

THE BENZINE BOARD: THE UNITED STATES ARMY  
REDUCTION OF 1870

BY

DAVID PERRY PERRINE

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United States Military Academy

West Point, New York

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Thesis Approved:

Oddie B. Far  
Thesis Adviser  
Carl A. Lys  
Jane Smallwood  
Norman W. Durham  
Dean of the Graduate College

968355

## PREFACE

This study examines reductions in the Regular Army officer corps in 1870 as well as the events in Congress preceeding the cut backs. Immediately following the Civil War, the Volunteer Army disbanded while the Regular Army expanded; many of the Volunteer officers and men sought and gained appointments in the growing Army. As the Army appeared to be attaining its authorized strength and efficiency, Congress enacted a massive reduction program, one that proved traumatic in the ranks of the Army. The following year Congress opted to decrease the officer strength; a board of five officers once known as the "Special Board" or "Hancock Board" but now called "The Benzine Board," was established to oust undesirables. Years afterwards Army historians would record that 750 unfortunates, heroes of the Civil War, were cast aside by an ungrateful public and a stingy Congress.

Only a few records of the Benzine Board are readily available in the National Archives. Many others have been misplaced or no longer exist. The proceedings of the board were confidential and details were not officially released to the public. On January 19, 1871, The Daily Patriot a Washington, D. C. newspaper, printed a recapitulation of the cases which the Board decided for or against, or on those cases wherein a decision was not rendered. As far as can be determined, this newspaper article was the only official or unofficial summary of the activities of General Hancock's Board. Although the source of this news article was unknown, I believe it to be accurate.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE MILITARY PEACE ESTABLISHMENT

With the collapse of southern forces in the spring of 1865, Union soldiers, their families, and loyal Unionists throughout the North and South wildly rejoiced. Four years of bloodshed and disease had exhausted both forces; scarcely a family had avoided the impact of this bloody fratricide. Scars left by years of pre-war Congressional bickering still remained as well as the marks borne by the maimed, widowed, and orphans.

For the soldiers who wore Gray, the return home was long and arduous. After stacking their arms, these men began their journey home in small groups or individually, making their way as best they could, existing on the meager handouts from the impoverished farmers or from what they could scavenge from the exhausted land. Often their arrival home was saddened by the presence of Union troops.

The victorious Union Army momentarily savored their glorious triumph with many celebrations, culminating in a Grand Review in the District of Columbia. On May, 1865, General George G. Meade led his Army of the Potomac down Pennsylvania Avenue, passing in review before the President and his Cabinet, members of Congress, and jubilant citizens. The following day, General William T. Sherman's western troops, numbering 65,000 battle-hardened men, marched in review for six and a half hours.<sup>1</sup> Never before had the Nation witnessed such a martial display; a tremendous sense of euphoria, pride and confidence filled both soldier and spec-

tator. The Sword of the Republic was invincible!

After the review, it was time for the nation to return to reality. The first business at hand was the return of the Volunteer to his home. Regiments were mustered out swiftly, the troops paid, and an overtaxed transportation system employed to move the veterans to their destinations. The phase out of the Volunteer Army was orderly with the discharged troops starting their moves homeward on April 29, 1865. According to the Adjutant General of the Army, all 1,034,064 volunteers could have been mustered out and transported home within three months from that date.<sup>2</sup> Despite this boast, the advisability of such a rapid exodus was questionable, and plans were implemented more prudently. At the war's end, 985,516 volunteers were on duty; another 48,548 volunteers enlisted after May 1, 1865, thus totaling 1,034,064 volunteers requiring demobilization. By November 15, 1865, 800,963 men were home and another 209,707 men discharged by June 30, 1866. Only 11,043 volunteers, the remnants of a vast Volunteer Army, remained on the muster rolls by the end of October, 1866.<sup>3</sup> The dramatic swiftness of this demobilization was best illustrated in a 52,000 man force which marched into Texas in May, 1865; by August of that year, all but 5,000 volunteers had been discharged.<sup>4</sup>

While the Volunteer Army disbanded, the War Department responded to Congress' demands for troops to be stationed throughout the country. Because of perceived threats from both within and without the nation, several requirements for military forces existed. Politics determined that the volunteer should be returned home immediately although many recognized that the small Regular Army could not satisfy all of the requirements. Troops were needed for four specific tasks in addition to the normal requirement to man coastal defenses from Maine to Alaska.



The first, and considered to be the greatest threat, was the need for a "Border Army". The international intrigue in Mexico, brought about by an ambitious and colonial-minded France, caused Congress to authorize the dispatch of an expeditionary force to the Rio Grande River. Maximilian, the self-proclaimed Emperor of Mexico, established a government in Mexico during the Civil War; fearful of collaboration with the Confederacy, the United States felt powerless to actively thwart this threat. With the cessation of hostilities, Congress urgently focused its attention south of the border. General Philip H. Sheridan, in Washington to participate in the Grand Review, hurriedly departed on May 17, 1865, to take command of a 52,000 man army ordered to the Rio Grande River area to hold Texas and the international boundary and force Maximilian to withdraw his army into the interior. Four months later his command was but a skeleton due to the discharge of the volunteers and Regular Army troops rushed to replace his depleted force. The need for this Border Army continued until 1867, the year Maximilian was executed and France withdrew its interest from Mexico. <sup>5</sup>

To the north, a smaller threat developed from the Fenian Brotherhood, an organization dedicated to free Ireland from English rule; many sympathetic veterans joined this organization headed by John O'Neill. In the spring of 1866, approximately 10,000 Fenians were repulsed at the Canadian border by American troops under General Meade. Although the incursion was permanently crushed, the threat lingered for a time afterwards necessitating the stationing of troops along the Northern border. <sup>6</sup>

For a decade following the war, the United States Army operated as the instrument of Congress as enforcers of Reconstruction policy. This "Reconstruction Army" performed humanitarian tasks initially and was

welcomed generally by the Southerners. Some of these tasks included the maintenance of sanitary conditions, relief of the needy, repair of the communications systems, restoration of educational facilities, suppression of lawlessness, and the protection of property. These duties continued until local officials were elected.<sup>7</sup> As soon as local citizens established control, the Southerners believed the need for an occupying force to be at an end but the Radical Republican Congress thought differently. The Army remained for more than a decade causing much resentment and dissatisfaction to both soldier and Southerner.<sup>8</sup>

Unfortunately Congress selected the Army as the only available agency to execute it's policies to alter the South's social structure. The duties were onerous. Because of the difficult and sensitive nature of these duties, a large portion of the Army was garrisoned in the South with more than 20,000 troops scattered in 130 posts in the five Territorial Departments which administered the South. By October, 1870, 9,050 "Regulars" continued to "occupy" the South.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, a "Frontier Army" was needed for the protection of the western territories and states. Conditions in these areas were deplorable and in many cases had regressed during the war years. In 1860, the bulk of the 16,000 man Army was stationed in the West, assisting in the opening and expansion of the territories and preserving the peace. The onset of the Civil War forced the withdrawal of all Regular Army troops eastward and left the frontier defenses in the hands of the local militia and a few Volunteer Regiments. By 1865, the work of the Regulars accomplished between 1848-1861 had been undone.<sup>11</sup> As fast as they could be spared, Regular Army regiments were hastily transferred to the West to restore the frontier.

