between paydays. The long waits led soldiers to seek money by cutting wood and performing other labor for local civilians. Contrary to the efforts of the men to acquire additional cash, several commanders issued orders to the effect that "a soldier's time when at a military station . . . [was] the property of his government."\textsuperscript{39} Periodically such directives forbade enlisted men and officers to perform labor for private emolument when present for duty with their regiments.\textsuperscript{40}


\textsuperscript{39}Order 1, 15 January 1828, Company E, 5th U.S. Infantry Regiment Orderly Book, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Michigan.

\textsuperscript{40}Ibid. Lieutenant Colonel Gustavus Loomis to General Roger Jones, 24 April 1844, U.S., National Archives, Old
Troops occasionally received small amounts of money for many sundry reasons. For example, if some part of their ration were not available, commanders directed payment of the difference between the contract price and the cost of a deleted item. In 1823, a shortage of beans occurred at Fort Atkinson on the upper Missouri River. The post commander instructed the quartermaster officer to insure that each man was paid for his missing food item. In another instance, after the 1832 curtailment of the whiskey portion of the ration, Secretary of War Lewis Cass ordered a commutation in lieu of the omitted daily gill of alcohol. The amount of money paid remained small, however, and usually varied between two and three cents a day. In 1838, Congress authorized the issuance of coffee and sugar instead of the monetary compensation.  

Between 1819 and 1833, soldiers received an annual stipend from the sale of their share of excess farm produce,  


41In 1821, the Secretary of War gave instructions to the quartermaster to pay fifty-one cents a gallon to any soldier who willingly gave up his whiskey ration. The order provided for the payment to be given every ninety days. By omitting this item of his ration, a soldier could collect an average of approximately one dollar extra pay each month. Order, 15 November 1821, 19 November 1823, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207. U.S., Statutes at Large, 5:258-259.
which added a small sum to their pay. The amount seldom exceeded three or four dollars a year. Thus, the many small payments to soldiers increased their pay considerably, particularly the fifteen cents a day for fatigue details and the rebates for unused clothing.⁴²

The few enlisted men who were married supported their families on army pay. As a means of obtaining additional funds, a soldier sometimes sought to have his wife appointed as one of the several laundresses authorized for duty with his company. The number of these positions available occasionally changed, but regulations generally permitted the employment of one washerwoman for each seventeen men present for duty. The Council of Administration determined the fee that the laundresses could charge, which usually amounted to approximately fifty cents a person each month. Even with such a minimal charge, the women possibly earned the equivalent of a private's monthly base pay. In addition, they each were issued one ration a day. They also had

their quarters provided and their transportation paid upon a change of station of the company to which they were assigned.43

The many small sources of additional pay and the numerous deductions created difficulties for soldiers in keeping their accounts correct. In 1835, to aid each enlisted man in maintaining a personal record, the adjutant general directed that each enlisted man be issued a book in which to keep his "military history, . . . the state of his accounts, . . . allowances of pay [and] clothing, . . ." as a basis for later claims.44 Thereafter, the sutler kept the "Soldier's Book" in stock and sold them at a price ranging from twenty to thirty cents each. By 1847, as is indicated by the absence of instructions in the regulations of that year, the army had discontinued the practice of

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requiring enlisted soldiers to maintain a personal record of their military affairs. 45

When the paymaster did make his rare appearance at a frontier post, the sutler probably collected the largest portion of the average soldier's pay received. As did other creditors, he had the privilege of standing at the end of the line to accept any money due to him for the goods he had sold "on the cuff" since the last pay call. Regulations permitted the appointment of these civilian merchants to provide military units with certain provisions which were not issued by the quartermaster. In return for a guarantee of a monopoly to sell to the troops of a post, the sutler paid a fee as established by three officers on the Council of Administration. The assessment ranged from ten to fifteen cents a month for each enlisted man present at a garrison. At posts where large numbers of troops were stationed, appointers of the merchants permitted more than one to operate. In such instances, one usually found one sutler to each four or five companies. 46

45 Ibid. Regulations for the Army, 1847.

The sutler held his appointment from two to four years at the pleasure of the Secretary of War. He could expect a renewal of his position as long as he abided by army rules and regulations. While the sutler received no monetary compensation from the government for his services, Congress still subjected him to the provisions of the Articles of War. He could be suspended from his appointment and fined twenty-five cents for each enlisted soldier at a post upon conviction by a court-martial for any wrongdoing. In case he failed to pay any assessment levied by a military tribunal, he could be imprisoned. ⁴⁷

The Council of Administration set the sutler's prices based on his costs at the point of supply and the distance the goods had been transported. A generally accepted schedule permitted the merchant to markup his groceries 150 per cent and his less perishable items 100 per cent. In 1821, the sutler at Fort Atkinson asked twenty-five cents for a pound of tobacco or sugar, fifty cents for the same amount of coffee or black pepper, and sixty cents a pound for butter or cheese. He received two dollars a pound for

his tea, and two dollars and twenty-five cents for a gallon of whiskey. In the late 1830's, like goods still brought about the same price at posts on the upper Mississippi River. Regulations permitted sutlers to extend credit to enlisted men not to exceed one-half of an individual's monthly pay. This privilege was contingent upon approval by a soldier's commanding officer.  

One major change occurred over the years, however, and sutlers began to stock less perishable foods as regions of the country became more settled. Local merchants caused the change by offering more competition with goods from local sources. Occasionally individuals travelled from some distant commercial center with an abundance of such things as bacon, eggs, and sausages in hope of receiving special permission to sell the produce to the soldiers at an isolated post. Sometimes commanders allowed the entrepreneurs to dispose of their goods at extremely low prices.  


49 Order, Cantonment Council Bluffs, 19 February 1821, Order 18, 9 November 1821, Order 132, 27 May 1822, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207.
In the early 1830's, the army discontinued its permission for sutlers to sell spirituous liquors to soldiers. Before the curtailment order ended such sales, commanding officers of posts could authorize their men to purchase one gill of whiskey a day. They usually extended the privilege to soldiers whom they knew would cause no problem from intemperance. After restrictions ended the sale of distilled liquors on posts, sutlers still retained their right to sell fermented beverages such as beer, ale, or wine. 50

When the troops moved out on a campaign, sutlers followed them. With the approval of a regimental commander, regulations permitted a single merchant to move one wagon drawn by four horses in a military column. He had to furnish the animals and his equipment. He could make sales only to the regiment to which he was assigned. 51

While the Secretary of War made the final decision as to who would be appointed the privilege of sutling on a military post, he seldom made his choice without considering the suggestions of a commanding officer and his Council of Administration. Occasionally an officer sought to exert

51 Regulations for the Army, 1825, pp. 138-139.
the influence of his position in the selection of a sutler. One such incident occurred at Fort Leavenworth in 1839. The council made its recommendation for a sutler and forwarded the name to the post commander. Because of his dislike of the individual selected, Colonel Kearny disapproved the decision of the board. Major Clifton Wharton, president of the council, adamantly insisted that the wishes of the selecting officers be forwarded to higher headquarters. Kearny placed Wharton under arrest and forced the appointment of a sutler agreeable to his opinion. General-in-Chief of the Army Alexander Macomb finally intervened to settle the matter. He reprimanded Kearny for his actions and also emphasized that command pressure could not be condoned in such instances. Macomb wrote that the colonel's sole responsibility should have been confined "... to see that the sutler did not impose upon the troops, and that he conducted himself in conformity with the Articles of War."52

The composition of the Council of Administration consisted of the three senior officers on a post, excluding the commander, and a fourth one who acted as the secretary. It met at least once every two months and prescribed the

clothing, groceries, small equipment, and other commodities to be stocked in the sutler's inventory. Those items purchased and kept on hand at the store were necessities and also luxuries not issued by the quartermaster. In addition to determining the composition of the sutler's stock, the council periodically audited his records and established his prices. It inspected every aspect of the merchant's operations, and therefrom made recommendations for improvement.\footnote{Regulations for the Army, 1825, pp. 72-73. Regulations for the Army, 1841, pp. 35-37.}

The responsibility for collecting the fees assessed on the sutler also lay with the Council of Administration. The money collected from the levy went into a post fund. When an installation had a paymaster present for duty, he acted as the treasurer for the money. If a finance officer were not assigned to a post, the commander then appointed some "discreet" individual to perform the task.\footnote{U.S., American State Papers, Military Affairs, 2:218. Regulations for the Army, 1825, pp. 72-73.}

The post fund developed as an important source to provide relief for military personnel and their families. With the approval of the council and the commanding officer, money could be donated to widows and orphans of deceased
commissioned and enlisted personnel. Regulations also warranted the fund to be utilized to assist men disabled in the line of duty, or those too aged to perform further active duty. In this regard, the fund served as an important morale factor in the years prior to retirement. In addition to serving as a relief fund, it also provided a source of money for the purchase of many articles of cookware for the company kitchens. It afforded a means to buy the instruments and equipment for a post band. The money expended on a military cantonment for the education of soldier's children and the acquisition of books for a post library.  

The greater part of the money deposited in the post fund came from the saving of flour through the utilization of a central baking facility. As soon as feasible after a unit established a new cantonment, the quartermaster had an oven constructed. By the consolidation of a post's baking, an accumulation of one-third of the flour portion of the soldier's daily ration resulted. The quartermaster transferred the excess to the sutler, who sold it and deposited all money above his cost with the post fund treasurer. In  

1826, Fort Atkinson had approximately 450 men assigned. An assessment of ten cents for each soldier present for duty brought forty-five dollars a month to the fund. On the other hand, the Council of Administration reported it had received approximately sixty dollars each month from the sale of excess flour. Official records reflected numerous such instances of similar statistics. 56

Since the post fund provided an abundant source of money for the purchase of books, seldom did a military installation lack a well-stocked library with the older and latest publications. Reading offered a favored diversion for the literate soldiers at isolated cantonments. No statistics exist to be able to discern the number of men in the army who could read or write; however, one soldier, James Hildreth, bragged of the high literacy rate in his company. He further stated that his unit compared favorably with the remainder of the Regiment of Dragoons when recruited in 1833. An 1839 survey of an infantry company found that

at least one-third of the men in the unit had been comfortable materially before enlisting. Several had been lawyers, doctors, or ministers, a fact that was indicative of a high literacy rate. While many other observers during the period remarked adversely about the illiteracy of soldiers, they did admit that no shortage of books existed in military posts reading facilities. 57

In 1821, shortly after its move up the Missouri River under the most difficult conditions, the Sixth Infantry Regiment established a library at Fort Atkinson. Each year the unit made extensive additions to its basic collection. On one occasion the Council of Administration voted to allocate five hundred dollars for the purchase of books. The colonel then made an order from a Philadelphia dealer who delayed the shipment at St. Louis until he had been paid for the cost of the publications and an additional one hundred dollars for their transportation. 58

The troops probably preferred Robinson Crusoe as the most popular book. In addition to this novel, the other


58 Order, 27 September 1821, Orders 75, 92, 13 March, 6 April 1822, Order 52, 5 March 1823, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207.
favorites among the enlisted soldiers included the writing of James Fenimore Cooper, Sir Walter Scott, and Frederick Marryat. In the 1830's and 1840's, the accounts of the western explorations of United States army officers John Charles Fremont and Benjamin L.E. Bonneville equally enticed the imaginative young soldiers. Selectors of the reading materials also chose local and national newspapers such as the Watchman, the National Intelligencer, the Missouri Republican, and the Arkansas Gazette. These news sheets cost from three to six dollars a year plus postage. Other general periodicals included the Niles' Register, the North American Review, the Army and Navy Chronicle, and several agricultural journals. The inventories of books also had such titles as Columbus' First Voyage, Croley on the Apocalypse, Philosophy in Sports, Hall's Voyage, and numerous technical publications. A fact that greatly impressed foreign visitors was the vast selection of books, newspapers, and periodicals from which the soldiers could choose. Regulations even directed that a section in each reading facility be reserved and stocked with publications specifically requested by enlisted personnel.  

59 Orders 7, 57, 8 January, 27 March 1826, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued, RG 391, Entry 1208. Missouri Republican, 8 April 1826. North Western Gazette & Galena
To care for and safeguard against abuse of the reading materials, the Councils of Administration drafted detailed library regulations. These procedural documents varied little from one post to another one. An example may be found in the official records of the fifth Infantry Regiment when it was stationed at Fort Howard near present-day Green Bay, Wisconsin, in 1837. The board appointed a knowledgeable soldier to act as librarian and paid him five dollars a month from the post fund. He maintained an index and classified each publication according to subject matter. Only soldiers and officers and their families could sign out materials. If an individual proved to be a chronic abuser of books, the council barred him permanently from the library. 60

In addition to providing the men and their families with a means for self-improvement and entertainment, directives also licensed each Council of Administration with the power to establish a school for the soldiers’s children. Prior to the authorization of chaplains in 1838, an adjutant


60 Order 67, 27 May 1837, 5th Infantry Regiment Orders. Issued, RG 391, Entry 1186.
selected a qualified noncommissioned officer or private
to act as schoolmaster. In instances where he was unable
to find a competent enlisted man, the officer engaged an
officer’s wife or employed a local civilian in that capacity.
The post quartermaster furnished a building with the necessary
furniture. The council determined the school teacher’s
salary and paid it from the post fund. Since regulations
did not mention officers’ children, the council levied a
tax of fifty cents a month on each one who attended school.61

The salaries of schoolmasters varied a great deal and
depended on the qualifications of an individual. Enlisted
personnel usually received fifteen cents a day above their
normal pay and allowances. Better qualified persons received
more. One western post paid a Harvard graduate seventy-five
dollars a month. Needless to say, the quality of instruction
was not the same at any two posts. In 1838, Congress
partially resolved the dilemma by authorizing the employment
of chaplains at twenty posts, who also served as school-
masters.62

61 Orders 34, 75, 84, 24 January, 13 March, 28 March
1822, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG
391, Entry 1207. Order 7, 8 January 1826, 6th Infantry
Regiment Orders Issued, RG 391, Entry 1208.

Papers, Military Affairs, 2:218. Regulations for the Armv.
Prior to 1836, the army made no official provisions for the moral guidance of its soldiery. While not specifically stipulating that chaplains could be employed, an 1836 general order did permit Councils of Administration to utilize post funds to cover the cost for the "... moral and religious instruction of the troops ..." from time to time. In 1838, Congress formally recognized the problem and statutorily approved the hiring of individuals to act as both chaplain and schoolmaster at twenty posts nationwide. Only eight of these installations were west of the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes.

Before military and civilian leaders officially recognized the importance of non-temporal matters in the life of a soldier, piecemeal efforts by various religious denominations and a few officers and their wives had sought to provide moral guidance for personnel stationed at frontier installations. Troops at many posts in Indian Country seldom had the benefit of local civilian clergymen to administer their

63 General Order, 31 December 1836, Adjutant General Orders and Circulars, RG 391, Entry 44.

64 General Order 29, 18 August 1838, ibid. U.S., Statutes at Large, 5:259. Councils of Administration were authorized to pay up to forty dollars a month, issue four rations, and provide a captain's quarters and fuel to anyone employed as a chaplain.
spiritual needs. Occasionally a missionary would offer his services, or in some instances, invite the troops to attend church at a nearby Indian mission. Numerous petitions to Congress and newspaper editorials urged the addition of chaplains to the army's organization. They based their concern more on soldier intemperance than on cultural or spiritual needs of the men.65

In 1829, an editorial in the Arkansas Gazette reported that seldom did a preacher remain in rural congregations for more than a few months in the region west of Ohio. While troops stationed near small villages occasionally had a church to attend, in more instances they were unable to find one. In 1832, when Washington Irving visited Fort Gibson in present-day eastern Oklahoma, his traveling companion, Henry Leavitt Ellsworth of New York, commented that many of the men buried in the post graveyard had received no religious consolation at their funerals. The garrison's surgeon usually conducted the burial services by reading a short sermon at the graveside.66


66 Arkansas Gazette, 6 January 1829. Henry Leavitt Ellsworth, Washington Irving on the Prairie or a Narrative of a Tour of the Southwest in the Year 1832, edited by
Dragoon James Hildreth made many disparaging remarks about military life, but none were more critical than his lamentations over the total absence of the Sabbath in the army. After Secretary of War Lewis Cass had ordered an end to Sunday inspections in 1833, the editor of the Green Bay Intelligencer reservedly complimented him. The newspaperman then added that he hoped religious instructions would soon be provided for the troops. Numerous letters and petitions to Congress also urged that funds be made available for the employment of clergymen at military posts. Generally, all of the memorials expressed opinions that the implementation of a moral guidance program would sharply curtail desertions, intemperance, and poor physical health among the troops.67

Between the end of the War of 1812 and the early 1830's, efforts to establish moral guidance programs developed among military dependents. The endeavors of the wife of the post commander at Fort Snelling epitomized such attempts. In 1821, Mrs. Josiah Snelling offered the basement of her


quarters for Sunday school classes. She conducted classes and invited local laymen to preach weekly sermons. To gain the interest of soldiers's children, Mrs. Snelling arranged outings away from the post. According to observers, the officer's wife enjoyed some success in establishing her program and keeping it in operation. 68

Prior to the 1830's, very few religious denominations sent missionaries to the frontier. As Protestant ministers, and an infrequent Catholic clergyman, began to arrive in larger numbers, they offered their services to military posts. Some traveled long distances regularly to conduct scheduled meetings. For example, in 1833, the pastor of a church in Galena, Illinois, drove his buggy at least twice monthly to Fort Winnebago at the portage between the Fox and Wisconsin rivers in present-day central Wisconsin, a distance of approximately one hundred miles. 69

One of the most relevant incidents which support an idea that officers fell victim to an awareness of their exalted position in the military caste, even in spiritual matters, occurred at Fort Winnebago. In 1835, Reverend Abel Parker achieved an almost official status at the post.

69 Ibid.
He organized Bible classes, a temperance society, and study sessions, in addition to regular Sunday services. In return for all the clergyman's efforts, the Council of Administration paid him forty dollars a month. Soon several officers registered complaints with the post commander because enlisted men frequented many of the functions. They threatened to boycott further gathering at which soldiers participated. Parker expressed his disgust over the situation, but was persuaded to remain by a promise of a solution to the problem. The post commander finally arranged for enlisted personnel and their dependents to use the Indian mission immediately outside garrison for separate religious instructions.  

Some officers enthusiastically insisted that their soldiers attend church regularly. In the late 1830's, the colonel at Fort Snelling completed his Sunday morning inspection in time for the men to arrive at the chapel in time for services. Those individuals who refused to go to church listened to the reading of the Articles of War long past the termination of the religious ceremony. The colonel repeated the procedure for two weeks and by that time had encouraged 100 per cent of the soldiers not on duty to

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70 Ibid., pp. 291-292.
attend church. Other commanders felt that religious services were too bothersome and a waste of time on soldiers who were indifferent anyhow. One of these officers, Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny of the Regiment of Dragoons, questioned the provisions in the regulations that directed officers to send their men to church. The adjutant general candidly informed Kearny that regular attendance at religious services was a part of a soldier's military duty.  

At times death occurred so frequently on the frontier that burials seldom required more than a minimum of time or attention. Prior to the authorization of chaplains, one of the officers conducted the burial services. If an individual died on the prairies, only men close to the deceased participated in a simple ceremony, which ended with the grave being covered with stones or logs to prevent wild animals from digging up the remains. In garrison, time and conditions permitting, fellow soldiers gave more attention to a funeral ceremony. In cases of epidemics or large battle losses, the army curtailed formality at the services.

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72 Order, 9 May 1819, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207. Hildreth, Dragoon Campaigns to the Rockies, pp. 81-82. Order 4, 13 January 1833, Order 9, 9 March 1834, U.S., National Archives, Old Army Records, 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, 1824-1836, Records Group 391, Entry 1095. Army and Navy Chronicle, 3 January 1835.
After a brief memorial ceremony in the post chapel, the men of a deceased soldier's unit escorted the body to the post graveyard. The band preceded the entire burial procession, marching with drums muffled and covered in black, to the slow cadence of the Dead March. Six pallbearers of the same rank as the deceased carried the casket immediately behind the band. Behind the first two elements, a fully equipped horse with boots reversed in the saddle stirrups added solemnity to the occasion. An honor escort or firing squad whose size depended on the rank of the person being rendered homage marched behind the horse. The deceased's company, trailed by the other units of a garrison, completed the procession. After a brief ceremony at the graveside, the honor guard fired a three-round salute. Before a detail began to cover the casket with sod, the participating troops marched hurriedly back to their normal places of duty at "quick time."\(^7^3\)

Owing to restrictions caused by military routine and a lack of a diversity of entertainment facilities on western posts, many soldiers searched around the barracks for pastimes.

\(^7^3\)U.S., American State Papers, Military Affairs, 2:205-206. Regulations for the Army, 1825, pp. 28-31. A private's guard of honor consisted of eight men commanded by a corporal, while a sergeant's had fourteen men and a noncommissioned officer of the same rank as the deceased.
Off-duty idleness left them with a problem of combating boredom. Many turned to alcohol for a solution, while others merely deserted. Those who faced reality sought entertainment and relaxation within the simple social and religious institutions found on frontier posts or in an infrequent nearby town. Diversions in the barracks took the form of singing, story-telling, games and horse-play, reading, and outside sports such as football, foot-racing, wrestling, and even throwing stones. When the military situation and local conditions permitted, some men sought their relaxation off-post by fishing, hunting, horse-racing, and visiting the local whiskey sellers. The hospitality at western posts greatly impressed visitors, both from the East and abroad. Many made complimentary remarks about the quality of acting in plays produced and directed by enlisted men. Nearly all also commented about the invisible wall which separated the officers and their families from the soldiers and their dependents of "soapsuds row." Even at social gatherings, seating arrangements divided the inhabitants of a post into two sections, one for the enlisted men and their dependents and one for the officers and theirs.\(^74\)

\(^74\) Hildreth, Dragoon Campaigns to the Rockies, pp. 55, 87. George Catlin, North American Indians, Being Letters and Notes on Their Manners, Customs, and the Conditions,
Prior to the settlement of civilians in the vicinity of a military garrison, commanders gave permission for soldiers to leave the posts to hunt and fish. As white settlers began to increase in numbers in an area, the men then received passes also to visit the local villages. The maximum length of time allowed for a pass could not exceed two days. Usually the number of men permitted to leave a garrison ranged from two to six per company. Most soldiers received one-day passes good during daylight hours only. When an individual wished to be absent for a longer period than two days, he submitted a formal request for a furlough. While these absences usually could not exceed sixty days, sometimes a commander approved a soldier's petition for a period as long as four months if circumstances warranted it. Many units encouraged men to reenlist by offering them a sixty-day furlough with pay. Since soldiers on leave were reported on muster rolls as being absent, they evidently received no pay for the time spent on leave. The regulations are not clear on the matter. In

addition to the cessation of an individual's pay, no more than two men could be on furlough from one company at the same time. 75

A soldier stationed at a western frontier post faced hardships, inconveniences, and loneliness during the first half of the nineteenth century. In comparison with other frontiersmen, nevertheless, he had certain advantages. His monetary compensation equaled that of unskilled workers, who comprised the greater portion of the American labor force. Whereas both the soldier and civilian found little leisure time, when they did entertainment facilities on a military post offered a greater degree of diversion than those found in frontier villages. In most instances, before many settlers arrive in any area, the local military garrison served as the center of social activity. Owing to a sparsity of clergymen over the entire frontier, the absence of

individuals to conduct church services and offer moral
guidance affected both groups equally. Generally then, in
matters related to pay and basic material and cultural
needs, the soldier enjoyed conditions equal to, and in many
cases better than, his civilian counterpart.

At the same time, the soldier's plight did not compare
favorably with nonmilitary men at all in one instance. No
matter what his qualifications, the enlisted man's leaders
continued to consider him incapable and relegated him
permanently to a lowly position at the bottom of the military
caste. Only in times of extreme need was the soldier tendered
a commission, and then only so long as an emergency lasted.
The system that developed as a result of such an attitude
primarily attracted the undesirables of society, but even
when highly qualified men did enlist, they found their
ambitions stifled. They had a very slight chance of ever
earning a commission. No doubt many army officers were
capable men, but they failed to discern one source of their
many disciplinary problems. Frustrated men who lost all hope
of becoming officers either deserted or returned to civilian
life after five years disenchanted from their period of
oppression. A few soldiers stayed for many years, and
formed the nucleus for the noncommissioned officers' corps, but their number was small when compared with the total number of men who enlisted each year.
CHAPTER V

DISCIPLINE AND RELATED PROBLEMS

The immutability of the invisible barrier which separated commissioned and enlisted personnel, and the hopeless situation in which soldiers found themselves in the military order, may be discerned to some extent from the records pertaining to discipline and related problems. Courts-martial meted out harsh treatment for breaches of good order, whether for conviction of charges for felonies, or merely for minor infractions of rules. The theory seems to have been that the more severe the punishment the less likely an individual would commit a second offense. Some tribunals often arbitrarily devised their own unique penalties and apparently attempted to outdo the ones preceding them. While many men did deserve chastisement for wrong-doings, harsh punishment did not solve the problems which led them to commit the offenses. A search for the sources of frustrations and a subsequent reform of the system which perpetuated medieval social traditions would have accomplished more in curtailing transgressions by the rank and file. Discipline was an essential ingredient for an
effective army, but cruelty for the sake of maintaining a rigid military caste was not.

Since units were deployed over extensive areas of the Mississippi Valley, in many instances the responsibility for training and maintenance of good order fell to inexperienced officers. Thus some justification for the firm application of discipline and the failure to discern the causes for challenges to military injustice can be understood, but not consistent unwillingness on the part of otherwise competent leaders to see the need for a more humanitarian approach in instilling obedience. Further vindication of army leadership may also be made because of its concern over committing undisciplined troops to combat. In the type of warfare of the day, as demonstrated in the conflicts with American Indians, troopers unfortunate enough to be captured by the hostiles could expect the maximum penalty. One can readily understand, in light of these circumstances, the anxiety of commanders in preparing their men for battle.  

1In contrast to the conflicts in Florida and the later Far West, the army lost very few men in the Trans-Mississippi West as a result of open battle with Indians between 1815 and 1845. In fact, the regular army fought in only four skirmishes while on campaigns, and in these few, less than a dozen men were killed. George Washington Webb, Chronological List of Engagements Between the Regular Army of the United
Participants and contemporary observers of the period from the end of the War of 1812 until the Mexican War reported the severity of military correction and training from varying points of view. In 1821, Major General Jacob Brown, commander-in-chief of the army, expressed the general philosophy espoused by the officers and other supporters of rigid discipline and harsh punishment for anyone challenging the accepted principles of military good order. Upon assumption of overall command of the military establishment, the general issued an order commenting on obedience and duty. In regard to discipline, he wrote that when it was "... no longer nourished by the principle of constitutional activity, ... [it became] in a great degree dependent for existence on the application of authority in command ... ."² He continued that subordination was the essence of the military system. Brown emphasized that officers should be unrelenting in the enforcement of rigid and steady discipline because the soldiers would take advantage of any slackness they found.

²General Order, 1 June 1821, U.S., National Archives, Old Army Records, Adjutant General Orders and Circulars, 1797-1910, Records Group 391, Entry 44.
Both Brown and later General-in-Chief Winfield Scott advocated impartial justice, not oppression, in officer-enlisted relations.  

Men who served in the enlisted ranks and other observers disagreed that army justice was fairly administered. James Hildreth, a private in B Company of the Regiment of Dragoons in 1833, grimly told of the constantly overflowing guardhouse at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. He felt that the convicted men's physical punishments far exceeded the gravity of their offenses. Hildreth also severely criticized dragoon officers and thought that many of them knew less than the privates they commanded. In 1839, an editorial in the Army and Navy Chronicle urged the abolishment of degrading punishments in the military service. The writer agreed that continued drumming out of misfits was alright, but that the practice of lashing them and shaving their heads and branding those convicted of desertion was disgraceful.  

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3 General Order, 1 June 1821, General Order 53, 20 August 1842, ibid.  

Several foreign visitors censured American officers for their failure to maintain consistent and effective command over their soldiers. On the other hand, they could not understand the necessity of the amount and type of punishment they witnessed. One or two considered the American private the worst soldier in the world and a product of a culture that led him to believe himself equal to any of his leaders. On the subject of social equality, one Briton commented that the American trooper "... never forgets that when his three years of enlistment are over he will again . . ." have the same status as anyone else in his society.  

The reluctance of the men in the ranks to submit totally to imposed standards of discipline led to many violations of regulations. A good relationship between a young officer and his corporals and sergeants eased immensely the burden of troop-leading and created the most effective deterrent to curtail violations of the Articles of War. The manner in which an officer afforded respect for his non-commissioned officers served as an essential ingredient in

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developing and retaining an affinity between the commissioned and enlisted leaders. Although regulations did not contain instructions cautioning officers against reproving non-commissioned personnel in the presence or hearing of privates until 1841, many regimental commanders did remind their subordinates of the importance of not degrading their sergeants and corporals. In addition to urging the use of prudent methods when redressing enlisted leaders, unit directives forbade the mixing of any one of them with privates, even during confinement while they may have been awaiting court-martial. As early as 1820, the commander of the Sixty Infantry Regiment ordered an end to the practice of committing noncommissioned officers to the guardhouse when charged with petty offenses. They were placed under arrest and confined to their quarters to await trial. ⁶

The "Rules and Articles for the Government of the Armies of the United States," established by Congress in 1806, catalogued almost every imaginable offense "... prejudice of good order and military discipline ..." ⁷ Although a


⁷U.S., Statutes at Large, 2:371.
great variety of crimes and lesser infractions of these Articles of War occurred, desertion and varying immoralities resulting from intemperance comprised the most prevalent violations. Of these two transgressions, the high number of desertions which occurred almost daily created the most pressing problem. 8

In 1820, Adjutant and Inspector General Daniel Parker reported to the Secretary of War that the desertion rate in some regiments had equaled 20 per cent of their total strength during the two preceding years. In 1823 and 1824, approximately one-quarter as many soldiers took unauthorized leave of the army's ranks as were recruited. The following three years, the number increased to approximately one-half of the total men enlisted. The Secretary of War's report to Congress in 1853 set the annual desertion rate from 1826 until the Mexican War at 12.6 per cent of the army's strength. 9

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In contrast to figures quoted in official records, however, this author's research revealed startling discrepancies. Evidently civilian and military leaders computed their statistics upon annual losses in relation to the army's total strength. Their method considerably lowered the desertion rate from its actual level. A detailed survey of the enlistment records of approximately 45,340 men who enrolled in nineteen of the twenty-six years from 1821 through 1845 disclosed that 12,479 or 27 per cent deserted before completing their terms of obligation. The average annual rate ranged from 22 to 42 per cent in all except one of the years when it dropped to 16 per cent. Thus, a computation based on the annual enlistments in relation to desertions increased the rate of losses more than two times the percentage admitted by officials.¹⁰

¹⁰U.S., National Archives, Old Army Records, Register of Enlistments in the United States Army, 1798-1914, Records Group 94, Microcopy 233, Rolls 18-21. The following table gives the approximation for the years computed by this author.

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<th>Enlisting</th>
<th>Deserting</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enlisting</th>
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The reasons for the wholesale departures were numerous, but many troopers who left had been under the influence of alcohol. Brown, as did many other civilian and military leaders, blamed the desertions on the restless spirit of the type of men enlisted. These same officials believed that the problem could be resolved through unrelenting exertion of rigid discipline and the prompt application of punishment. After all, the most effective tool for controlling the actions of men was through humiliation.11

Other causes for desertion ranged from poor food to overwork, ill-treatment by noncommissioned officers, insufficient pay, and excessive length of terms of service. And then a few individuals left because of their being singled out for special instructions, a practice that can best be described as military tradition. The older soldiers refused to accept a recruit until he had spent at least a year in a unit. Prior to the establishment of training centers at recruit depots in the East during the late 1830's, noncommissioned officers drilled the newly assigned men in

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their companies. After the young soldiers gained sufficient knowledge of basic tactics they joined a regular squad. If an individual failed to progress satisfactorily, he remained in an awkward squad. Occasionally, clumsy men who could not overcome their handicap deserted to halt harassment.  