Acknowledging these requirements, Congress supported the War Department's urgent request to expand the Regular Army, now in a dreadful state owing to wartime casualties and a poor enlistment rate. Despite a wartime authorization of 2,009 officers and 37,264 enlisted men, the Regular Army never exceeded 65 percent of its authorization.<sup>12</sup> By the end of May, 1865, 153, or about one-third of the companies were unorganized.<sup>13</sup> It was apparent that something needed to be done to dramatically and rapidly alter the Army's reduced posture.

Recruiting efforts were renewed and many discharged veterans, grown restless in civilian life, returned to the rolls for a three or a five year "hitch". By the end of June, 1866, the Regular Army strength was at 85 percent of its authorized strength and the Regulars displaced Volunteers as fast as they were able.<sup>14</sup> Despite high desertion rates, the Army was closely able to maintain authorized strength.

To meet the requests for troops, General Ulysses S. Grant, the Commanding General of the Army, urged Congress to approve an Army of 80,000 men; Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton was willing only to approve a force of 50,000 men.<sup>15</sup> Ironically each man received his wish on July 28, 1866, when President Andrew Jackson signed "an Act to increase and fix the military peace establishment of the United States," authorizing the Regular Army ten regiments of cavalry, five regiments of artillery and forty-five regiments of infantry. Each of the 630 authorized companies consisted of a minimum of fifty privates which, at the discretion of the President, could be increased to one hundred privates in the cavalry and infantry regiments and 122 privates in the artillery regiments.<sup>16</sup> The maximum possible strength thus could be 75,382 officers and men; the announced authorization for 1866 however consisted of sixty-four privates

per company in all of the arms, or a total of 54,302 officers and men in the line.<sup>17</sup> One year later, the President reduced the strength of the Army allowing only fifty privates in most of the infantry and artillery companies.<sup>18</sup>

Although recruiters enlisted sufficient numbers of men, the Army never realized the full services of the regiments. Four of the infantry regiments were Veteran Reserve regiments composed of invalids who were used in "guarding storehouses and cemeteries";<sup>19</sup> two cavalry regiments and two infantry regiments were "colored regiments" requiring about two years to recruit and train.<sup>20</sup> Thus, eight regiments were in effect unavailable for normal military duties for at least two years following the war; further, the five artillery regiments were employed primarily along the coastal defenses and rarely became involved in any of the missions previously outlined.

The Army was not a cohesive and unified force because deep jealousies and a different chain of command separated the "staff" and "line", or more specifically, the staff officers stationed in Washington and the cavalry, infantry, and artillery arms of the service. In general, the Commanding General of the Army directly controlled the arms of the service and reported to the Secretary of War while the staff officers bypassed the Commanding General and reported directly to the Secretary of War. This arrangement created much confusion and frustration, particularly in the line. The situation was not rectified until the formation of the General Staff in 1903. Until this time much bickering and jealousy arose among the officers of the staff and line. Thus, when Congress later called for retrenchment in the Army, both the staff and line pointed accusing fingers at each other and were unable to form a

united front against Congressional attempts to reduce the Army; consequently, both staff and line suffered possibly preventable reductions, with the line being the hardest hit. <sup>21</sup>

The Army thus found itself in the unique position of expanding one part of itself while disbanding another part. Ignoring loud cries for retrenchment, Congress nevertheless approved a build-up of the Military Peace Establishment due to a long neglected international situation and internal turmoil. Loud expressions for retribution were voiced in several sections of the country and Congress supported the need for a substantial Reconstruction Army to occupy the South. Not until the readmissions of the seceded states to the Union was the Army able to reduce significantly the number of troops in the South. By that time, only the frontier demanded attention.

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Oliver Lyman Spaulding, The United States Army in War and Peace (New York, 1937), pp. 334-335.

<sup>2</sup>War Department, "Report of the Secretary of War," Washington, November 22, 1865, Report of the Secretary of War, 1865 (Washington, 1865), pp. 24, 27-29; War Department, "Report of the Adjutant General of the Army," Washington, October 20, 1866, Report of the Secretary of War, 1866 (Washington, 1866), p. 79.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>4</sup>War Department, "Report of General P. H. Sheridan," New Orleans, Louisiana, November 14, 1866, *ibid.*, pp. 47-48.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.; Spaulding, The United States Army, pp. 307-308, 334-335; William Addleman Ganoë, The History of the United States Army, (New York, 1942), pp. 298-299, 312.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 301, 302, 305; Spaulding, The United States Army, p. 340; War Department, "Report of General George G. Meade," Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October 12, 1866, Report of the Secretary of War, 1866, pp. 42-44.

<sup>7</sup>James E. Sefton, The United States Army and Reconstruction, 1865-1877 (Baton Rouge, 1967), p. 8.

<sup>8</sup>Ganoë, The History, p. 301.

<sup>9</sup>For an excellent account of this facet of the post-war Army see James E. Sefton, The United States Army and Reconstruction, 1865-1877 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967).

<sup>10</sup>Sefton, Army and Reconstruction, pp. 260-262.

<sup>11</sup>War Department, "Report of General U. S. Grant," Washington, November 21, 1866, Report of the Secretary of War, 1866, p. 17.

<sup>12</sup>Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army (2 Vols., 1903; rpt. Urbana, 1965), Vol. I, p. 626. See Appendix A.