Probably the principal cause of desertion in the early years after the formation of the Regiment of Dragoons in 1833 developed from an attitude of deep chagrin that arose from the differences between the flattering descriptions of army life promised by recruiters and the unpleasant situation in which the enlistees later found themselves. Many men had been told that they would be treated like West Point cadets and that they would ride the prairies all the time without a care in the world. The expected and the reality often differed drastically. The troopers faced harsh discipline, hard work in stable construction, and various other menial details which to them defied justification. Other regiments experienced the same difficulty as a result of false promises. High ranking civilian and military

\[12\] Hildreth, Dragoon Campaigns to the Rockies, p. 41.
leaders made efforts to halt deception in recruiting, but were unable to curtail it completely.  

When a soldier deserted his company, his commanding officer sent the departed individual's description to the superintendent of the recruiting service and offered a reward for his apprehension. During the period immediately after the War of 1812, regulations set no exact amount of bounty for the return of a deserter. If an individual departed with his or some other person's equipment, the price for his capture went as high as fifty dollars. Beginning in 1818, regulations permitted the offering of thirty dollars for the apprehension and return of each deserter. This bounty created problems, however, particularly in the case of recruits. Many times some unscrupulous civilian enticed a newly enlisted soldier to desert and then apprehended the gullible trooper for a reward. For a short period between 1830 and 1832, the War Department reduced the bounty on a deserter's head to fifteen dollars for civilians and

ten dollars for enlisted men. In 1832, Secretary of War Lewis Cass directed that the old rate be paid again.¹⁴

To publicize a soldier's absence and to increase his chances of apprehension, a commander advertised the man's description and the amount of reward in a local newspaper. Many posts even organized alert squads to pursue deserters as soon as their absence became known. In 1827 at Jefferson Barracks, Colonel Henry Leavenworth directed the adjutant to inform the officer of the guard to fire the reveille cannon three times in quick succession. Upon the signal, the garrison, and civilians in surrounding villages, could be on the lookout for all soldiers whose absence was unauthorized. In 1834, Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny reported to his regimental commander, Colonel Henry Dodge, that he had been successful in apprehending five of the twenty-one dragoons who had deserted in one week from Fort Des Moines, Michigan Territory.¹⁵

¹⁴ Order, 19 May 1819, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207. Missouri Gazette & Public Advertiser, 28 January, 4 February 1815. Arkansas Gazette, 14 October 1820. General Order, 4 August 1818, Order 70, 21 October 1830, Order 95, 26 October 1832, Adjutant General Orders and Circulars, RG 391, Entry 44. Regulations for the Army, 1841, pp. 22-24.

¹⁵ Missouri Gazette & Public Advertiser, 28 January, 4 February 1815, Missouri Republican, 21 June, 30 October 1827, Arkansas Gazette, 14 October 1820, 18 June 1822,
A few military posts had built-in deterrents to desertions. Those located in territory surrounded by hostiles seldom experienced difficulty with many men absenting themselves. Equally effective as the fear of Indians, the extremely low temperatures at northern garrisons in winter months discouraged many potential deserters. The thought of freezing to death in the desolate wilds served as an effective hindrance for men to contemplate unauthorized leave.  

The Articles of War of 1806 established three types of courts-martial. For capital and other serious offenses, departmental or higher commanders could appoint general courts-martial. The crime warranting trial by the highest tribunal included desertion, inciting mutiny or not reporting a conspiracy of one, striking a superior officer while he


was in the execution of his office, or refusal to obey any officer attempting to halt frays or other disorders. In time of war, cowardice in the face of the enemy, or disclosure of the password to any person unauthorized to receive it, could mean death for an offender without the right of presidential review. For lesser offenses such as drunkenness, hiring ones duty to be performed, minor thievery, and absence without leave, lower ranking commanders convened garrison or regimental courts-martial. Sentences of hard labor, fines, or confinement from these two lesser tribunals could not exceed one month.  

Prior to 1830, a soldier found guilty of desertion could expect pardon from his sentence to the penalty of death. After 1830, regulations forbade capital punishment for desertion except during the time of war. Even before the termination of the death penalty, presidents generally commuted such sentences unless some other capital crime had also been committed. The maximum punishment usually awarded an individual convicted for desertion was confinement at hard labor with a ball and chain for the remainder of his enlistment, to include bad time, forfeiture of all pay.

due him, and at his release to have his head shaved before being drummed out of the army. In addition to the above penalties, officials had a two-inch "D" tattooed on some concealed part of his body with indelible ink. This practice prevented former deserters from reenlisting.  

Between 1812 and 1833, Congress retracted its consent for courts-martial to impose stripes and lashes as punishment for conviction of any offense. After the revocation of authorization for corporal punishment in 1812, officers continually petitioned for its return. Finally in 1833, congressmen partially relented and restored whipping as a penalty only for convictions of desertion. Since a knotted, rawhide thong provided a more severe instrument than did the cat-o-nine-tails used in the navy, army tribunals directed administrators of punishment to employ the leather strips. The accepted philosophy of leaders of the period agreed that applying the more harsh implement would aid

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18 Order 29, Headquarters Army, 12 June 1830, U.S., National Archives, Old Army Records, 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, 1824-1836, Records Group 391, Entry 1095. General Orders, 5 June 1816, 31 October 1820, Adjutant General Orders and Circulars, RG 391, Entry 44. Department Order, 2 October 1819, Order, 24 November 1820, General Order, Headquarters Army, 5 February 1820, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207. Niles' Register, 15 June 1839, 22 July 1843. Soldiers referred to the practice of tattooing convicted deserters.
more in discouraging desertion. With the restoration of corporal punishment, courts-martial frequently directed that a convicted deserter receive fifty lashes after having his head shaved and being branded before his drumming out ceremony. ¹⁹

In numerous instances commanders either mitigated part of the sentences awarded, or even commuted them entirely, where they had hope of rehabilitating men with previous good records. Despite the leniency of officials, many soldiers deserted a second time. A search of two years in the army enlistment register revealed that of the approximately 1200 men taking unauthorized leave in 1830, the army apprehended over 400. Of those returned to duty, 74 or almost 20 per cent left a second time. In 1833, 974 men were listed as deserters. Of the 318 apprehended and returned to military control, more than 40 per cent absented themselves again. These figures indicate that more severe punishments did not discourage desertion, instead they show that men taking unauthorized leave took greater care not to be caught. ²⁰

The difficulty in determining how many men actually deserted presented a problem. Sometimes soldiers merely over stayed their passes, or left camp overnight with the intention to return, and were apprehended. Rather than consider charges for the lesser infraction, however, many of the more authoritarian-type leaders sought to make examples of the delinquents. They filed allegations which charged individuals with desertion to assure more severe punishments upon conviction.  

While desertions recurred most frequently of the serious breaches of discipline, intemperance contributed more to lesser violations of regulations. Critics made many comments about the men who composed the frontier army and their propensity for intoxicating spirits. The drunkenness witnessed at almost every post brought many adverse remarks from observers, foreign visitors in particular. Generally, however, soldiers considered drunkenness on duty as an unpardonable violation of military custom, but as one author stated, "one of the infeasible rights of man . . ." permitted him to indulge to the point of excess once the duty day had ended.  

21 Ibid.

Temperance seems to have been the exception rather than the rule at most installations. On the other hand, contrary to accusations by prohibitionists, not every military garrison suffered from total intemperance. With the rise of temperance societies in the late 1820's, many commanders joined the crusade. Some officers attempted to curtail drunkenness by strict controls. They placed rigid limits on the amount of liquor sold to their men over their daily ration or the gill received while engaged on fatigue details. A few commanders encouraged their troops to form temperance societies. An occasional officer even required soldiers convicted of charges resulting from drunkenness to serve probationary period as members of groups organized to suppress alcoholism.

In July, 1835, Brigadier General George Mercer Brooke, puzzled by the findings of a court-martial, commented that he could not understand how the companies of his Fifth Infantry Regiment at Fort Howard, Michigan Territory, had so many convictions for drunkenness. His units at two other

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posts had not tried one soldier for the same cause during the preceding month. Both of the garrisons with a low court-martial rate for drunkenness had temperance society chapters. The year following Brooke's observations about his companies, Lieutenant Colonel Josiah H. Vose praised his troops of the Third Infantry Regiment at Fort Towson, Indian Territory, for their participation in a temperance society. During the 1840's, both the First and Second Dragoon regiments reported phenomenal success in curtailing courts-martial involving drunkenness. Both units had chapters of the Temperance Society at their Fort Jesup, Louisiana, and Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, stations.

On the eve of the Mexican War, one commander of a dragoon detachment at Fort Gibson, Indian Territory, permitted the sutler to sell whiskey without any restrictions on the amount an individual could purchase for immediate consumption. Lieutenant Colonel Richard Barnes Mason's actions dramatically decreased the number of brawls involving

soldiers at the local whiskey sellers's and reduced unauthorized absences. While the number of trials for intemperance increased, Mason stated in a report to the adjutant general that the greater number of courts-martial had not resulted from more men being drunk, but from the tightening of military discipline. For all his efforts, the local citizens, who lost business over the change in post policy, petitioned the War Department to remove all troops from Fort Gibson.  

Availability of alcoholic drink varied with location. Federal statutes forbade the transportation and sale of whiskey in Indian Territory. In the period immediately after the War of 1812, army officers had no specific standing instructions to remove illegally settled squatters or even to search licensed traders suspected of carrying liquor. In 1822, Congress amended intercourse laws to insure that both Indian agents and army officers should stop and inspect the cargoes and goods of any person suspected of transporting whiskey. Owing to the vast stretches of territory over which the jurisdiction of governmental agents spread and

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sometimes the neglect in enforcing current directives, the suppression of the whiskey trade seldom proved to be very effective. 26

Soldiers readily found quantities of liquor to quench their thirst. Without a doubt, as many historians have shown, they did drink to excess on many occasions. They did commit many violations of regulations and did neglect their duties while under the influence of intoxicants, but, to a lesser degree, so did their officers. On the other hand, many soldiers continued to perform their duties and were not burdened with the problem of intemperance. 27


Military records of the period 1815 through 1845 are incomplete, but sufficient numbers of documents pertaining to courts-martial are still available for surveys of many of the years. A sampling of the orderly books of the Sixth Infantry Regiment from 1833 through 1835 does support an assumption, however, that intemperance of soldiers may have been somewhat exaggerated. During the three-year period, the unit had an annual average of approximately 431 men present for duty. Based on an estimation that the annual attrition rate of the regiment's strength reached 30 per cent from desertion, deaths, and discharge for all reasons, then a total of over 800 different soldiers served in its ranks over the period of study. Regimental and garrison courts-martial judged and convicted 311 men in 677 cases. Over one-half of the soldiers tried made from two to nine appearances before tribunals.\(^28\)

Based on the above figures, it would seem reasonable to conclude that slightly more than 60 per cent of the men assigned did not receive judiciary punishment each year.

\(^{28}\) Historical Society of Wisconsin, 2(1856):229. Order 1, 2 January 1836, 5th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued, RG 391, Entry 1186.

Those troopers certainly do not characterize the image which officers, other contemporary observers, and historians have depicted. It might be added that the Sixth Infantry Regiment was stationed at Jefferson Barracks, a few miles south of St. Louis where intoxicants and the possibilities of acquiring them were more plentiful than at isolated posts in Indian Country. One must remember, also, that the enlisted men did not write the opinions so prevalent about their alleged weaknesses.

The punishments for drunkenness and other minor infractions of regulations and standing orders offered an interesting contrast. A typical sentence for a soldier convicted for bringing whiskey on post probably resulted in his confinement for fifteen days on bread and water in some units. Conviction for a similar offense in another regiment may have found an individual walking in front of the guardhouse from sunrise to sunset for fifteen days. While pacing under the supervision of the sentinel on post number one, he probably carried a weight of eighteen to forty pounds. In addition to his physical punishment, a convicted soldier paid a fine which equaled one-half of a month's basic wages. A prisoner

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placed on bread and water received a single bread ration plus two glasses of water each day.  

For conviction of drunkenness on post guard, a soldier could be sentenced to as much as thirty days in solitary confinement on bread and water and a fine of one month's pay. On two separate occasions, noncommissioned officers convicted of wife beating while intoxicated and creating disturbances in the chastisement of their spouses were reduced and required to perform menial labor for one month. As soon as each of the former sergeants had satisfactorily completed their punishment, their commanding officers promoted them back to their old grades.

James Hildreth best described the severity of condoned standards of punishment for a combination of offenses. One private, who voluntarily returned to duty after an absence of ten months, successfully pretended mental incompetence to escape punishment. Soon after authorities hospitalized the malingerer; however, he soon grew tired of his monotonous

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30 Order 55, 27 October 1836, 3d Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1095. Orders 42, 81, 93, 1833, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued, RG 391, Entry 1208.

31 Order 28, 1833, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued, RG 391, Entry 1208. Order, 9 December 1819, Order 20, 25 January 1823, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207.
life in the dispensary and sneaked over to the sutler's store, where he drank himself into a stupor. When the regimental surgeon found him, the delinquent refused an order to return to the hospital. The drunk was not satisfied with mere defiance of the doctor's instructions, he also struck the medical officer. For punishment, a court-martial sentenced the soldier to suffer fifty lashes before the mustered Regiment of Dragoons. After the completion of his corporal punishment, surgeons' mates washed the man's wounds with salt water to prevent infection, and then an escort marched him to the guardhouse to serve out the remainder of his enlistment.  

Conviction of habitual drunkenness and neglect of duty resulted in a derelict being drummed out of service. If a soldier reported to any formation while under the influence of alcohol, he could anticipate several days confinement at hard labor. After he spent several days performing menial task, the prisoner served the last half of his incarceration on bread and water. In addition to the physical punishment, he probably lost one month's pay in a fine. During the winter months at Jefferson Barracks in 1833, one court-martial found a private guilty of being drunk at reveille.

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32 Hildreth, Dragoon Campaigns to the Rockies, pp. 47-50.
It sentenced him to walk twelve hours a day in front of the
guardhouse for fifteen days and to be confined at night.
During the day, a guard halted the prisoner every thirty
minutes and poured a gill of water down the collar of his
shirt. \footnote{Arkansas Gazette, 12 June 1839. Order 11, February
1833, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued, RG 391, Entry
1208.}

A regimental or garrison court-martial would usually
impose the maximum permissible punishment to soldiers found
guilty of stealing or borrowing another man's equipment.
In 1826, a soldier at Fort Atkinson on the upper Missouri
River spent thirty days in the guardhouse, one-quarter of
which was in solitary, and lost his pay and whiskey ration
for the same period as a penalty for stealing a blanket.
A few years later, a private at Jefferson Barracks took
clothing belonging to another soldier without permission.
A court directed that his pay be stopped for one month and
that he be confined for the same period. During the first
fifteen days of his imprisonment, the man walked alternating
twenty-four-hour tours in front of the guardhouse carrying
an eighteen-pound weight. He served the last half of his
punishment in solitary on bread and water. In 1835, one
soldier suffered three days confinement at hard labor merely
for appearing at a weekly inspection dressed in a friend's overcoat.  

Evidently officers became bored with giving the same punishments for each of their adjudications. In reading the records of military trials, one discovers the use of a great variety of sadistic methods to instill discipline in army units. Some of the penalties imposed including the immersing of an individual in a nearby river during the colder months for several consecutive days before breakfast, or branding a man's face with a "D" for repeated convictions of intemperance. Frequently, courts-martial directed that offenders be tied with their hands above their hands and feet placed at least one yard apart. They remained in this spread-eagle position for periods as long as six hours at two intervals each day for several days. Many guardhouses had wooden sawhorses constructed in front of them, particularly in the mounted regiments. Men were forced to sit astraddle the sharp crosspiece an hour or two each day for as long as a month.  

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34 Order 19, 3 February 1826, Order 13, 31, 12 February, 7 April 1835, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued, RG 391, Entry 1208. Order, 8 January 1820, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207.  

35 Order 19, 3 February 1826, Order 13, 12 February 1835, Order 31, 7 April 1835, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued, RG 391, Entry 1208. Order, 8 January 1820, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207.
Colonel Talbot Chambers of the Rifle Regiment summarily ordered the cropping of two privates' ears after they had been returned from desertion. A general court-martial convicted the officer for transcending his authority and suspended him from rank for thirty days. The tribunal had also recommended that the sentence be remitted, but President James Monroe refused. He indicated that he felt that the colonel should have administered less degrading punishment as it would have produced desired effects just as well.

On rare occasions, soldiers managed to trick their officers and thereby lived a less toilsome life than their peers. In the winter months at the more northern posts, individuals delighted at receiving confinement while their fellow soldiers labored outside in the cold weather. Probably the most humorous incident occurred at Fort Gibson in the 1830's. The post commander, Brigadier General Mathew Arbuckle, directed that a well be dug near the fort. Each day two prisoners worked on the project, and upon return to

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36 General Order, Headquarters Army, 30 June 1821, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207. One historian implied that Chambers did not order the ears of the men to be cropped. He indicated in a footnote that Colonel Henry Leavenworth denied the rumor circulating about the incident. On the other hand, the above general order has a summary of Chambers's trial and the charges. Prucha, Broadax and Bayonet, pp. 52-53, n30.
the guardhouse at night reported good progress. After eighteen months, by calculations based on the laborers's daily estimations, the excavation should have been 465 feet 9 inches deep, but still no water. Arbuckle finally detailed an officer to climb down into the hole to find out what the problem was. The inspector discovered that the proposed well was only 15 feet deep. The prisoners had initially dug far enough down to hide from observation, and then they had played cards each day thereafter. The well was never completed.37

Although participants in dice, card, or other games of chance expected punishment and confiscation of any money visible upon detection by an officer, the threat did not deter men who wanted to gamble. On pay day one found all sorts of games of chance in any secluded location. The gamblers used the post graveyard as one of the favorite places to hide their activities. Other places of concealment for the illicit pastimes included areas not often frequented by officers, such as the stables, barns, storage buildings, or the brushy clusters immediately outside a post. The quarters of noncommissioned officers did not afford a safe hiding place. In addition to daily inspections

37 Davis and Fischer, "Dragoon Life," p. 11.
to make certain that enlisted men's families properly prepared their food and served their meals at the appointed hour, each night the duty officer assured that all lights had been extinguished at tattoo.  

Beginning in 1818, regulations prohibited all "... gambling and games of hazard, excepting backgammon, ..." within one mile of ..." military posts and stations. Some commanders refused to allow their sutlers to keep cards in their stock of merchandise. Exceptions may be found to the general rule, however. In 1820, after scurvy had reduced the ranks of the Rifle and the Sixth Infantry regiments at Fort Atkinson, the post commander issued an order which permitted the soldiers confined to quarters as a result of the malady to play cards for amusement only. When the men recovered their health, he rescinded the directive and imposed former restrictions.

38 Dick, Vanguards of the Frontier, p. 90.

39 General Order, 29 August 1818, Adjutant General Orders and Circulars, RG 391, Entry 44.

40 Order, 24 September 1819, Order, 21 November 1819, Order, 16 December 1819, Order, 21 March 1820, Order, 1 May 1820, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207. Order 46, 20 July 1832, Order 43, 3 July 1833, 3d Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1095.
By 1842, gambling had become such a problem around Fort Gibson that while making a visit of his troops at the post Colonel Kearny issued orders for all persons not directly connected with the army to leave the federally administered territory. One officer stationed at the fort reported that the sutler had bet as much as five hundred dollars on one horse race. Kearny's concern for the moral welfare of the soldiery and the Indian wards of the national government had warranted his actions. 41

Soldier gamblers usually fell into two categories—those who won and those who lost. Winners went to town to spend their gains, while the losers stayed in the barracks to read and to lounge on their bunks. The nearby towns or whiskey sellers had their houses of prostitution and their saloons. Although detection in one of the brothels subjected a soldier to days of punishment, the threat did not dissuade all men from visiting the houses. For example, in the early 1840's, the standing punishment for visiting the cribs within a quarter mile of Fort Gibson resulted in fifteen days' hard labor and a pay stoppage of four dollars for a

guilty soldier. In 1845, the ruffians who loitered at one brothel killed a dragoon and an infantryman. The next night, the comrades of the slain soldiers attacked the women and burned their place of business. Although the post commander, Lieutenant Colonel Mason, arrested four of the men involved, he never saw his men brought to trial. The civilians who suffered the beatings and the loss of property declined to appear in district court at Little Rock to testify. 42

An occasional record of courts-martial indicated that soldiers did associate with prostitutes. On the other hand, the surgeon general's statistics revealed that they fraternized with promiscuous women more often than legal documents indicated. During a ten-year period from 1829 through 1838, less than 1 per cent of the men stationed at western posts contacted and received treatment for venereal diseases of all types. The soldiers at Jefferson Barracks, Fort Gibson, and Fort Leavenworth, a few miles north of the confluence of the Platte River of Missouri and the Missouri River, stood the greatest chances of contacting the social maladies.

42 Order 38, 18 February 1843, Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, Orders Issued, RG 393, Entry 4. Mason to Captain James Henry Prentiss, 15 March 1845, Mason to Indian Agent P.M. Butler, 23 April 1845, Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, Letters Sent, RG 393, Entry 1.
Troops stationed at the latter two of these posts suffered an annual rate that approached a 2 per cent average annually.\textsuperscript{43}

In contrast to the information available in regard to soldiers and their associations with women infected with gonorrhea and syphilis, official records and other sources seldom mention sexual deviation. In 1819 at Fort Atkinson, Surgeon John Gale asked his commander for a board of inquiry to clear his name of accusations of wrong-doing in his relationship with another officer. A subsequent panel could find nothing deviant in the conduct of the doctor and warned his detractors to desist in spreading malicious rumors.\textsuperscript{44}

On separate occasions in 1822 at the same post as Gale, two privates asked for investigations of statements that they had committed unnatural sexual acts with animals. While one board of inquiry cleared its subject, another left doubt as to the guilt of its complaintant. The second officer board stated that it had no grounds on which to


\textsuperscript{44}Gale to Lieutenant Colonel Willoughby Morgan, 4 November 1819, Order, 9 November 1819, 6th Regiment Orders Issued and Received RG 101 Enter 1207.
base a recommendation for the court-martial of a sergeant who had publicly ridiculed the private about his deviant sexual behavior. The panel reasoned that since the soldier "... had been twice detected in the stables ... in a situation that justified the belief that he ..." had committed unnatural sexual acts with the animals, the non-commissioned officer had not been criminal in making remarks to that effect.\(^45\)

In March, 1828, Brevet Brigadier General Henry Leavenworth, post commander of Jefferson Barracks, ordered the discharge of a Third Infantry Regiment private on charges of "... infamous and unnatural conduct ...."\(^46\) Such wording as found in the directive implied that the individual was a homosexual.

By mid-twentieth century standards for instilling discipline, the methods practiced in the pre-Mexican War army seem to have been more for humiliation than for rehabilitation. While officers merely followed the dictates of the accepted philosophy of their times, their uniquely devised harsh and degrading punishments did little to curtail

\(^{45}\) Ibid., Order 29, 19 January 1822, Order 32, 24 January 1822, Order 91, 8 April 1822, Order 107, 22 April 1822.

\(^{46}\) Register of Enlistment in the US Army, RG 94, Microcopy 233, Roll 18.
violations of regulations and standing orders. In regiments where humanitarian and just leaders commanded, fewer infractions of rules resulted.

A large number of soldiers relied heavily on intoxicants as a crutch to pass their time in a monotonous environment. All of them, however, were not victims of alcoholism, and records of courts-martial do not substantiate long accepted allegations and implications that a greater percentage of enlisted men were habitual drunkards. While many individuals did drink to excess, more of them never faced judiciary punishment for conviction of charges resulting from the so-called enlisted curse. A careful and detailed study of military records and a comparison of the social habits of soldiers's civilian counterparts refutes a generalization that the majority of the army's rank and file were alcoholics.
CHAPTER VI

CAMPAIGN PREPARATION

From the end of the War of 1812 through 1833, the regiments stationed at western frontier posts did little except remain in garrison most of the year. In their relatively fixed positions, they served as a source of labor for the construction of new fortifications and for the building of roads. Their officers also directed the soldiers' efforts toward easing the burden of resupply imposed on the quartermaster department by employing them in farming operations. Even after 1833, infantry units generally continued in the same routine as in earlier years, but more frequently the mounted regiments patrolled the frontier and conducted annual forays into the Great Plains. Civilian and military leaders pursued a policy that favored an ostentatious show of force to inculcate in the minds of the Indians fear of the consequences of committing depredations on white settlements. In addition to providing a force to awe the wild inhabitants of the Great Plains, soldiers also aided Indian agents in settling differences between various tribes, ejected unauthorized persons and whiskey sellers
from Indian country, and afforded protection for Santa Fe traders.

At times military leaders became frustrated that their troops received insufficient preparation to perform their duties as soldiers. Owing to the infrequency of their training and drill, many of the rank and file ignorantly abused their weapons and equipment. Once a company received orders to conduct a punitive, escort, or reconnaissance mission, its leaders needed a period of time to drill and to train the assigned soldiers. The officers found that they should make several inspections to determine the condition of their troops' weapons and equipment. Once they found deficiencies, the noncommissioned officers used a portion of the preparation period to supervise their privates in correcting them. To assure that the men's health did not suffer unnecessarily in the field, quartermaster personnel directed the packing and storing of sufficient medical supplies and food in the wagons to accompany an expedition.

Prior to the Mexican War, the army did not issue its troops a practical field uniform. Although the tragic march of the Regiment of Dragoons in 1834 demonstrated the dire necessity of adopting more comfortable clothing for use on campaign, officials did not act until 1857. In fact,
commanders constantly warned their soldiers not to wear articles of dress unless prescribed by regulations, whether in garrison or to the field. While the basic items of issue included fatigue clothing, such garments were worn only while the men participated in tasks of a menial nature. ¹

In 1810, officials prescribed the first major changes for the style of the American army uniform after the Revolutionary War. A single-breasted, swallow-tailed coat with ten silver buttons, and full length trousers replaced the old double-breasted continental garb, and its knee-length breeches. Regulations directed that all regiments, except those of riflemen, wear dark blue coats and white trousers. Light infantrymen wore all gray. In 1812, the long tails gave way to short coatees or jackets for enlisted men. A leather cap, or shako, with a bell crown and a silver

eagle in front, topped with a five-inch pompon, substituted for the traditional felt hat of the past. In 1813, other modifications directed that all lace and trimmings be removed from the collars and sleeves of the jackets, and permitted only epaulettes and knots to indicate officers' rank. Regulations contained no instructions for designating the grades of noncommissioned officers. During this period, the army also issued to enlisted men the high-topped Jefferson shoe. Owing to a scarcity of blue cloth resulting from the nation's non-intercourse economic policy and the War of 1812, few units dressed in uniforms of the prescribed color.1

Until 1821, only a few minor changes in army dress were made. For the first time noncommissioned officers began to wear chevrons on their arms to designate their grades. Sergeant majors and quartermaster sergeants sewed worsted stripes on each arm above the elbows, sergeants and senior musicians below the elbow, and corporals, one on the right arm.

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arm below the elbow. Pompons of different colors adorned the hats of men in the various corps. Artillery wore yellow; regular infantry, white, with the two grenadier, or light companies in each regiment using red; and the riflemen green. In 1823, a general order added an additional piece of headgear to enlisted men's issue for everyday use. Besides the old "tar bucket," soldiers received a leather foraging cap. Since the one rifle regiment had been disbanded in 1821 with the reduction of the army, only artillery and infantry units continued to serve. The 1825 regulations reflected acknowledgement of the presence of only two corps, and prescribed dark blue as the national color for all uniforms. An 1832 amendment directed that enlisted men wear white trousers in the summer, and sky-blue trousers in the winter. 3

Andrew Jackson had always favored a traditional look in military dress. In 1832, as President he directed that

the facings and cut of the army uniform be patterned along lines of that worn by the soldiers of the American Revolutionary War period. While quartermaster designers attempted to comply with the desires of Jackson, they committed numerous errors. The most noticeable were the retention of the shako, new facings on the coats, and the adding of epaulettes to noncommissioned officers' dress. In addition to the wearers' grade being designated on the shoulder boards, each had a regimental number embroidered on it. For undress, noncommissioned officers continued to wear chevrons with one modification. All sergeants had three on each sleeve above the elbow, and corporals had two.  

Although dragoons, infantry, artillery, and riflemen reverted back to a double-breasted coat with two rows of ten silver buttons in each, enlisted soldiers assigned to the engineer and other corps wore a single-breasted coat with a row of nine buttons. With the exception of dragoons, who adopted a waist-length jacket, the upper garment of all enlisted men extended almost to their knees. As before, all collars were made of stiff material which rose high enough

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to permit a wearer to turn his head only slightly. Trimmings of the coats or jackets indicated the corps to which an individual was assigned. Dragoons used yellow, artillery red, mounted riflemen yellow, infantry white, and engineers black.\(^5\)

While the other corps used ankle-length trousers, the dragoons adopted tight-fitting pantaloons. All troops continued to wear white in the summer and sky-blue in the winter. The pants or trousers of noncommissioned officers had an outseam stripe on each leg the same color as the trim of their coats. In garrison and while on campaign, all troops wore a cotton tunic or woolen jacket as an outer garment, but these shirt-like articles were also impractical. Each had seventeen silver buttons, which the soldier polished prior to falling out for each formation. No changes occurred in the footwear; the quartermaster continued to issue the same high, lace boot adopted in 1825. Although supply officers provided each man with his authorized items of clothing, company commanders did not permit enlisted soldiers

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to retain them. Each spring they packed all woolens in wooden tierces and stored them. As the weather turned cool in the fall, they reversed the process, and retracted all cottons.

Regulations outlined very specific instructions for the care and cleaning of a soldier's clothing. When an individual had no soap on hand, he washed and boiled Irish potatoes. Upon completion of the cooking process, he mashed them into a gruel, and immersed his dirty cotton clothing in the mixture, to be left for twenty-four hours. After the prescribed period of soaking, the individual rinsed his garments in clean, fresh water, and allowed them to dry. Instructions claimed that potatoes would remove grease and every kind of dirt from white or dyed cottons.

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Order, 5 October 1819, Order, 14 January 1820, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207.
Order 32, 2 November 1831, Order 36, 1 December 1831, Order 12, 1 May 1832, U.S., National Archives, Old Army Records, 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, 1824-1836, Records Group 391, Entry 1095.
Order 52, 19 August 1841, 1st Cavalry Regiment General and Special Orders, RG 391, Entry 614.

7 The Western Star, 19 April 1816.
For cleaning white woolens, regulations recommended using Spanish whiting. If the dry compound were not available and a soldier needed to remove a spot of grease, he could apply "... pipe clay moistened with saliva from an empty stomach. [Then after the mixture dried, he was to] scratch the place lightly, ... and then beat it." Spots of tar could be dissolved with an application of fresh butter. Most stains in dyed woolens could be removed with lemon juice or vinegar.

Although many officers and men agreed that the army uniform was impractical for field and everyday wear, only an occasional one protested in the newspapers. In 1838, a private wrote a letter to the editor of the Army and Navy Chronicle urging that a greater variety of sizes of the various items of clothing should be stocked. He said that supply officers handled only four sizes, with reference only to the height of an individual. A slim man, whether tall or short, always needed to have his uniforms altered before he could appear at formations. The private's greatest criticism was that he had to pay for the tailoring of his clothing, and then if without permission of his commander,

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8 Regulations for the Army, 1825, p. 49.
9 Ibid.
he could be held liable for damage to government property. In 1840, a lieutenant emphatically urged an end to the Jacksonian era uniform as being impractical and expensive. He felt that soldiers could gain self-respect without their having to dress to look "... like a flock of eastern flamingoes, or Florida wood-peckers ... ." 10

When a soldier deserted from a post in the Mississippi Valley, his former commander inventoried his clothing and stored it for further use. Sometimes, the quartermaster department collected items being held at the many companies periodically, and shipped them to convicts working on fortifications. In some instances, when a shortage of equipment occurred at a post, the supply officer retained any new items in a shipment, and returned them to the companies for troops having the greatest need. 11

Upon the death of a soldier, his commander made a detailed inventory of all his effects and clothing. If a deceased's family had not claimed his property within six months, the Council of Administration disposed of it and

10 *Army and Navy Chronicle*, 10 September 1838, 20 January 1840.