<sup>13</sup>War Department, "Report of the Adjutant General of the Army," Washington, October 20, 1866, Report of the Secretary of War, 1866, p. 73.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Robert M. Utley, Frontier Regulars: The United States Army and the Indian, 1866-1891 (New York, 1973), p. 11.

<sup>16</sup>General Orders Number 56, Adjutant General's Office, August 4, 1866; War Department, "Report of the Adjutant General of the Army" Washington, October 20, 1866, Report of the Secretary of War, 1866, pp. 73-74.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 84; War Department, "Report of the Secretary of War," Washington, November 14, 1866, Report of the Secretary of War, 1866, p. 3.

<sup>18</sup>General Orders Number 101, Adjutant General's Office, November 26, 1867.

<sup>19</sup>War Department, "Report of the Secretary of War," Washington, November 14, 1866, Report of the Secretary of War, 1866, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup>War Department, "Report of the Adjutant General of the Army," Washington, October 20, 1867, Report of the Secretary of War, 1867 (Washington, 1867), p. 411; War Department, "Report of the Adjutant General of the Army," Washington, October 20, 1868, Report of the Secretary of War, 1868 (Washington, 1868), p. 142.

<sup>21</sup>Speech of Congressman James A. Garfield in The Army-Navy Journal, February 27, 1869, pp. 443-444; Gano, The History, p. 419; C. Joseph Bernardo and Eugene H. Bacon, American Military Policy: Its Development Since 1775 (Harrisburg, 1957), p. 285.

## CHAPTER II

### THE OFFICER CORPS

The public attitude toward the peacetime Regular Army was at best tolerant; at worst, civilians viewed soldiers to be derelicts recruited from the lower social strata. During wartime, the public glorified the "boys in Blue", particularly the citizen-soldier, the Volunteer. It was the public's duty to serve the country cheerfully and to sacrifice for the Union's just cause. After the war public opinion once again returned to normalcy—hostility to all things military.<sup>1</sup> An excellent example of this low opinion appeared in an issue of The Army-Navy Journal, in 1876, where traditional civilian attitudes indicated the Regular Army was composed of men who were: "bummers, old drunkards, bad and runaway boys, sober men but never-do-wells and men of education with listless character, including some of real refinement and ability."<sup>2</sup> A historian of American soldiery also wrote that the public viewed the Regular as a "jobless worker" from the "sorriest of all the flotsam and jetsam of the economic system."<sup>3</sup> Due to this attitude, the professional soldier found himself segregated from society, both socially and physically. Some restrictions were imposed on them, including in some states the right to vote.<sup>4</sup> Such "disabilities" combined with outspoken contempt caused the soldier to recognize quickly his "place" in society and motivated his withdrawal from "civilization". Resultant brooding and resentment caused him in turn to look down on all civilians.



The public held the officer in higher respect, although opinions conflicted in this regard. Horace Greeley caustically remarked that officers were "shiftless nobodies" while Congressman James A. Garfield sympathetically stated they were "abused yet selfless, national servants". Others thought the officer's integrity and patriotism open to question, particularly those graduates of the United States Military Academy, who were described as "anemic in thier loyalty" to the cause of the Union.<sup>5</sup> These attitudes caused the officers to retreat into their own inner circle or as a military historian noted, they developed a "distinctive military character."<sup>6</sup> This posture probably had as much to do with the military-civilian polarization as did the civilian's attitude. General Sherman sought to avoid this split and advised the officer to "mingle with the People" in order to foster mutual understanding, for the officer was "chosen by the People and closely watched by them".<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, his advice generally went unheeded; a century later, despite the relevancy of Sherman's remarks, both citizen and soldier still have not altered their opinions measurably.

Since 1802, men had been appointed as officers in the Regular Army in one of three ways.<sup>8</sup> Article IV of The Revised Regulations of 1861, the rules governing the administration of the Army during and after the Civil War, outlined these appointment sources as being awarded to graduates of the United States Military Academy (West Point), meritorious non-commissioned officers of the Regular Army, and qualified citizens who successfully underwent required examinations.<sup>9</sup>

The first priority for commissions went to the graduates of West Point. These men attended that institution for at least four years, receiving a college education heavily oriented toward engineering. Cadets

generally received appointments to the academy from their Congressmen or Senators, although a few appointments were awarded by the President. After four years of rigid discipline these men received regimental commissions as Second Lieutenants in the various arms of service.<sup>10</sup> Funds allocated by Congress paid for the education of these select men; consequently, elected officials frequently awarded a cadetship to the son of a man to whom a favor was owed. Thus, some cadets owed their attendance at West Point, and consequent officer status, to a system of patronage.

The second priority for appointing men to the officer ranks went to deserving non-commissioned officers. Until 1847, the authority for these commissions rested on custom only. After that date an act of Congress governed the commissioning of enlisted men. Initially, regimental commanders recommended to the President the names of men, and he awarded appointments as he saw fit. In 1854, regulations were modified to read that the President must seek the advice and consent of the Senate in each case after the nominee successfully passed an examination before a board of officers. This was the first time that "rankers" submitted themselves to the scrutiny of an examining board for qualification to the officer ranks. No records were kept on these examinations until 1878 so there is no known evidence extant to indicated the thoroughness or the severity of the test.<sup>11</sup> In general however, the examination consisted of questions in English Grammar, Arithmetic, Plain and Solid Geometry, Geography, History and the Constitution.<sup>12</sup> This was the system in use during and after the war.

Except during wartime, very few soldiers received such appointments. Strong advocacy of this system came from General August V. Kautz, the

Army's foremost authority on customs and traditions of the service. The former private soldier and a graduate of West Point wrote, "There can be no progress in human nature, in the ranks or out of it, unless there is a hope that time and successful labor will bring its reward."<sup>13</sup> Others did not agree with Kautz. Brevet Lieutenant Colonel Alfred A. Woodhull wrote in his prize essay for The Journal of Military Service Institution, that rankers appointed to officer status often were ignorant, unrefined and sometimes corrupt; they were appointed due to their bravery and not necessarily for their traits of intelligence or moral fiber. "I do not look upon the ranks as the best or even as a good school from which to graduate with a commission." He continued stating that many fine sergeants were thus ruined by promoting them to officer ranks.<sup>14</sup> Woodhull was in the minority; others like Anson Mills, a general officer and former ranker, believed that this system secured the services of the best men and also gave men of little or no influence a chance to attain high rank on an even basis with those appointed due to political patronage.<sup>15</sup>