11 Order 38, 1 July 1824, Order 60, 15 July 1825, Adjutant General Orders and Circulars, RG 391, Entry 44. *Regulations for the Army*, 1847, pp. 41-42.
deposited any money received with the paymaster. Relatives or legal representatives had no definite time limit in which to claim such accounts. 12

Until 1819, the official muskets and rifles of the army consisted of several variations of flint-lock pieces, manufactured at arsenals or by contractors. Each of the firearms produced required specially machined replacement parts. Although the ordnance department won the adoption of the revolutionary Hall breech-loading, percussion-lock firearm, with its interchangeable parts in 1819, rifles and muskets constructed on its principle did not reach the hands of infantrymen until the early 1840's. The so-called Mississippi Rifle of Mexican War and Civil War fame was merely a modified version of the Hall firearm. While foot soldiers consistently praised the weapon, mounted troopers and artillerymen scorned their carbines and musketoons designed on the same principle. 13

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12 Regulations for the Army, 1847, pp. 39-40. Order 36, 22 July 1830, Adjutant General Orders and Circulars, RG 391, Entry 44.

13 Martin Rywell, United States Military Muskets, Rifles, Carbines, and Their Current Prices (Harriman: Pioneer Press, Publisher, 1951), pp. 10, 17-19. Claud E. Fuller, The Breech-loader in the Service; The Development of One Hundred and One Years, 1816 to 1917, A Description of the Breech-loaders and Magazine Arms Used in the Service and the Different Systems Tested by the Ordnance Boards; The Development of the Interchangeable System of Manufacture
After the War of 1812, infantry regiments used the common or contract flint-lock muskets, Models 1795, 1808, 1816, 1835, and 1840, primarily. In 1842, a few foot-soldiers received the only smoothbore, muzzle-loading, percussion-lock shoulder weapon manufactured by arsenals or contractors. All of the muskets loaded a .69 caliber ball. After 1842, arsenals discontinued producing muskets, and turned to making only breech-loading percussion-lock rifles, carbines, and musketoons for the general service. Since rifle regiments were no longer a part of the army's organization between 1821 and 1842, no new models of bored weapons appeared. The 1803, 1814, 1817, and 1819 rifles were used in limited numbers during the period. Each infantry company retained a few of the accurate, long-range weapons on hand for hunting game to supplement food supplies at western posts. After 1841, United States arsenals began producing patterns of the Hall model rifle, and modifying

serviceable muzzle-loaders to accept their charges from the breech-end. 14

Upon activation of the Regiment of Dragoons in 1833, military officials determined that the mounted troopers should be armed with weapons more suited for use on horseback. In addition to adoption of a pistol, they settled for a carbine patterned after the Hall system. In 1833, Simeon North of Middletown, Connecticut, began manufacture of the shoulder weapon. Initially, the carbine was smoothbore and loaded a .69 caliber ball. In 1836, a newer model had rifling, and reduced the size of the round used to .54 caliber. Thereafter, official documents referred to the smoothbores as musketoons and the rifled ones as carbines. In the period from 1833 through 1845, the army experimented with and adopted six models of Hall-North carbines and musketoons for use by dragoons and artillerymen. 15


15 U.S., National Archives, Old Army Records, Ordnance Handbook Relating to 1822-1855 Models of Small Arms and
When martial pistols are mentioned, one generally thinks of those invented and manufactured by Samuel Colt of Hartford, Connecticut. On the contrary, however, the multi-shot Colt handgun did not win the confidence of military men until the Mexican War. Until 1833, only officers armed themselves with pistols, and these were of the single-shot, flint-lock variety. While many models of martial handguns appeared, officials selected an 1819 model designed by Simeon North with which to arm the dragoons. Many sources referred to this .54 caliber handgun as the Harper’s Ferry pistol. The misnomer resulted because the United States arsenal located there manufactured many of the weapons. The army did not convert its pistols to the percussion principle until after the Mexican War.  

Occasionally, Congress, the War Department, and army headquarters directed the formation of boards to test the accuracy, durability, safety, and celerity of old and new

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rifles, muskets, carbines, and musketoons. When inventors presented entirely new weapons that had possibilities for military use, they were given the privilege to compare their products with the firearms then in the hands of the troops. In 1826, officers issued muzzle-loading flint-lock service muskets and rifles to artillerymen at Fortress Monroe, Virginia, for such a test. They also provided the same number of Hall's rifles to the group. At distances up to two hundred yards under the most adverse conditions, and under the stress of constant drill, the percussion-lock breech-loading Hall outperformed the other weapons in every instance. 17

At a test in 1828, Brevet Major Daniel Ketchum of the Sixth Infantry Regiment discovered a means to increase the Hall's accuracy even more. He determined that by not patching a ball when it was inserted in the breech, a firer did not need to take time after every few rounds to remove excess lead from the barrel. The heat from the ignition of the propellant expanded the lead sufficiently to prevent gases from escaping prematurely. In addition, not as much

friction occurred between the metal of the barrel and the propelling round. 18

Tests with several models of carbines in the late 1830's brought modifications to the shoulder weapon. Although some soldiers involved in experiments expressed preference of new types of carbines over the one in the hands of the troops at the time, officials persistently continued to support the retention of the Hall-North weapon. The suggestions rendered by the men working with new arms did result in several improvements in the standard service carbine, however. For example, ordnance did direct the shortening of its barrel and decreasing its caliber. Technical service officials also changed the type of powder used, and removed the useless bayonet stud, which always seemed to snag on the soldier's saddle. They adopted tools to increase the efficiency of maintaining the piece in good working order, and attached a wiping rod on a swivel as a permanent part of the weapon. Cartridges boxes and other accoutrements were modified to increase the rate of fire. Although many changes did improve the serviceability of the dragoon arm, no solution was ever found to keep the ball from disconnecting with the propellent when a trooper unconsciously pointed

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his carbine toward the ground. One officer estimated that the weapon would not fire 66 per cent of the time for that one reason. 19

The need for care, cleaning, and preservation of firearms consistently gave rise to problems in the army. An untrained or poorly disciplined unit could be readily detected by the manner in which the men handled their individual arms. While regulations contained specific instructions on the handling of all type of small arms, commanders found frequent need to issue their own interpretations on the matter. Lieutenant Colonel Willoughby Morgan of the Rifle Regiment gave as much emphasis to weapons care as any officer. He related firearms maintenance to personal pride and called it one of the essential traits of a good soldier. Morgan urged his riflemen to be proud of their profession and to never turn in an night without assuring themselves that their arms were in the best possible

order. He placed great weight on his belief that a slovenly soldier never attained the distinction of becoming an expert marksman without giving proper care to his ever faithful rifle. After his soldiers failed to respond to his initial wishes, Morgan then issued a special directive to the officers for them personally to inspect each soldier's weapon every morning at reveille.²⁰

Failure to clean one's assigned weapon sometimes resulted in judiciary punishment. In 1834, a soldier in the Sixth Infantry Regiment, after conviction by a court-martial for neglecting his musket, received a sentence to walk alternate hours in front of the guardhouse for three consecutive days, carrying an eighteen-pound weight. Carelessness in security of ones weapon could precipitate just as severe chastisement, without benefit of a trial. During a change-of-station march, one private forgot his weapon by a tree after an overnight bivouac. His company commander ordered the trooper to walk, leading his horse, in front of the mounted regiment for the entire day in retribution for his error. The individual felt that his punishment had been more than

²⁰Rifle Regiment Orders, 10 May 1819, 12 June 1819, 6th Infantry Regiment Order, 18 May 1820, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207.
commensurate with his misdeed by the end of a twenty-three-mile march over rough terrain. Other than quietly complaining of the punishment in the presence of his friends, the private had little recourse. 21

Concern over care, cleaning, and preservation of firearms resulted in experiments being conducted to discern the best methods. In 1822, an ordnance board determined that olive oil provided a better deterrent to rust than preservatives containing animal fats. To remove oxidation from a badly tarnished barrel, regulations soon directed that anvil dust should be mixed with oil and put in an old sock, and rubbed over the deteriorated area. Finely crushed brick clay could be substituted for the anvil dust. After the rust had been removed, an extremely soft piece of wood was to be used to polish the spot. When a weapon had been browned for protection against oxidation, as most of those in the army were, great care had to be exercised not to remove the coating. Instructions stressed that under no circumstances were noncommissioned officers or privates to take the locking mechanism apart. 22


For drill each soldier kept a small piece of animal bone to substitute for a flint. This prevented the damaging of the primer nipple by the striking of the hammer. After live firing exercises, a soldier washed out the carbon from his barrel with water and applied a light coat of oil to the interior. He used only a wooden rod as a tool, never metal. Occasionally, soldiers sought to beautify their stocks by scraping and staining them, but regulations prohibited the practice as harmful to the wood.  

Directives went into great details on the cleaning and care of weapons' accoutrements. These items included the cartridge box, waist belt, bullet and cap pouches, gun sling, bayonet and sword scabbards, carbine bucket, and powder flask and its belt. Ordnance used buff leather as the material for most of the accoutrements, and regulations required their blackening. After application of a homemade dye, a soldier rubbed the surface of the stained material to soften it. He then coated it with a light coat of oil to increase its shine. Great care needed to be exercised

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not to put too much of the smut oil on the leather. Since the dye was not color fast, the process had to be repeated frequently. 24

Prior to 1858, the army printed no formal instructions for marksmanship training. Commanders on their initiative, however, did make some efforts to provide a program within their units to increase the proficiency of their troops in the use of their weapons. Many officers designed their own methods of training, with no two following a uniform procedure. 25

While all commanders made attempts to increase the firing capabilities of their soldiers, a few placed more emphasis on such programs than others. One such individual was the previously mentioned Lieutenant Colonel Willoughby Morgan of the Rifle Regiment. In 1819, he directed his officers to have a range constructed near the post. A work detail made high mounds of dirt to form a wall in front of which it placed a line of targets. So as not to hinder visibility, the soldiers cleared all brush for a distance of at least

24 Ordnance Handbook Relating to 1822-1855 Models of Small Arms, RG 156, Entry 1030.

two hundred yards. They erected covers at intervals of fifty yards to protect the firers and ammunition from the effects of the sun. After each day's firing, the riflemen went to the berm behind the row of targets and retrieved all the expended rounds they could find. This salvaged lead was then turned in to the supply officer for processing and reuse.\textsuperscript{26}

Each day during the designated period of weapons familiarization, each soldier received six rounds. Firing began at a distance of fifty yards. Any rifleman placing four out of six rounds within two inches of the bull's eye from a standing position on two successive days received a rating of second class marksman. Those failing to qualify at fifty yards were placed in an awkward category. The soldiers meeting the minimum requirements also won the privilege to compete for highest honors. To be classified as a first class marksman, a firer needed to place four out of six rounds within three inches of the center of a target from an offhand position at one hundred yards.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{26} Rifle Regiment Orders, 7 May 1819, 10 May 1819, 14 May 1819, 15 May 1819, 19 May 1819, 25 May 1819, 6 June 1819, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
The stigma attached to failure to reach the first class level led most of the troops to give their best effort. Individuals who failed to qualify expected to perform the menial tasks around garrison most of the year, while the experts went on periodic hunting excursions. Constant training programs aided the poor shooters in preparing for the next chance at qualification. The quartermaster set up targets for guards to fire their weapons each day as they came off duty. Until 1835, regulations directed commanders to establish the targets, but afterwards only an occasional unit continued the practice. Company officers also provided for dry firing exercises periodically during drill periods. An occasional commander made arrangements for men who failed to qualify with their allotted ammunition to purchase their own and continue their practice. He then permitted them another chance to fire for record. An observer stated that few men failed to attain first class marksman. 28

Owing to the easy access of weapons and the practice of the army issuing the troops their ammunition to retain

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on hand, accidents from the discharge of firearms frequently occurred. On its move up the Missouri River in 1818 and 1819, the Rifle Regiment suffered one fatality or crippling injury monthly. The neglect of the officers and soldiers became such a problem that the task force commander, Colonel Henry Atkinson, forbade the firing of weapons within four hundred yards of nightly campsites, or the boats during daylight hours. By the 1840's, carelessness with firearms still caused concern to commanders. After 1833, men armed with the carbine experienced many accidents from that particular weapon. 29

In addition to firearms and their accoutrements, enlisted men were also issued swords and other edged weapons. By the end of the War of 1812, only noncommissioned officers of infantry and all enlisted artillerymen carried swords. Privates of infantry were issued bayonets. For the next few years, members of the army's only two combat corps utilized similar double-edged swords. In 1833, however,

29 Nichols, ed., Missouri Expedition, pp. 12, 30, 32, 42, 43, 45, 52, 55, 60, 62, 73, 80, 84. Orders, 12 August 1819, 20 June 1819, 5 December 1819, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207. James Henry Carleton, The Prairie Logbooks; Dragoon Campaigns to the Pawnee Villages in 1844, and to the Rocky Mountains in 1845, edited with an introduction by Louis Pelzer (Chicago: The Caxton Club, 1943), p. 113.
the newly activated mounted branch and artillerymen received their own model of a cutting arm. Ordnance designed a dragoon saber along patterns of the one used by British light cavalry. At the same time, artillerymen received a useless and unwieldy short sword. Although infantry noncommissioned officers had a specially designed double-edged weapon, they primarily carried the same one as cannoneers. 30

In 1840, several modifications reflected attempts by the army to find the most practical hand weapon for each of its corps. The dragoon saber was designed on a French light cavalry model. It had a single-edged blade with a short false edge on the foible, and was much heavier than the 1833 model. The additional weight placed more strain on a user's lower arm, and thus, soon earned it a sobriquet of "Old Wristbreaker." The mounted service used this saber until the eve of World War I. Infantry noncommissioned officers and artillerymen received a longer and much heavier sword than the ones issued in previous years. Although the

30 Harold Leslie Peterson, The American Sword, 1775-1945; A Survey of the Swords Worn by the Uniformed Forces of the United States from the Revolution to the Close of World War II (Philadelphia: Ray Riling Arms Book Company, 1965), pp. 4-45 passim. Generally, sword is the term applied to a long-bladed, hand-wielded weapon with two cutting edges. On the other hand, sabers have only one sharpened side of its blade.
single-edged, saber-like blade was ill-balanced and the weapon unwieldy, the army continued to arm its troops with the same model for the next one-half of a century. 31

Between 1815 and 1845, except for a short period during the Black Hawk War in 1832, artillery units did not serve in the Mississippi Valley above lower Louisiana. Infantry regiments had two six-pound cannon which they carried with them on expeditions, and used as part of post defense at other times. By the beginning of the Mexican War, cavalry detachments had increased the size of their artillery pieces to twelve-pounders. They invariably towed the guns with them on campaigns. The adjutant usually had the assigned responsibility of selecting and training cannoneers. Before each expedition, he levied the companies for soldiers, and then drilled them in servicing and firing the pieces. While the practice did not prove the tactical effectiveness of the cannon, the noise provided by them did serve to awe the Indians. 32

31 Ibid.

Since artillery regiments were not stationed on the western frontier, and infantrymen were seldom mounted, the army did not find need to concern itself with the purchase of horses until 1833. Prior to and even after the formation of the Regiment of Dragoons, officers purchased their own horses. When a unit needed replacement mounts for enlisted personnel, the quartermaster advertised in newspapers. Upon delivery of potential cavalry horses to a post, a board of three dragoon officers supervised a rigid examination. In most instances they accepted few of the animals presented for their inspection. During the period between 1833 and 1845, quartermasters generally paid from $70 to $85 for each mount purchased. In numerous instances, condemned cavalry horses sold for as much, if not more, money than they had been appraised at the time of acceptance.  

33Order 2, 2 November 1822, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207. Order 78, 20 November 1833, 3d Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1095. Niles' Register, 24 August 1833. R.S. Ewell Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny to Major Joshua B. Brant, 9 November 1834, Kearny to Lieutenant Henry Smith Turner, 8 March 1835, Kearny to Lieutenant John Henry K. Burgwin, 3 May 1835, Kearny to General Thomas Sidney Jesup, 5 June 1835, 1st Cavalry Regiment Letters sent by a Detachment, RG 391, Entry 630. Order 38, 4 June 1842, Order 53, 3 July 1842, 1st Cavalry Regiment General and Special Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 614. U.S., Congress, Senate, Report from the Secretary of War Showing Contracts Made by That Department During the Year 1840, 26th Cong., 2d sess., 20 January 1841, S. Doc. 97.
Inspection boards made certain that horses met several prerequisites before conducting a detailed physical inspection. First, the color of the animals had to be the same as those already in the companies for which replacements were being sought. Upon formation of the dragoon regiment in 1833, its first commander, Colonel Henry Dodge, had designated the shades of horses to be assigned to each unit. For example, companies A and K had blacks; B and G, grays; C, E, and I, bays; and D, F, and H, sorrels. Because of their easy visibility, whites, paints, and pintos were not used. The color scheme determined by Dodge developed as a tradition in the cavalry.^34

Second, the officers investigated the age of each horse in order to fit the requirement of purchasing only animals from four to six years of age. Third, the mounted service desired horses between 15 and 16 hands in height. Experience proved that size mount to be the most efficient and the easiest to purchase. Finally, when animals met all of the initial requisites, a board instructed the company farriers

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to engage in a detailed examination to determine they had no malformities or apparent character weaknesses.  

Even with the minute attention given to selection of cavalry mounts, and the subsequent hardships endured on campaigns, officials found frequent inspections necessary. Generally, after a unit returned from the field, and quarterly while in garrison, post commanders formed officer boards to determine the status of each animal assigned. The examiners not only devoted their attention to the horses, but also to all equipment and draft animals. In numerous instances, after one summer campaign most of the mounts in a participating company needed to be replaced. When an inspection board condemned an animal, it branded a large "C" on one of its hindquarters to indicate its unserviceability for further military use. The board then directed that the unserviceable steed be transferred to the quartermaster for public sale.  


36 U.S., American State Papers, Military Affairs, 1:427. Order 12, 23 March 1841, Order 32, 10 July 1841, Order 33, 11 July 1841, Order 39, 2 August 1841, Order 40, 3 August
Prior to the Civil War, the army had no veterinarians assigned. The one farrier and blacksmith authorized in each company had been recruited from applicants who claimed to have knowledge of the accepted methods of animal care. They had acquired their proficiency through observation and experience. 37

Since each dragoon loaded his mount with approximately eighty pounds of equipment, the animal needed to be in excellent condition before departing on an extended mission. In addition to a saddle and its paraphernalia, the cavalry trooper carried his weapons and their accoutrements, and his personal equipment. In preparation for a mission, non-commissioned officers supervised their privates to make certain that the men packed only the essentials as prescribed by regulations and orders. 38

Instructions in the 1834 and 1841 tactical manuals described the method for each mounted trooper to use when he packed his personal belongings for field duty. The

38 Hunt, James Henry Carleton, p. 84.
quartermaster issued a leather bag which was eighteen inches long, eight inches wide, and six inches deep. In the valise, a trooper stored two shirts, one pair of stockings, one handkerchief, one stable jacket, one pair of gloves, one pair of overalls, a forage cap, one pair of boots, shaving articles, and cleaning equipment. In addition to his clothing for everyday wear, he packed his entire dress regalia. Upon the Great Plains, officials required frequent formal parades in attempts to awe the wild inhabitants. A trooper rolled his blanket in a waterproof cloak or raincoat. At night he used the one dry blanket to cover himself, and placed the damp one from under his saddle on the ground. If the troops found themselves going out in the cooler months, they added a buffalo robe to their equipment.39

All the supplies and additional ammunition carried on an expedition went in the one or two wagons accompanying each company. Each unit's quartermaster sergeant supervised the loading of rations and other stores. Infantry companies usually had more transportation means available owing to their need to store many of the items of personal equipment

that mounted troopers carried on their mounts. If an infantry detachment accompanied an expedition, each company of "walk-a-heaps" had an additional wagon assigned to carry their personal effects. 40

While the supplemental transportation means solved the infantrymen's problem easily, the mounted soldiers constantly sought means to distribute his and the weight of his equipment evenly over the back of his horse. Until the McClellan saddle became a fixture in the United States cavalry in 1858, the search continued for one best suited for military use. During the War of 1812, mounted units had received a saddle patterned after the one issued in the French army to its hussars, or light cavalry. Its design spread the weight of the rider and his equipment uniformly over the back of his horse. In 1833, many officials preferred to adopt a hussar style saddle for the newly activated mounted regiment. Instead ordnance decided upon a flat piece of horse furniture that resembled the English riding model of today. 41


Soon the 1833 dragoon saddle proved to be an impractical piece of equipment, and the army began searching for a new one. After experimenting with several different samples, officials decided upon the so-called Grimsley saddle in 1841. It was styled on the old hussar pattern. Owing to its heavy padding, the Grimsley saddle required no blanket, but the army continued to issue an additional one to its mounted troopers. After a cavalry unit had ridden hard all day, the soldiers did not remove the blanket from their horses' backs until they had cooled. This helped to prevent scalding and subsequent swelling of the animals' parts which had been covered all day during a march. Experience also taught the dragoons to refrain from washing their mounts while they were still heated from riding. While the men permitted their horses to drink their fill of water if they planned to continue to march, at the end of a day's travel, the troopers learned to limit their intake to prevent them from foundering.42


If a horse's back did become chafed and sore, it was difficult to heal. When on campaign a trooper merely doctored his mount and continued to ride it. He washed the inflamed parts with castile soap and rinsed them with fresh water. The trooper then rubbed in animal fat to keep the wounded area softened. The farrier also supervised the soldier in blowing calomel into any open wounds to prevent flies from depositing eggs and causing a fatal infection. Teamsters tied a piece of bacon rind between the collar of a draft animal and a chafed spot on its shoulder to ease the pain each day during a march.\footnote{Marcy, \textit{Prairie Traveler}, pp. 53-54, 123-124.}

An alert order usually allowed two wagons for each company to haul its rations, tentage, forage, and extra ammunition. For a sixty-day expedition, the quartermaster sergeant packed sufficient salt meat for approximately one-sixth of the period. He carried enough flour and small

items of the ration for the entire planned time of absence. The supply officer issued him additional fresh beef from a small herd driven along with the task force trains. During the later stages of an expedition, hunters killed buffalo and other game found along a route of march. 44

While in garrison, a dragoon horse received an allowance of four to six quarts of corn and fourteen pounds of hay daily. In the field, the quartermaster reduced the amount to one quart twice each day. The animals were dependent on grazing prairie grass for additional forage. A company returning from an extended campaign needed several weeks for its horses to recover their strength, particularly if they had been over terrain with little foliage. 45

After officials began to utilize mounted troops on the prairies, they soon realized that the streams that had been


so favorable to movement in eastern regions of the country proved to be formidable obstacles in the West. Although the dragoon regiment soon learned to double its wagons as boats with a few modifications, their efforts never turned out completely satisfactory. In addition to the need of flotation equipment to assist the movement of units in the West, troops in Florida urged the invention of lightweight craft to increase their trafficability in the swamplands. Ordnance conducted several tests with portable watercraft. By the late 1830's, technicians had developed an India rubber boat which could be easily carried in the bottom of a wagon, and inflated when needed to move troops and their equipment across unfordable rivers. Although the compact pieces of marine equipment never proved satisfactory in Florida against hostiley opposed landings, troops in the Great Plains utilized them effectively in expediting their movements. On campaigns where western frontier units expected to encounter unfordable bodies of water, each company carried a rubber raft in addition to their pontoon wagon.46

During the period prior to the activation of the first mounted regiments, infantry units performed the missions requiring movement into Indian country. Except on rare occasion these troops followed water routes to their destinations. In making their plans for campaigns, infantry commanders arranged for transporting their soldiers on steamboats where the depth of streams to be navigated permitted. In instances where the excess draft of machinery-driven craft prohibited their employment, units employed keel-or flatboats. Because of the slow means of travel utilized and the uncertainty of times of return, commanders instructed their soldiers to carry all of their clothing. Quartermaster officers also assured that all the rations and other supplies required for the expedition were loaded on board the boats. Additional food could be foraged along the water route by details specifically assigned the task.  

Although men participating in river travel suffered from exposure to the inherent hazards of such movement, they

47 Nichols, ed., Missouri Expedition, pp. 67, 69, 73-74, 76, 79, 81082, 84-85, 97-118 passim. Order, 5 May 1819, Order, 7 June 1819, Western Department Order, 8 July 1819, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG.391, Entry 1207. Order 4, Headquarters Right Wing Western Department, 5 May 1825, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued, RG 391, Entry 1208. Order 6, 7 March 1831, Order 150, 28 November 1831, Order 151, 29 November 1831, 3d Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1095.
seldom had to do without their rations and clothing. Occasionally, unforeseen accidents resulted in exceptions to the general rule. In 1819, because of the incapacity of the contractor's steamboats to move upstream against the swift current of the Missouri River, the Rifle and Sixth Infantry regiments on their move to establish Cantonment Atkinson near present-day Omaha, Nebraska, were not efficiently resupplied. After he realized the failure of the steamboats to navigate the river, the quartermaster officer sent keelboats, manned by soldiers, to carry rations to the isolated troops. To supplement the men's diet while they awaited the return of the detail, the commanding officer of the Rifle Regiment sent two companies away from the cantonment to subsist themselves on the land. They found an abundance of game and other food on the prairies. In fact, they returned that in excess to their own needs to the main body. Generally, however, contractors and quartermaster personnel effectively provided food and other supplies to infantry regiments involved on campaigns. Only during the period after the activation of mounted units, and the subsequent abandonment of water routes, did distance, and obstacles in the vast stretches of prairie nearly overwhelm the army's supply system. By the beginning of the Mexican
War, experience and improvements in means of transportation had aided greatly in solving the dilemma.\textsuperscript{48}

Once a unit received an order to conduct a mission, the troops directed their attention to preparing for the forthcoming expedition. Since the area in which they expected to travel determined the amount of rations and other supplies they should carry, they made plans accordingly. In all instances, they depended on the land for water and fuel and sometimes for a large portion of their food. As long as military units utilized water routes to reach their destinations, however, they gave less attention to the exactness of their supplies and equipment, and usually carried an excess. With the transition from water travel to moving across land on horses, they made many mistakes initially. Leaders and their men soon learned the importance of making detailed plans, and packing only the most essential items in their limited transportation facilities.

CHAPTER VII

CAMPAIGNING

After the War of 1812, American interest in the trans-Mississippi West increased. Military penetration into Indian country west of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River had resulted from concern of government officials, nationalists, and economic interests over the incursions of British fur traders into the area, and their continued influence over the many tribes within the Louisiana Purchase territory. By 1821, the army had established an exterior line of forts which blocked trade routes from Canada, and provided a thin barrier against invasions to the east by the wild inhabitants of the Great Plains. As the line of white settlements moved westward, officials constantly reshuffled the army's scarce manpower resources in front of the pioneers. Each change resulted from efforts of officials to provide a police force to control sparsely settled areas behind the exterior line of fortifications.

Until 1833, the army left its troops in fixed installations, from which they occasionally conducted punitive expeditions to suppress Indian uprisings in protest to white
encroachment upon their tribal lands. Other than rare moves to inflict punishment on rebelling hostiles, military units primarily shifted their positions to establish new posts. After 1833, with the activation of mounted units, infantry regiments continued to occupy fixed positions, but the cavalrmen conducted periodic forays into Indian Country to impress upon the wild inhabitants the consequences of committing depredations on white settlers and the tribes removed from east of the Mississippi River.

Prior to 1833, the army conducted only five operations of major importance which included sizeable numbers of soldiers. Although several expeditions, such as the 1819 one led by Major Stephen Harriman Long to find the source of the Arkansas River, included enlisted personnel, in most instances they went along to perform menial tasks for the specialists and officer personnel.¹

The first campaign requiring large size military units took place in 1823. After having received information of an Arikara Indian attack on a party of fur trappers in present-day North Dakota, Colonel Henry Leavenworth led

¹Major Stephen Harriman Long to John Caldwell Calhoun, 20 April 1819, U.S., National Archives, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Letters Received by the Secretary of War, Registered Series, 1803-1860, Records Group 107, Microcopy 221, Roll 82.
elements of the Sixth Infantry Regiment up the Missouri River with intentions of chastising the hostiles. The force numbered 220 soldiers, 80 fur trappers, and approximately 500 Sioux warriors. In the one battle that ensued from the expedition, observers considered the overall campaign a failure. Before a treaty could be extracted from the Arikaras, they had slipped out of their village and disappeared into the wilderness. While the Indians on both sides had suffered numerous casualties, the Sixth Infantry ended the expedition with two men wounded in the skirmish and seven men drowned on the move up the river. The excessive destruction of the Arikara village left them with extreme hostility toward the white man, however,²

The 1823 Leavenworth expedition accomplished little in ending Indian attacks on traders in the upper Missouri region, and left many tribes hostile to one another and the white man. In the vicinity of the Yellowstone River, the Blackfeet became more obnoxious in their relations with

neighboring tribes and white traders passing through their lands. Incessant war among the Indians soon extended conflict into the upper Great Lakes area, and resulted in increased depredations on white settlements there. Soon, Congress authorized the President to appoint a commission to negotiate peace among the various tribes along the Missouri, and attempt to win their loyalty to the United States. In conformity with the wishes of lawmakers, President James Monroe appointed Indian Agent Benjamin O'Fallon to head a group of commissioners to seek an end to the hostilities among the warring tribes.

In 1825, a military force consisting of 476 soldiers of the First and Sixth Infantry regiments, under the command of General Henry Atkinson, provided an escort for the commission. Between the time of its departure on May 16 and its return on September 19, the so-called Yellowstone Expedition traveled over 2,000 miles without the loss of a single man or boat. While in one of its primary objectives

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to win the friendship of the Blackfeet and the Assiniboine Indians the mission failed, it had reached agreements with seventeen lesser tribes. Those who submitted to the supremacy of the United States and concurred not to trade with tribes failing to sign a treaty were guaranteed military protection. In his after action report, Atkinson urged that an expedition be sent into the upper reaches of the Missouri every three or four years. Officials neglected to act on the suggestion until several years later, however.

After the 1821 reduction of the army, its strength proved inadequate to man both an exterior and interior series of forts effectively. In efforts to solve the problem, in 1826, Secretary of War James Barbour decided to evacuate several interior posts and consolidate several infantry units at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, to serve as a reactionary force for expeditious movement to any area threatened by Indian uprisings. One of the forts evacuated had been Fort Crawford, near Prairie du Chien, Michigan Territory, in the heart of Winnebago country. The Indians interpreted

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the withdrawal as a sign of weakness and began to attack white settlements in the area. In the summer of 1827, General Atkinson rushed troops from Jefferson Barracks and Fort Snelling, near present-day Minneapolis, Minnesota, to the site of trouble. His arrival with a force of approximately 1,100 regulars overawed the rebelling Indians. As a consequence of the Winnebago uprisings, the secretary of war directed military leaders to reoccupy Fort Crawford, and to establish a new post at the portage between the Wisconsin and Fox rivers.5

During the 1820's, the Santa Fe Trail developed as an important commercial link between northern Mexico and St. Louis. By 1829, Indians of the central and southern Great Plains and white renegades had become such a terror to caravans that the War Department responded to urgent requests of western merchants. It directed the army to provide an escort to accompany the traders wagons over the route to Mexico. Major Bennet Riley led a dismounted force of four

companies from the Sixth Infantry Regiment to perform the task. While the soldiers successfully accomplished their mission of seeing the merchants safely to the international border, they found that dismounted infantry was ineffective against mounted marauders. They had been constantly harassed and did not have the mobility to punish their tormentors. Upon return to Missouri, Riley recommended that future escorts be mounted, but authorities failed to act on the matter until an Indian uprising emphasized the great need for cavalry in 1832. The troops on the first military escort over the Santa Fe trail also made another important discovery. They had used oxen as draft animals to pull the supply wagons. Not only did the beast hold up well in the semi-arid Plains, but they offered a source of food when the soldiers' supplies were depleted.  