During the Civil War, the Regular Army increased by eight infantry, one cavalry, and one artillery regiments; one-third of all the Second Lieutenant vacancies in these regiments went to deserving non-commissioned officers.<sup>16</sup> Thereafter all Second Lieutenant vacancies in the Regular Army regiments were to be awarded to rankers.<sup>17</sup> According to General Kautz, the peacetime practice of examining appointees by a board of officers was ignored and men received commissions strictly on the basis of gallantry. Still, he wrote, this was the "surest means for a competent man to enter the army as an officer."<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately bravery by itself was not a foolproof criterion for the proper selection of good leadership material. In 1867, the War Department officially recognized the value of

the experience of non-commissioned officers as good officer material and announced that one-quarter of all annual Second Lieutenant vacancies were to be filled by rankers after the West Point graduating class had received their appointments. Any remaining vacancies were to go to civilians.<sup>19</sup>

The third, and lowest priority, for officer appointments went to men from civilian life. Starting in 1837, the Secretary of War stated that all civilian candidates must receive an examination; ten years later these oral instructions finally were written into a regulation.<sup>20</sup>

Although each man was to receive his examination before a board of officers, it was not until 1866 that the officers of the same arm to which the applicant would serve comprised the membership of the board.<sup>21</sup>

Two-thirds of all officer ranks went to civilians in the newly formed Regular Army regiments at the onset of the Civil War; the remainder went to Regular Army officers except for the grades of Second Lieutenant which went to Regular Army Sergeants. Thus, many former Regular Army officers like Grant and Sherman returned to the uniform with higher rank while many inexperienced civilians entered the Regular Army as senior officers, some as Colonels and Lieutenant Colonels.<sup>22</sup>

In 1866, the Regular Army again expanded and original officer vacancies in the newly organized regiments were filled solely by veterans of at least two years field service. In the cavalry arm, all original First and Second Lieutenant grades went to former officers and enlisted men in the Volunteer Cavalry while the former officers in the Volunteer Cavalry filled two-thirds of the vacancies in the grades of Captain and above; the remainder went to officers of the Regular Army. In the new infantry regiments, all First and Second Lieutenant positions went to former officers and enlisted men who served in any Volunteer arm during the war for

two years. Officers of the Volunteer arms who were eligible could apply for appointments in the grades of Captain and higher; these veterans occupied two-thirds of these positions while Regular Army officers filled the remainder of the positions. Appointments made from the Volunteer arms were given to the States, Territories, and District of Columbia in proportion to the number of troops supplied by them during the war. All officers were to receive an examination before a board of Regular Army officers in the arm of service for which the candidate made application. <sup>23</sup>

The examination administered to the applicants was not difficult. An oral examination was given also by the board however results of this test were not recorded. In some instances applicants received appointments without having taken the required tests. <sup>24</sup> The opportunity for awarding a commission as an item of patronage was great. A letter appearing in an 1866 issue of The Army-Navy Journal protested against this method of selection and cited "political or official patronage" as the prevalent means of selection. <sup>25</sup> Despite the ease of passing the tests, many applicants later changed their minds and refused to join their regiments. By February 6, 1867, a total of 227 appointees absented themselves from their organizations. <sup>26</sup> From August, 1866 to August, 1868, a total of 475 commissions were cancelled or declined by the individual. <sup>27</sup>

It was evident from the many voided commissions, coupled with the remaining unfilled vacancies that the life of a peacetime army officer was not considered an appealing station. Consequently, the War Department initially lowered qualifying standards in 1866, for on October 31, 1867, General Orders Number 93 announced that " a higher standard of qualifications, analogous to that which prevailed before the late war, will in the future be required of all candidates for the appointment of second

lieutenant." The new requirements additionally restricted the applicants to the ages of twenty to twenty-eight years although the two year war service was no longer required.<sup>28</sup> Although fewer men entered the Army through this method, the overall quality improved.

Few officers other than West Pointers possessed more than a high school education. Fewer believed that a college education was necessary for an officer. The most outstanding proponent of college level education for the officer ranks, Professor P. S. Michie of the United States Military, admitted that most educated men believed that highly educated men of arms were not required in this country.<sup>29</sup> The Army's outstanding and outspoken spokesman at this time, General Sherman, a former college professor, never advocated formal college level schooling for his officers. He did urge strongly the professional education and advancement of these men.<sup>30</sup> Under his strong leadership, the Army developed a "post graduate" program for all officers by establishing an Infantry and Cavalry School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and a "school of instruction for drill and practice for Cavalry and Light Artillery" at Fort Riley, Kansas.<sup>31</sup> In 1872, he wrote, "we expect every officer to know theoretically and practically his profession; first the duties pertaining to his immediate office and the one to which he expects to be promoted."<sup>32</sup> Unfortunately, in many cases the officer of the post-war Army believed that his war experiences were sufficient education. One officer described this period as one characterized by little booklearning among officers and "much lack of military study" although the men often reminisced of their battles and campaigns.<sup>33</sup> Instead of formal education, emphasis was placed on such martial virtues as physical strength, self control, industry, practical experience, bravery, honor, pride in the

service, self confidence, boldness, energy and perseverance. Due recognition went to the attributes of intelligence, courtesy, patience, justice and reliability. <sup>34</sup>

Despite the many sugar-coated portrayals of army life presented by contemporary writers, many faults existed in the military system. Briefly these faults contributed to an undertone of lethargy and despairing for reasonable advancement in the minds of some officers. In addition to the patronage system previously discussed, many officers of the line desired to transfer to the staff due to the fact that the staff duties were not arduous and generally were performed at a comfortable post. Promotions were also considered to be more rapid. In the line, a regimental system determined that all promotions through the grade of Captain occurred within the particular regiment. These resulted only when a vacancy existed, generally due to a death, resignation, retirement, or dismissal. Thereafter, a seniority system limited promotions in the grades of Major through Colonel to a particular arm. Further advancement was strictly political. Advancement might be faster in one regiment than another, but never was it considered rapid. This promotion system, built upon seniority and tenure provided "little incentive to ambitious effort".<sup>35</sup> An antiquated retirement system, restricted to no more than seven percent of the officer strength,<sup>36</sup> left many officers on active duty who were incapable of performing routine duties. This inadequate system further stifled advancement.

Many officers suffered disciplinary actions for improper conduct. In a setting where humdrum prevailed, the vices of drinking and gambling became more pronounced and evident in the officer corps. The paucity of adequate diversions coupled with individual lethargy strained many weak

personal traits resulting in harsh disciplinary measures taken by General Courts Martial. For gross, unacceptable behavior, these courts dismissed or cashiered officers from the service; other than forced resignations, no other method existed to weed out undesirable officers. Many officers were thus dishonorably discharged. Regretably, many of these men were later restored to duty due to their influence. In 1868 a published General Order somewhat limited these despised Presidential restorations by requiring reappointment only after Senate conferment.<sup>37</sup> From 1866-1870, a total of 106 officers were convicted and purged from the officer corps. Surprisingly, thirty-nine of these were later restored to active service in good standing.<sup>38</sup>

In summary, the officer ranks were filled from three different sources. The vast majority of these officers entered the postwar Army as civilians although they possessed for the most part, at least two years honorable and faithful service in the Volunteer Army. Because of the urgent need for a large number of officers coupled with difficulty in interesting young men in the military life, high standards for applicants were not prescribed by the War Department. As a result, some officers received commissions who should have been rejected. Although some of these men abruptly departed the service by receiving a General Court Martial and others were forced to resign rather than face a General Court Martial, most of them remained in the service. A feeling of lethargy and indifference developed due to a lack of advancement potential. Such an atmosphere made a desire for professional development extremely difficult. Many officers felt secure in their tenure knowing that little could be done to them short of outright dismissal or cashiering which required conviction by a General Court Martial. To the many good and faithful



officers, these men were a disgrace and a burden who had to be endured because the system could not enforce their proficiency and it could not discard them for failing to meet acceptable standards.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Samuel P. Huntington, The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil Military Relations (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 226-227.

<sup>2</sup>The Army-Navy Journal, May 6, 1876, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup>John Joseph Lenney, Rankers: The Odyssey of the Enlisted Soldier of America and Britain (New York, 1950), p. 30.

<sup>4</sup>Huntington, The Soldier, p. 225.

<sup>5</sup>Charles Robert Kemble, "The Image of the Army Officer: The Nineteenth Century Background," (Unpub. Ph. D. dissertation, The George Washington University, 1969), pp. 2, 30.

<sup>6</sup>Huntington, The Soldier, p. 229.

<sup>7</sup>Colonel Albert G. Brackett, "Our Cavalry: Its Duties, Hardships, and Necessities, at our Frontier Posts," Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States, IV, No. 13 (1883), p. 393.

<sup>8</sup>Lieutenant William E. Birkhimer, The Law of Appointment and Promotion in the Regular Army of the United States (New York, 1880), p. 28.

<sup>9</sup>War Department, Revised Regulations for the Army of the United States, 1861 (Philadelphia, 1862), pp. 11-12. See Appendix B for a summary of post-war appointment sources.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.; Thomas J. Fleming, West Point: The Men and Times of the United States Military Academy (New York, 1969), pp. 98, 112.

<sup>11</sup>Lenney, Rankers, pp. 100, 104; Birkhimer, The Law, p. 29.

<sup>12</sup>Brigadier General August V. Kautz, Customs of Service for Non-commissioned Officers and Soldiers, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, 1865), p. 189.

<sup>13</sup>Lenney, Rankers, p. 141.

<sup>14</sup>Lieutenant Colonel A. A. Woodhull, "The Enlisted Soldier," Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States, VIII, No. 29 (1887), pp. 59-60.

<sup>15</sup>Brigadier General Anson Mills, My Story, 2nd ed. (Washington, 1921), p. 375.

<sup>16</sup>General Orders Number 16, Adjutant General's Office, May 4, 1861.

- <sup>17</sup>General Orders Number 101, Adjutant General's Office, November 20, 1861.
- <sup>18</sup>Kautz, Customs for NCO, pp. 190-191.
- <sup>19</sup>General Orders Number 93, Adjutant General's Office, October 31, 1867.
- <sup>20</sup>Birkhimer, The Law, p. 29.
- <sup>21</sup>War Department, Revised Regulations, 1861, p. 12; General Orders Number 56, Adjutant General's Office, August 1, 1866.
- <sup>22</sup>General Orders Number 16, Adjutant General's Office, March 4, 1861; General Orders Number 33, Adjutant General's Office, June 18, 1861. See Appendix C for a random sample of these appointment sources.
- <sup>23</sup>General Orders Number 56, Adjutant General's Office, August 1, 1866.
- <sup>24</sup>Birkhimer, The Law, p. 29; see Appendix D for a typical written test administered to applicants.
- <sup>25</sup>The Army-Navy Journal, October 27, 1866, p. 154.
- <sup>26</sup>United States Senate, 39th Congress, 2nd Session, "Officers Who Have Not Joined Their Regiments," Senate Executive Document Number 21, 2 Vols., (Washington, 1867), Vol. II, pp. 1-6.
- <sup>27</sup>The Adjutant General, Official Army Register for 1866 (Washington, 1866), pp. 96-102; Official Army Register for 1867 (Washington, 1867), pp. 118-138; Official Army Register for 1868 (Washington, 1868), pp. 134-139; Official Army Register for August, 1868 (Washington, 1868), pp. 134-136.
- <sup>28</sup>General Orders Number 93, Adjutant General's Office, October 31, 1867.
- <sup>29</sup>Professor P. S. Michie, "Education in its Relation to the Military Profession," Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States, I, No. 2 (1880), p. 154.
- <sup>30</sup>Russel F. Weigley, History of the United States Army (New York, 1967), p. 273.
- <sup>31</sup>Frederic Louis Huidekoper, The Military Unpreparedness of the United States (New York, 1915), p. 152.
- <sup>32</sup>The Army-Navy Journal, December 7, 1872, pp. 264-265.
- <sup>33</sup>Captain Ulysses Grant Mc Alexander, History of the Thirteenth Regiment, United States Infantry (Fort Mc Dowell, 1905), p. 76.

<sup>34</sup> Captain August V. Kautz, Customs of Service for Officers of the Army as Derived from Law and Regulations as Practised in the United States Army (Philadelphia, 1868), pp. 14-16.

<sup>35</sup> Mills, My Story, p. 362.

<sup>36</sup> War Department, "Report of the Secretary of War," Washington, November 20, 1869, Report of the Secretary of War, 1869 (Washington, 1869), p. 4.