Prior to the activation of a mounted ranger battalion in 1832, and the subsequent Regiment of Dragoons in 1833, an Indian war had to prove to congressmen the dire need of

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cavalry in the army. In July, 1830, several Sauk and Fox chiefs had ceded all their tribal lands east of the Mississippi River to the United States. When a band led by the Sauk chief Black Hawk returned to their Rock River Valley homes in northern Illinois in the spring of 1831, they found white settlers living on their lands. This group had not been a part of the 1830 negotiations. They reacted to the encroachment of whites upon their lands by burning a few isolated cabins. Frantically, the settlers called for Governor John Reynolds to intercede since they felt that their lives and property had been threatened. On May 28, 1831, Reynolds declared that Illinois had been invaded by hostile Indians and called out the state militia. He also requested federal troops. In addition to rushing six companies of the Sixth Infantry Regiment from Jefferson Barracks to Rock Island, military officials reinforced the garrisons at Forts Crawford and Winnebago with elements of the First and Fifth Infantry regiments.  

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After failing to gain the support of several bands of Winnebagoes, Pottawatomies, and Kickapoos, Black Hawk moved his people back west of the Mississippi River to their treaty land. The troops from Jefferson Barracks returned to their home station, and the governor of Illinois released all militia and volunteer units. During the remainder of 1831, however, both the Sauks and Foxes suffered from famine, and general discontent prevailed among all the Indians who had been forced to abandon their Illinois homes. In the August of 1831, a group of the Sauks and Foxes had ambushed a party of Menominees near Prairie du Chien. The unprovoked attack had led to a general threat of an Indian war, which would have spread over the entire northwest frontier.  

General Atkinson had immediately moved all the troops at his disposal from Jefferson Barracks to the threatened area. In addition to his force from St. Louis, he directed Colonel Zachary Taylor to dispatch several companies of his First Infantry Regiment from Forts Snelling and Crawford for stationing at critical points along the Mississippi in

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vicinity of possible points of confrontation between the tribes directly involved. In the meantime, Black Hawk decided to take advantage of the situation and crossed to the east of the Mississippi to the south with an estimated 1,000 warriors from the Sauks and Foxes and Winnebagoes. Those bands of these tribes still friendly to the United States no longer had the power to surrender the renegades who had engaged in the ambush of the Menominees. At the appearance of Black Hawk's force into Illinois, the settlers fled their homes in terror. Governor Reynolds reacted by ordering out the militia and calling for volunteers. With a force of approximately 3,000 mounted volunteers and 400 regulars, Atkinson moved to drive Black Hawk back across the Mississippi. Instead of fighting such a formidable force, the Indians withdrew into the swamps and began to send out small parties to attack stragglers and undefended settlements. Before the five-week war ended with the decisive defeat of Black Hawk in August, 1832, approximately 200 militiamen, volunteers, and civilians had been killed. Estimates place the Indians' losses at about the same figure. Cholera took the lives of far more regular

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troops than combat during the conflict. The dread disease had decimated the ranks of the twenty artillery and infantry companies rushed to the area from as far away as the Atlantic seaboard and Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Of the slightly more than 500 regulars actually engaged in battle, only 5 were killed in action and 4 wounded. Most important for future operations of the army, however, the conflict had emphasized the indispensability of mounted troops in dealing with Indians who made use of horses as a means of movement.

Once troops alerted for a campaign or a move to establish a new post completed their preparations, the task force commander issued his march order. Since infantry regiments traveled primarily by water in the period prior to 1833, a directive included the loading sequence of the companies, march discipline, security in night bivouac, and other instructions of a general nature to be followed the entire trip. A typical set of orders may be found in the records of the Sixth Infantry Regiment relative to its move from New York to the West, and up the Missouri River in 1819. A

detachment of the Fifth Infantry Regiment, with its new commander, Colonel Josiah Snelling, accompanied the Sixth down the Ohio River, and as far up the Mississippi as Belle Fontaine, a few miles north of St. Louis. Once the two units reached their immediate destination, Snelling took his detachment on north to Fort Crawford. Atkinson's regiment bivouac at Belle Fontaine for a month before it moved on up the Missouri to join the Rifle Regiment, an action that completed the first step of Calhoun's plan to have a series of forts all the way to the Yellowstone River.  

Upon departure from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Atkinson had directed that one line company should be loaded on each of the eight lead flatboats, and the detachment of the Fifth Regiment in the last two. Two companies of the Sixth had been deactivated because of a shortage of personnel throughout the regiment. The commander, his staff noncommissioned officers, regimental medical personnel, and the

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band traveled in the lead boat. The executive officer commanded the fifth craft in the column. Atkinson outlined an intricate system of flag signals for moving out, landing, anchoring, extending and closing the line of boats, cordelling, and distress. In an open column, the flatboats remained one hundred yards apart, and when directed to close, they moved to one-half that distance. Since the threat of Indians caused little concern on the voyage down the Ohio River, the commander made no elaborate plans for defense. The boats departed Pittsburgh on May 8, 1819, and arrived at Belle Fontaine on June 8.12

Before landing, Atkinson issued instructions which outlined the arrangement of the temporary camp to be established. The quartermaster provided each company with six tents for the shelter of the troops. Until the boats were unloaded, and four of them turned over the the Rifle Regiment, a detachment consisting of one noncommissioned officer and two privates remained on board to guard against thievery. The units continued to subsist off the rations they brought with them from Pittsburgh. Once they exhausted their food supply, the

commissary officer requisitioned replacement items from local depots. After the tents had been pitched and a regular routine established, Atkinson directed that a post guard be formed to patrol the perimeter of the contonment.  

On June 8, the Sixth Infantry Regiment received alert orders to embark for Council Bluffs and to establish a permanent post there in cooperation with the Rifle Regiment. In addition to the equipment requisitioned for normal operations, the quartermaster received departmental authority to issue additional fatigue clothing to the troops. He drew shoes and other clothing sufficient to supply the unit for one year. He loaded the rations and equipment on the three steamboats belonging to the contractor for the expedition, Colonel James Johnson of Kentucky. The embarkation plan called for one-half of the regiment and its staff to ride the larger boats, and four companies to man one keelboat each.

13 Regimenal Order, 8 June 1819, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207.

14 Ninth Department Order, 8 June 1819, Stephen Watts Kearny Papers, Missouri Historical Society Collections, St. Louis, Missouri. Ninth Department Orders, 21 June 1819, 3 July 1819, 8 July 1819, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207.
Although the expedition received orders on June 21 to depart as soon as possible, owing to the failure of Johnson to provide the promised transportation on schedule, its departure was delayed until July 4. On the trip up the river, the men on the keelboats experienced difficulty in moving the small craft against the swift currents. They utilized poles, cordells, and even occasionally unfurled sails to aid them in their struggle. On the other hand, the men on the steamboats had no luxury ride either. Each day they cut wood for boiler fuel along the river, and performed other duties to expedite their hazardous movement up the river. They periodically scrubbed the decks of the boats. They frequently unloaded the steamboats to lessen their draft when they grounded on sandbars. When they were not busy, the troops had no cover from the elements on the open decks. In fact, the keelboats progressed up the Missouri more rapidly than the steamboats, which were delayed by the low water level in the summer months. On July 22, however, the four keelboats and one of the steamboats arrived at Franklin, about 150 miles above the mouth of the river. After a few days wait while the men in the smaller boats let their baggage dry, they pushed on up the Missouri. The steamboat delayed its move for several more days while it made repairs.
The other two contractor craft had broken down some 60 miles below Franklin, but expected to complete overhauls of their machinery and continue upstream in a couple of days.  

After realizing the impracticality of using steamboats on the swift and treacherous Missouri River, Atkinson recommended to Secretary of War Calhoun that only keel or flatboats be used for future operations. He emphasized the ease with which the lighter craft would readily pass over shallow spots in the river, and a crew could still average fifteen miles a day against the currents. In addition to suggesting the utilization of a more efficient means of transportation, Atkinson pointed out that the practice of contracting for food to be shipped from Kentucky should be reconsidered. He felt that the distance caused it to be overly expensive when sufficient rations could be purchased above St. Louis along the Missouri.

On August 23, the four companies of the Sixth Regiment in the Keelboats overtook the battalion of the Rifle Regiment

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15 Ninth Department Orders, 21 Ju 1819, 3 July 1819, 5 July 1819, 9 July 1819, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207. Nichols, ed., Missouri Expedition, pp. 102-104.

which had departed from Belle Fontaine in June. The elements of the two units continued on up the Missouri together, where they joined the battalion of riflemen that had wintered at Cantonment Martin the preceding year. On September 5, the entire Rifle Regiment and five and one-half companies of the Sixth Infantry departed their rendezvous near present-day Leavenworth, Kansas, under command of Colonel Talbot Chambers, to push on up the Missouri. No steamboats were able to travel beyond that point. Only one of the three steamers that had left Belle Fontaine reached Cantonment Martin. One had completed its repairs and proceeded toward the rendezvous, but had failed near the confluence of the Kansas and Missouri rivers. The third had never reached Franklin. The army finally transferred the supplies and equipment on the contractor's steamers to keelboats for movement to their final destination. The soldiers who had been passenger-workers earlier provided the necessary manpower to push the shallow draft craft on up the Missouri. 17

Although Atkinson did not accompany the main body from Cantonment Martin, he issued the directive that established

a standing operating procedure for the combined force under command of Chambers. Each morning reveille sounded at daybreak, and the firing of a rocket thirty minutes later signaled the boats to begin their move simultaneously. The troops maintained a distance of fifty to one hundred yards between their craft. At 8 o’clock they halted for breakfast, which they prepared on the bank of the river. As with the morning mess, the troops also had one hour in which to cook and to eat their noon meal. Then each evening, one hour prior to sunset, the task force boats closed to within twenty paces of one another and encamped on the river bank for the night. As means of visual communication, the units employed the same flag signals that the Sixth Regiment had used on its trip down the Ohio River earlier in the year. Since the riflemen had buglers, they provided many of the auditory commands relayed to the troops in addition to the firing of the swivel guns mounted on each keelboat.  

To provide security against surprise attacks by Indians, the Rifle Regiment sent a twenty-man party a few hundred yards out on each flank to watch for Indians. These flank security details returned to camp each night when a regular

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18 Detachment Order 31 August 1819, Department Order, 4 September 1819, 6th Infantry Regiment Orders Issued and Received, RG 391, Entry 1207.
camp guard took over. Atkinson stressed the need for the troops to keep their arms in readiness, and the importance of having the weapons by their sides both day and night. The first and last companies in the line of boats provided flank security at night. The units on the interior of the task force slept on line facing away from the river. To provide early warning for the sleeping men, the officer of the day posted four pickets 80 paces in front and to the flank of the encampment. 19

In case of an Indian attack at night the men remained in place where they slept. A foray against the task force while it was in motion required all boats to move rapidly to the scene of the assault and prepare to drive the hostiles away. When an accident occurred to a boat and it required assistance, it fired its swivel gun four times. The nearest craft to the boat in distress moved to its aid. 20

Before the task force arrived at its destination in the vicinity of Council Bluffs on September 29, Atkinson had overtaken it. He then directed the reconnaissance to determine the best site for the establishment of the new cantonment. On October 4, the troops began constructing a

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.
post about three miles north of Council Bluffs on the west bank of the Missouri. The following spring, a flooding of the river forced the abandonment of the campsite on the low land near the river. They finally selected a site on a bluff which was renamed Fort Atkinson in 1821.

The voyage up the Missouri had exposed the men of the Rifle and Sixth Infantry regiments to extreme hardships and incessant exertion to pole the keelboats against the swift currents had reduced their resistance to disease. In addition, their diets consisted primarily of salted meats and no fresh vegetables. In early 1820, scurvy spread through the ranks of both regiments. During the first three months of the year, of the 788 men stationed at Cantonment Missouri, approximately 400 suffered from the disease. Of the soldiers treated for scurvy, 157 died. Medical personnel blamed the sickness on a deficiency of vegetable matter aggravated by fatigue, indolence, cold and moisture, and personal uncleanliness. Since only one officer died from

the scurvy, the idea that exertion and fatigue from the trip up the river contributed to the disease seemed reasonable. 22

To end the epidemic one surgeon recommended the cessation of issuing salt provisions. Instead he wanted to feed the troops on fresh meat more often. When necessary to use the salt-preserved provision, he advised that it be boiled in water with charcoal added. He suggested also that the barracks be cleaned and aired frequently. In addition to the measures for sanitation in the living quarters, the surgeon emphasized personal hygiene. While both surgeons assigned to the two regiments realized that the troops needed a supply of fresh vegetables, none was available at the isolated outpost during the winter months. Upon the arrival of warmer weather, the troops moved out of the unhealthy environment to a tent city on the bluffs above the old camp. With the arrival of spring, the scurbotic epidemic soon abated.

Although the disease continued to occur among frontier troops, no unit ever again suffered an epidemic of such magnitude.23

After the activation of the Regiment of Dragoons in 1833, the army began to conduct expeditions into the Great Plains away from the rivers. The first year after the organization of the mounted unit, nine of its companies, under command of Colonel Henry Dodge, went on a summer campaign to the Rocky Mountains and returned to Fort Gibson. They successfully awed the Indians wherever they traveled and extracted peace treaties, but the regiment suffered much sickness and many deaths from intermittent fever. Company A, under Captain Clifton Wharton, provided the force for the second military escort over the Santa Fe Trail. Upon his return from the operation, the officer reported that his unit had made no contact with hostile Indians or renegades. He suggested that the escort duty be discontinued. Until 1843, 1844, and 1845, no other dragoons received an assignment to travel with the caravans to Mexico.24

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In 1835, the Dragoon Regiment began conducting smaller and more numerous patrols into the Great Plains. On May 29, Dodge departed from Fort Leavenworth with one of four patrols of the year. He marched A, C, and G companies on a trek up the Platte River to the Rockies, south to the Arkansas, and then back to their home station by way of the Santa Fe Trail. The task force halted for two days' rest at Bent's Fort on the Arkansas River in present-day southern Colorado. While the civilian owners of the post entertained the officers of the Dragoon Regiment, the enlisted men crossed over the river into Mexico. One sergeant described the drunkenness and promiscuity in the Indian village as a professional private's dream. The troops arrived back in Fort Leavenworth after a 1,600 mile trip on September 10. The campaign to the Rocky Mountains in 1835 had been less costly in lives and equipment than the one of the preceding year. Dodge lost only one private to intermittent fever, and the horses returned in a thin condition, but still in good health.25

At the same time that the one group of dragoons journeyed to the Rockies, the regimental executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny, led three companies on another campaign to the north. He departed Fort Des Moines, located on the Mississippi River a few miles north of the Missouri state boundary, and moved into Sioux country of southwest Minnesota. On his return home, Kearny dispatched part of his command to reconnoiter the Des Moines River to its confluence with the Mississippi.  

Major Richard Barnes Mason led a third force of two companies south from Fort Gibson to the Red River and then west along the international boundary between the United States and Mexico. Approximately 150 miles west of his point of departure, he assembled the Comanche and Kiowa Indians for a parley with American peace commissioners. The patrol also removed all whites who had no authority to be in the area. While Mason conducted his mission, a fourth group of dragoons marched to the Osage village on the Neosho

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River above Fort Gibson with a similar plan of operation. This force consisted of one company from Fort Gibson and one from Fort Leavenworth. 27

All four campaigns resulted in some degree of success in bringing a favorable attitude for future negotiations of treaties between the United States and Great Plains Indian nations. After 1837, however, with an increase in the Florida War, the withdrawal of troops from the western frontier forced a curtailment of operations there. The First Regiment of Dragoons discontinued making regularly scheduled forays into the Indian Country and began to move to troubled areas only when requested to do so by government agents. By 1843, the practice was resumed again, along with military escorts over the Santa Fe Trail. 28

Prior to the departure of a unit on a campaign, the men said their goodbyes and moved to their horses for an inspection by their officers. Once the critical examination of the troops and their equipment had been completed, the

27 Order 12, Headquarters Army, 9 March 1835, reprinted in the Army and Navy Chronicle, 19 March 1835. See also letters to the editor on 14 May, 29 May, 25 June, 23 July, 6 August, 1 October 1835. One of the pieces of correspondence told of the wife of one company commander who accompanied her husband on one patrol. She drove her own wagon and followed the dragoons to the Osage village on the Neosho River.