<sup>37</sup> General Orders Number 58, Adjutant General's Office, July 31, 1868; The New York Times, March 1, 1869, p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> The Adjutant General, Official Army Register for 1866, pp. 96-102; Official Army Register for 1867, pp. 118-138; Official Army Register for 1868, pp. 134-139; Official Army Register for August, 1868, pp. 134-136; Official Army Register for January, 1869, pp. 197-198; Official Army Register for September, 1869, pp. 201-206; Official Army Register for January, 1870, pp. 201-202; Official Army Register for January, 1871, pp. 186-194; see also individual entries of each officer in Heitman, Historical Register, I, pp. 149-1069.

## CHAPTER III

### THE MOVE TO CONSOLIDATE

In 1867, both houses of Congress started discussing the possibility of reducing the size of the Military Peace Establishment. Senator Lot M. Morrill of Maine submitted the only formal resolution in either house calling for an immediate reduction of the standing force; the proposal was referred to the Committee on Military Affairs and the Militia where it soon died.<sup>1</sup> This initial attempt was the forerunner of many that were to be offered over the next three years.

In the meantime, Napoleon withdrew French troops from Mexico and Maximilian faced a firing squad in June, 1867.<sup>2</sup> The public evidently thought that the elimination of the foreign threat was insufficient justification for a reduction because many troops still were needed in the South and along the international borders. General Grant voiced his protest against a reduction, citing a need for the protection of railroad construction crews and a need for troops to monitor the ever dangerous Indians on the frontier.<sup>3</sup>

The history of the Army was one of constant expansion and contraction. Serious threats were countered with an increase in the size of the military forces. Sometimes this expansion consisted of increasing the size of the Regular Army only. Most times an accompanying call up of the militia took place. Once the threat was eliminated, regiments in excess of peacetime requirements were disbanded and the officers and men released

to civilian pursuits.<sup>4</sup> Strangely, no satisfactory method had been devised to dispose fairly of the excess officers. In the reorganization of 1775, General George Washington was directed to select those who should remain in service. He complained that "many deserving officers were thrown out, while others, with more political influence but worthless men, were retained."<sup>5</sup> Consequently, when the reorganization and consolidations of 1778, 1780, and 1782 created an officer surplus, a new system was tried, one allowing the regimental officers to decide who should be retained; in cases where agreement was impossible, the junior officer retired.<sup>6</sup> This system was equally impractical. Almost a century later, there still was no just solution.

The second session of the Fortieth Congress opened the new demands for reduction. These demands were specific and well presented by leading legislators. Perhaps General Grant anticipated these demands, for under the expandable Army clause, he reduced the number of privates in each infantry company to fifty with the reduction to take effect "naturally", that is, by attrition.<sup>7</sup> Not satisfied with this gesture, Congressman James G. Blaine, chairman of the powerful Military Appropriations Committee, in February, 1868, submitted a proviso to the Appropriations Bill calling for a gradual reduction to twenty-five infantry, seven cavalry and five artillery regiments with the Secretary of War consolidating the regiments as soon as possible. Until that time, no new commissions were to be awarded except to graduating West Point cadets although promotions would be allowed to continue.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, Senator Henry Wilson of Massachusetts, chairman of the Senate's military committee, introduced a bill for the gradual reduction of the Army.<sup>9</sup>

Blaine's proviso did not pass the House of Representatives, primarily

because, he admitted, the Appropriation Bill was not the proper instrument to force a reduction. Others, such as Congressman John A. Logan, rejected the bill because there was no provision for a proportional reduction in the strength of the officer corps.<sup>10</sup> The Wilson bill eventually passed the Senate but was not put into law. Like the Blaine proposal, it did not provide for the involuntary release of officers but sought to reduce the excess numbers by attrition and restricting new commissions to cadets only.<sup>11</sup>

Congress made no new attempts to reduce the Army for several months. The reasons for this are unstated but perhaps Congressional energies turned to the impeachment proceedings, Reconstruction and the readmission of the seceded states. In June, 1868, Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, and North and South Carolina regained admission to the Union with only Texas, Mississippi, and Virginia remaining "seceded."<sup>12</sup> It is probable that many of the lawmakers, and citizens alike, believed troops were no longer required in the South. At any rate, the beginning of summer found the impeachment proceedings settled and most of the Southern states once again a part of the Union. Louder calls for retrenchment and economy were voiced in the chambers of both Houses and in the newspapers.

On July 10, 1868, Congressman James A. Garfield of Ohio introduced a House resolution to "reduce and fix the Military Peace Establishment."<sup>13</sup> Specifically, this resolution provided for a reduction of 20,000 men with the new organization consisting of forty-one regiments. About one quarter of the officer strength, less than 800 men, were to be sent home on half pay, but as soon as vacancies occurred, they would be reassigned to new regiments.<sup>14</sup> Senator Wilson reported a substitute bill from the

Committee on Military Affairs calling for a forty-two regiment force totalling 30,000 men. Senator James R. Doolittle of Wisconsin attempted to further reduce the Army's strength to 20,000 men, but Wilson was able to thwart this proposal.<sup>15</sup> Both Garfield's and Wilson's bills failed in their respective houses as the former was overloaded with amendments and unrecognizable from the original proposal,<sup>16</sup> while the latter failed because one section of it pertained to arming the militia and no agreement could be reached on this sensitive subject.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the fact that the Congressmen and Senators could not agree on the method of reduction and numbers of troops to be discharged, all officials appeared to be in favor of cutting the size of the Regular Army and thereby reducing the expenditure of public funds.<sup>18</sup> Thus far the War Department did not deem it necessary to justify the strength of the Military Peace Establishment for Congress' clumsy attempts at retrenchment had easily failed, probably due to their attention being drawn to other political ventures. The Army soon would find renewed attempts more bitterly fought by Congressional opponents.