28 Young, West of Cooke, pp. 91-92.
companies formed on the parade ground for a review. As soon as the task force commander satisfied himself of the combat readiness of his troops, he directed the units to move out in order of the seniority of their captains. The companies marched off in a column of twos and soon stretched like a huge snake over the prairie. The band followed along for a short distance to provide a few martial airs for the inspiration of the soldiers and onlookers. After having been in garrison for a lengthy period of time, the men always seemed ready to be on the move again. A force usually traveled only three or four miles the first day, when it halted and encamped overnight at a site selected by the quartermaster and his advance party. The short initial march permitted the men to become accustomed to their new life in the field and to readjust their equipment.  

The advance party selected a campsite that was easily defensible and convenient to water, wood, and grass. Although the first bivouac placed little emphasis on security, subsequent ones guarded against surprise raids by Indians. The first company to arrive moved into position on the far flank, and set about caring for its horses. As the additional units came up, they stopped on the flank of each preceding one, forming a rectangle. Each company occupied a front of approximately thirty yards, depending upon the terrain. The troopers picketed their horses on line, five feet apart inside the proposed row of tents, facing outward. The quartermaster officer spotted the supply wagons and the two howitzers on one side of the perimeter away from a stream, if one were present. After the men had stripped the horses of their equipment, they led them outside the camp to graze. Each trooper used the thirty-foot manila rope, halter, and fourteen-inch metal picket pin that he carried. Since cavalry units depended on the availability of grass along a route of march to sustain their horses, they placed great importance on assuring that they grazed at every possible chance.  

Once the troopers had cared for their mounts, they set about pitching tents for themselves, the mess, and the officers. Each company divided its personnel into three groups. One third worked on a tent detail. They assured that all the shelters were aligned. A second group took care of cooking the food, while a third detail cut wood. Immediately after supper, buglers notified the men to lead their horses back into the perimeter. The officer of the day posted sentinels around the entire encampment before dark. When tattoo sounded at 9 o'clock, all the men returned to their tents for an inspection of their weapons and equipment, and for roll call. Within fifteen minutes all the troops turned in for the night. 31

The first light of day brought a shrill blast of the bugler signaling reveille. Within two minutes after the call sounded, the first sergeants took roll call, and immediately thereafter, the squad leaders conducted a weapons inspection. From the first formation of the morning, the


troops watered their horses and put them out for grazing. At the same time that most of the men cared for their mounts, the few detailed to guard stood their inspection in readiness for a twenty-four-hour tour of duty. Once breakfast had been completed, the troops struck the tents and loaded all their equipment for the day's trek.  

The quartermaster officer departed the bivouac with the advance guard soon after the morning meal. By eight o'clock, the lead elements of the main body began its move, followed by the other companies. The supply and baggage wagons, the howitzers, and the cattle for fresh food, plus other animals trailed the last combat unit. If an adjutant were not present, the sergeant major and quartermaster sergeant took charge of the trains. The daily guard detail brought up the rear of the column under command of the duty officer.  

Generally, a cavalry unit traveled from fifteen to thirty miles a day, depending on the terrain and the urgency of its mission. At the end of each day's march, the troops almost invariably went through the same routine without change. Occasionally, commanders halted for one or two

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32 Carleton, Prairie Logbooks, pp. 16-17, 171-172.
33 Carleton, Prairie Logbooks, n. 17
days every couple weeks to rest the horses and allow the men to repair and clean their equipment. While they performed the maintenance, they relaxed and joked among themselves. Some of the men even played ball, cards, and managed to gamble. If the occasion for a halt were to celebrate a national holiday, the men expected a gill or two of whiskey. A few troops passed the days of rest by hunting or fishing for extra food to supplement their diets.  

Surprisingly, the soldiers on campaign received their mail, but not on a regular schedule. Sometimes couriers carrying dispatches also brought letters to the troops and returned their correspondence to civilization. On a rare occasion, trappers passed through an encampment and either brought mail or returned the men's letters to their home station for posting.  

Although the men usually seemed happy at the beginning of a campaign, they soon discovered that travel on the Great  

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Plains could be difficult and uncomfortable. While the large number of horses walking across the dry prairies stirred up large clouds of dust, the troopers suffered discomfort in their impractical uniforms and thirst. Many times the only water available to them was found in an intermittent stream in which buffalo had wallowed. The soldiers used one of several methods to make the precious liquid potable.36

In some instances the troopers merely dug holes in the mud or sand, then permitted water to filter through the soil into the excavation before drinking it. Sometimes they perforated a flour barrel with small holes and then forced it down into a moist, sandy spot near a source of water. The container prevented a cave-in and in the same time allowed the liquid to seep into a reservoir. During an infrequent rainshower, the men suspended a piece of cloth or blanket with a weight at one end to permit water to drip into a container. Some even spread out their raincoats, or gutta-perchas, to collect any precipitation, to include the morning dew.37


Several sources described the methods utilized by soldiers to remove excess sediment from water and to purify it. Evidently, the troopers merely adopted means long accepted by the Indians. One called for an individual to cut a prickly pear branch, burn the stickers off for ease of handling, split the cactus open, and throw it into a container of muddy water. Within a matter of a few minutes, the cactus absorbed the excess sediment and left the liquid sufficiently clear for drinking. Another source suggested that muddy water be strained through a hastily constructed charcoal filter.\footnote{Marcy, Prairie Traveler, pp. 47-50. Richard W. Johnson, A Soldier's Reminiscences in Peace and War (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1886), p. 67. Carleton, Prairie Logbooks, p. 209.}

Although the two above processes did not purify water, they did remove a sufficient amount of visible mud and trash to make it digestible. One accepted method for purifying water was to boil that found in stagnant pools. As the scum came to the top it was removed by skimming it off with a dipper. Another source advised placing a piece of alum in the end of a split stick and stirring it in a container of water to kill any germs.\footnote{Marcy, Prairie Traveler, p. 49.}
In the semi-arid Great Plains, and even in an unseasonably dry season in the normally more humid regions, prairie fires presented one of the most dangerous hazards to travelers. Even the conflagrations which burned in uninhabited areas emitted so much smoke and burning ashes that they caused discomfort and constant threat for miles away.\textsuperscript{40}

During unseasonably rainy seasons, the troops did not suffer from a lack of water, but from too much of it. Not only were trails difficult to traverse, swollen streams prevented rapid movement also. Sometimes units on a campaign had to wait several days until water levels of streams receded before they could continue a mission. Occasionally, the troops built bridges to expedite their movement when the necessity of speed dictated it. By the beginning of the Mexican War, each cavalry company which expected to move over terrain interspersed with unfordable creeks and rivers carried a portable rubber raft in its supply vehicle. In addition to the small boat-like piece of equipment, one of the wagons assigned to each unit could be employed as a floating transport.\textsuperscript{41}


Since the units on a campaign did not carry fuel, they became dependent on the region through which they passed to provide the materials to be used for their cooking fires and an occasional one for the comfort of the troops in cool or damp weather. In areas where few trees grew, people passing through sometimes found driftwood on the banks of intermittent streambeds. In instances where no such fuel existed, travelers in the Great Plains soon learned to utilize the bois de vache, or buffalo chips, found in abundance on the prairie. Since millions of the wild animals roamed the American West, soldiers seldom experienced difficulty in picking up a sufficient quantity of the dried animal dung for campfires, particularly at bivouacs near water. In damp weather, however, the dependence on the buffalo chips presented a problem. When wet, they would not burn. 42

Although the men underwent hardships while on the Plains for an extended period of time, they soon forgot and were ready to return after a few months in garrison. Upon their

arrival at their home station, they would be greeted by friends, loved ones, and fellow soldiers who had not been selected to go on campaign. The cares and worries of the recently completed journey were soon forgotten in the gaiety of the celebration that followed the return of troops to garrison. 45

Although the army of the trans-Mississippi West seldom had large numbers of troops assigned during the period between the end of the War of 1812 and the beginning of the Mexican War, the few units there always seemed to have been able to move to a troubled area at an opportune time to prevent an Indian uprising from engulfing the entire frontier. Immediately after the war with Great Britain, infantry and rifle regiments had performed the task of maintaining peace in the West and protecting the settlers. After 1821, a greatly reduced army caused officials constantly to shift the positions of the units to meet threats to peace on the frontier. During the 1820's and early 1830's, the difficulty experienced by the military establishment in coping with highly mobile Indians of the Great Plains changed congressional...

and military thinking to include mounted troops in the army's organization again. With the activation of the Regiment of Dragoons in 1833, the mission of patrolling the frontier and conducting forays into Indian Country fell to the mounted unit. Thus, during the so-called thirty years of peace, the regular army did manage to accomplish its mission of frontier protection with a great degree of effectiveness.
CHAPTER VIII

WHERE DID THEY GO--

CONCLUSION

Upon their departure from the army, whether by discharge, pension, or desertion, many of the men in the pre-Mexican War army remained in the West. More returned to their homes in the East, however. The incompleteness of official records and the similarity of many names of the former soldiers preclude a conclusive study of exactly where the many thousands of men who left the ranks of the army did finally settle after their departure from it. To add to the confusion of determining the former soldier's ultimate destinations, many deserters changed their names to hide from officials and bounty hunters who sought them. In drawing conclusions about the veterans of army service during the so-called thirty years of peace, one must make many assumptions as to where the former troopers did go after leaving military control.

The men left the ranks of the army by numerous methods. The greatest percentage, however, served out their periods of obligation and either received discharges for honorable
service or reenlisted. Over the entire period an average of approximately 34 per cent of the men taking leave of the military establishment satisfactorily completed their terms of obligation. An additional number equaling slightly more than 7 per cent reenlisted for one or subsequent periods. Thus, four out of ten men completed their obligations of enlistment.¹

In contrast to the number of men who received honorable discharges for full terms of service, many others also completed satisfactory periods but did not finish their agreed periods of enlistment. Authorities released approximately 10 per cent of the soldiers enrolling for non-service connected disability, inability, insanity, debility, and numerous other physical and mental incapacities. A few of these individuals were discharged upon their arrival at their regiments from the recruiting stations. A board of officers at the units determined that they could not efficiently perform soldierly duties because of their handicaps.

¹The statistics for this survey were determined by tracing the record of service of approximately 45,000 men who enlisted in twenty of the thirty years between 1815 and 1845. The years included in this study were 1821-1823, 1825, 1828-1838, 1841-1845. This author noted numerous discrepancies in the figures published by the War Department and generally accepted by other historians. See U.S., National Archives, Old Army Records, Register of Enlistments in the United States Army, 1798-1914, Records Group 94, Microcopy 233, Rolls 18-21.
Many of the soldiers also received discharges through political influence, reductions of the army, deactivation of special detachments, a termination of certain occupation specialties for which they had been enlisted, and by the directions of high ranking military and civilian leaders. The men released for the many sundry reasons, even though they had served honorably while in the army, were not awarded pensions or other compensations for their partial tours of duty.\(^2\)

A larger number of men died before they completed their enlistments than is indicated by official statistical computations. In the 1840 surgeon general's report, the head of the medical services calculated that the mortality rate for the army between 1829 and 1838 had been 4.4 per cent. In disagreement with the report, however, this author discovered that of the approximately 25,000 men enlisted during the same period, 2,479, or slightly less than 10 per cent, died before completing their terms of obligation. Further examinations of the twenty years surveyed between 1815 and 1845 revealed that the army lost 4,782 soldiers, or more than 10 per cent, of the approximately 45,000 enlisted from

wounds received in action, drownings, intoxication, sickness, and innumerable other causes.\(^3\)

Other than regular discharges, the army suffered its largest losses through desertions. Contrary to the estimations made by Secretary of War Jefferson Davis in 1854 that 12.6 per cent of the men in the army took unauthorized leave annually between 1828 and the beginning of the Mexican War, a detailed count determined that the figure more nearly approached a level of 29 per cent. If the number of men who took "French leave" and returned voluntarily, or were apprehended, was included in the computations the percentage would probably greatly increase. For example, in 1830, of the 2,051 individuals enrolling, 1,230 had an entry of desertion on their records before they completed their terms of obligation. Of that number, 408 returned to duty, with 822 of the absentees never having been apprehended. In 1833, 2,848 men enlisted and 974 of them deserted. Authorities apprehended 318 of them. Disregarding the number of soldiers returned to military control in the two years discussed, the average of desertions totaled more than

30 per cent of those enrolled. No matter how the rate of unauthorized absences is figured, it is always much higher than that found in officially computed statistics. 4

The disposition of the remaining 10 per cent of the men who enlisted in the army is varied. Approximately 1 per cent received discharges with pensions, 2 per cent by sentences of courts-martial, 0.9 per cent for minority, and 2 per cent after being turned over to civil authorities because of alienage or criminal charges. High ranking military and civilian leaders directed the release of the remainder of the men enlisted as having been deserters from other military services, by permitting substitutes or purchases of discharges, and for unsuitability, poor habits, worthlessness, and intemperance to mention the most prevalent reasons. 5

Numerical data supports the conclusion that recruiters experienced great difficulty in maintaining the army's troop


strength at a constant level. While statistics also reveal the general physical and occupational qualifications of the men who served in the pre-Mexican War military force, they fail to measure the degree to which soldiers conformed to the accepted cultural values of the period and the difference between those of personnel in the military service and civilians. Several modern sociologists agree that individuals entering the army retain patterns of response which can be traced to their experiences of the past. Thus, "... the structure of the military and the patterns of human association within it inevitably reflect the social patterns and structure of that larger society." If this theory is accepted to explain the role behavior in the present age, there is little reason to doubt that the nineteenth century soldier also carried the folkways and mores of his civilian community into the army with him.

In comparing the diversity between the civilian and military social structures and the patterns of expectations in social interaction, vast differences were discerned.

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Enlisted personnel who had been products of a society in which each individual believed himself equal to his peers experienced difficulty in adjusting to the role ascribed to him in a system deeply rooted in medieval traditions so prevalent in the army. Many of the more intelligent and capable enlistees deserted rather than sacrifice their individuality. That approximately 29 per cent of the men who enrolled each year took unauthorized absences before they completed their terms of obligation is an indication which supports such a statement. In addition, the fact that over three-quarters of the commissioned personnel on active duty by 1845 had been products of the Military Academy would further intimate the possibility of a gap between the accepted cultural values of enlisted men and their officers. Therefore, in making judgments about the rank and file, care must be exercised in accepting the observations of commissioned personnel.

Since soldiers left few records about their lives in the army, other sources need to be relied on heavily for information to piece together a picture of their existence in garrison and while on campaign. A study and analysis of official records supports a thesis that some of the longstanding criticisms leveled at enlisted men are exaggerations
and should be directed toward the system of which they were a part rather than at the soldiers themselves. First, while drunkenness occurred frequently in the enlisted ranks, soldiers were probably no more unrestrained than members of the society from which they enlisted nor the frontiersmen around whom they lived while in the army. Second, the period beginning in the late 1820's was an era in which temperance movements permeated the American scene. Prohibitionists certainly painted a more dismal picture of the situation than actually existed to win support of their efforts. The discontinuance of the issuance of whiskey as a component of the army ration coincided with local prohibition in several states. Third, while many soldiers did overly rely on alcohol to relieve their boredom in a life of isolation, a survey of courts-martial records indicated that more than 60 per cent never faced judiciary punishment from charges involving drunkenness.

Finally, the high rate of desertions experienced by the army between the War of 1812 and the Mexican War is indicative that the military system needed to be reformed. The harsh methods used to instill discipline evidently led many men to desert. The failure of leaders to accept an idea of the importance of recognition for outstanding service
is reflected by the almost total absence of provisions for promotion possibilities of enlisted personnel to the officers' grades. Thus, many other soldiers deserted because of their permanent relegation to the lowest castes in a system that resisted change. The tendency for men to take unauthorized leave then can be blamed on poor leadership as well as the quality of material enlisted.

During the period of study, leaders made few attempts to reform the general structure of the military institution as a social system. On the other hand, many changes can be discerned which improved weaponry and equipment, tactics, supply and administrative procedures, moral guidance, recreational facilities, and pay. As reenlistment rates indicate, the army did retain a nucleus of professional soldiers around which it maintained an effective force that served as one of the most important tools in taming the American West, but those who stayed did so at the expense of deferring and subordinating their individuality and personality. The deprivation of their egoistic values was the price the career soldiers had to pay.
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