Between the second and third sessions of the Fortieth Congress, several important events occurred which had significant impact on the Army. General Grant won the Presidential election and was succeeded as Commanding General by William T. Sherman. Sherman was apolitical and always attempted to avoid politics; he also firmly believed that none of his officers should utter political statements.<sup>19</sup> His colleague, General John M. Schofield, temporarily serving as Secretary of War, held a different and more practical view in this matter. Schofield recognized what was happening in Congress, and in November, 1868, he attempted to warn Sherman that the Army had to unite whenever it dealt with Congress.<sup>20</sup> General Sherman



needed to collaborate with the War Department Staff to defeat Congressional actions to reduce the Army. Unfortunately there was nothing Sherman could do once reduction debates were resumed in February, 1869, for he did not become General of the Army until after Grant vacated that office in March, 1869. President-elect Grant was probably too preoccupied with his future duties to become intimately involved in the reduction debates. However both he and General Schofield indicated that reductions could not be instituted until Indian hostilities on the frontier had ended.<sup>21</sup> Finally, Congressional interest in the Army was further heightened with the testimonies of senior Army officers appearing before Garfield's Military Affairs Committee, commenting on the feasibility and desirability of redesigning the channels of command and accomplishing consolidation of the staff.<sup>22</sup>

While these testimonies were in progress, Senator Wilson introduced a new bill to reduce the number of infantry regiments by consolidating the forty-five regiments to thirty. The reduction would be achieved by "casualty", that is, by attrition. Officers would be reassigned as vacancies occurred.<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile, the House of Representatives revived its debates when Congressman Blaine spoke again of reducing the Army to a total of thirty regiments, although he naively felt that the officer corps should be maintained at the sixty regiment level. He further believed that Congressman Garfield, as head of the Military Affairs Committee, should lead the fight for reduction. Congressman Garfield favored consolidation but balked at reducing the officer corps. He responded that although the officer strength could be reduced, it was not Congress' job to do it. He favored the "by absorption" method (attrition) and the cessation of all promotions and appointments until consolidation was complete.

Congressman John A. Logan jumped into the debate, announcing that proposals for officer reductions by the absorption method were like last sessions' reduction bills, all "humbug". He believed that a proportional amount of officers should be mustered out. After much debate, and efficient prodding by Logan, it was agreed that Garfield should introduce an amendment to the Military Appropriation Bill, despite the conflicting wishes of the head of that committee. <sup>24</sup>

The following day the Military Affairs Committee met for three hours and agreed that the draft amendment should recommend a reduction of fifteen infantry regiments; the cavalry and artillery regiments were not to be touched. <sup>25</sup> That afternoon Garfield reported the amendment to the Appropriation Bill calling for a reduction of 10,000 enlisted men and 670 officers, all by attrition. The reorganized Army would retain the current cavalry and artillery regiments but the new authorization would be for only thirty infantry regiments. Consolidation would probably be complete in two years as no new appointments were to be made. <sup>26</sup>

A flurry of amendments were introduced by members of Congress. The most damaging to the Army was that proposed by Congressman Benjamin F. Butler of Massachusetts, an outspoken opponent of the Regular Army. He proposed that the Regular Army consist of 25,000 men assigned to twenty-four infantry regiments, (including three Veteran Reserve regiments of invalids), six cavalry regiments and three artillery regiments with all unassigned officers to be mustered out promptly. He stated that this bill would save the treasury \$35,456,000. <sup>27</sup> Congressman Grenville M. Dodge of Iowa proposed a reduction of fifteen infantry regiments only, some consolidations in the staff and stopping all appointments until consolidation was completed. <sup>28</sup>

Many citizens became involved with the problem and wrote letters to newspapers about the reduction plans. Most writers prefaced their views with laudatory remarks about the debt of gratitude due the Army; they did not want to destroy the Army but saw no need to maintain a large peacetime force when Reconstruction was progressing well and the Indian wars on the plains appearing to have subsided. The officer strength should be reduced by "casualty", or attrition, system as it was the most just way to dismiss men who had served many years in the service.<sup>29</sup>

Butler's continual, blistering attacks on the Army soon seriously damaged his proposal. The influential New York Times adamantly opposed this plan stating that the proposal amounted "almost to annihilation."<sup>30</sup> The New York Tribune however, supported the Butler plan and stated that immediate muster out of the surplus officers was necessary or the Army would be turned "into a gigantic soup house."<sup>31</sup> Most Congressmen, and the public, appeared to approach the problem with moderation.<sup>32</sup>

Once again Congressmen Blaine rose to the debate, proposing as a compromise, a substitute for Butler's and Dodge's bills. His plan now called for an organization of twenty infantry, five cavalry and five artillery regiments with no new commissions being awarded until consolidation was completed. Eventually Garfield and Blaine persevered and the final recommendation was Garfield's plan as modified by Blaine.<sup>33</sup>

On March 3, 1869, the Regular Army was reorganized. Section III effected the officer corps and stated that there were to be no commissions, promotions, or enlistments in any infantry regiment until consolidations reduced the infantry regiments to twenty-five. The Secretary of War was "directed to consolidate the infantry regiments as rapidly as the requirements of the public service and the reduction of the number of officers will permit."<sup>34</sup> This last clause created much confusion

in the Army for although outwardly giving the Secretary of War discretionary powers, in reality it severely restricted these powers. Heretofore, infantry soldiers enlisted for three years with most of the infantrymen entering service in 1866 and 1867. While waiting for officer reductions to take place by attrition over a period of many months, infantry regiments would soon be skeletonized as no new enlistments were allowed until after consolidation. Many frontier forts would have to be abandoned. Secretary of War Schofield thus opted for immediate consolidation<sup>35</sup> and one week later announced in general orders his implementation of the consolidation; several days later, specific details were published governing the methods to accomplish consolidation.<sup>36</sup>

Thus after much bitter debate, the Regular Army was reduced by consolidating the infantry regiments. (see Appendix E for a recapitulation). There appeared to be no overt attempt by the War Department to prevent this reduction other than the brief statements of Generals Grant and Schofield that reduction was not possible due to the Indian wars. This feeble argument vanished after a successful winter campaign. Both Houses quickly seized the opportunity and skillfully succeeded in significantly reducing the Army's size. Exhibiting restraint, Congress voted down a "Butlerian frenzy to hack the Army in pieces."<sup>37</sup> Commenting on the passage of the bill, The New York Times, probably echoed the view of many Americans when it wrote:

Thus, quietly, economically, and without injustice, the important change will be effected, and the natural casualties of service--by death, resignations, and dismissals--will soon have brought all the remaining supernumerary officers into service. 38

In this respect, The Times' oversimplified and unrealistically reported Congress' serious omission. By not specifically mentioning what was

to be done with the infantry officers now without regimental billets, Garfield and Blaine erred in estimating true Congressional feelings. Few legislators, even the war veterans, would long tolerate hundreds of unemployed public servants on the payroll. With no united and vocal front representing the Army, further attempts to withstand Congressional pressures would probably be fruitless.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>United States Senate, 40th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Journal (Washington, 1867), p. 187.

<sup>2</sup>Colonel R. Ernest DuPuy, The Compact History of the United States Army, rev. ed. (New York, 1901), p. 309.

<sup>3</sup>The Army-Navy Journal, November 30, 1867, p. 229, December 7, 1867, p. 252.

<sup>4</sup>Ganoe, The History, passim, 137-230

<sup>5</sup>Birkhimer, The Law, pp. 19-21.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>7</sup>General Orders Number 101, Adjutant General's Office, November 26, 1867,

<sup>8</sup>United States House of Representatives, 40th Congress, 2nd Session, House Journal (Washington, 1868), p. 311; The New York Times, February 7, 1868, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup>United States Senate, 40th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Journal (Washington, 1868), pp. 152, 496-497.

<sup>10</sup>The New York Times, February 6, 1868, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup>The New York Times, February 19, 1868, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup>Sefton, Army and Reconstruction, p. 186.

<sup>13</sup>United States House of Representatives, 40th Congress, 2nd Session, House Journal (Washington, 1868), p. 1038; The New York Times, July 11, 1868, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 4; July 12, 1868, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup>The New York Times, July 21, 1868, p. 1; United States Senate, 40th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Journal, pp. 704-705; United States House of Representatives, 40th Congress, 2nd Session, House Journal, p. 656.

<sup>16</sup>The New York Times, February 6, 1869, p. 1.

- <sup>17</sup> The New York Times, July 21, 1868, p. 1.
- <sup>18</sup> The New York Times, July 23, 1868, p. 4.
- <sup>19</sup> Huntington, The Soldier, pp. 230-232.
- <sup>20</sup> Richard Allen Andrews, "Years of Frustration: William T. Sherman, The Army, and Reform, 1869-1883." (Unpub. Ph. D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1969), p. 10.
- <sup>21</sup> War Department, "Report of the Secretary of War," Washington, November 20, 1868, Report of the Secretary of War, 1868, p. 1, The New York Times, February 6, 1869, p. 1; The Army-Navy Journal, December 12, 1868, p. 265.
- <sup>22</sup> United States House of Representatives, 40th Congress, 3rd Session, "Army Organization," House Report Number 33 (4 Vols; Washington, 1869), Vol. I, pp. 1-129.
- <sup>23</sup> The New York Times, February 3, 1869, p. 1.
- <sup>24</sup> The New York Times, February 6, 1869, p. 1.
- <sup>25</sup> The New York Times, February 7, 1869, p. 1.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, February 8, 1869, p. 1.
- <sup>27</sup> The New York Times, February 18, 1869, p. 1.
- <sup>28</sup> The New York Times, February 19, 1869, p. 1.
- <sup>29</sup> See for example The New York Times, February 5, 1869, p. 4, February 8, 1869, p. 4, February 11, 1869, p. 4, February 23, 1869, p. 4.
- <sup>30</sup> The New York Times, February 8, 1869, p. 1.
- <sup>31</sup> The New York Times, February 23, 1869, p. 1.
- <sup>32</sup> The New York Times, February 18, 1869, p. 1.
- <sup>33</sup> The New York Times, February 19, 1869, p. 1, February 20, 1869, p. 1.
- <sup>34</sup> United States Congress, 40th Congress, 3rd Session, Appendix to the Congressional Globe (Washington, 1869), Chapter CXXIV, p. 319.
- <sup>35</sup> War Department, "Report of the General of the Army," Washington, November 20, 1869, Report of the Secretary of War, 1869 (Washington, 1869), pp. 27-28.
- <sup>36</sup> General Orders Number 16, Adjutant General's Office, March 10, 1869; General Orders Number 17, Adjutant General's Office, March 15, 1869.
- <sup>37</sup> The New York Times, February 23, 1869, p. 4.

<sup>38</sup>The New York Times, March 19, 1869, p. 4.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE CONGRESSIONAL ACTIONS OF 1870

The Act of March 3, 1869, caused 622 infantry officers to be rendered supernumeraries.<sup>1</sup> Consolidation was made equitably with the physically qualified senior company officers in each grade of the combined old regiments becoming the company officers of the new regiment; junior officers were sent home to await orders. Assuming that every officer desired regimental duty, the implementing general order announced that officers need not apply for active service as they would be contacted when a vacancy occurred. Field officers were to be selected by Army Headquarters.<sup>2</sup> Later, officers who desired transfers to the artillery and cavalry were encouraged to submit their requests to Army Headquarters.<sup>3</sup> General Anson Mills, then assigned to the Eighteenth Infantry Regiment, humorously recalled the consolidation of his regiment in April, 1869, and the extraordinary efforts taken by the officers to be among those retained on duty. He wrote, "Half the officers of these regiments were on sick leave or detached service, but when it was announced that the officers retained would be the best suited for service, nearly every ill officer in each regiment immediately recovered!"<sup>4</sup> Apparently Mills and other officers did not truly believe that all supernumerary officers would be assigned as vacancies occurred for many believed that "The hostile attitude of General Butler and other late volunteer generals who are now in power, and who evidently bear a grudge

against the Army" would call for further cuts in the officer corps.<sup>5</sup>

By November, 1869, the Secretary of War reported that most of the supernumerary officers were performing some kind of military duty. Only 156 officers remained home "awaiting orders" but at least thirty-five of these were unfit and of no value to the Army and ninety-six other officers were home by request for personal or business reasons.<sup>6</sup> By January 1, 1870, only 500 officers remained as supernumeraries with 338 of these men performing other military duties.<sup>7</sup> The Army-Navy Journal estimated that two years would be required to exhaust completely the list and therefore no Congressional legislation would be necessary to involuntarily discharge the excess officers.<sup>8</sup>

Both the Secretary of War and the Commanding General of the Army were skeptical of Congress sitting back and allowing natural causes to reduce the size of the officer corps. Secretary of War William W. Belknap twice referred to a possible reduction in his annual report and spoke of equitably reducing each arm of service rather than allowing the infantry to bear the brunt of the cut backs.<sup>9</sup> General Sherman presumed Congressional action "inevitable" and also recommended that "after Congress has enacted the necessary laws" a board of general officers be established to transfer the infantry officers as they saw fit and create an entirely new supernumerary list from among all three arms, with the excess being disbanded. He also felt that these ninety-six officers who requested to remain home awaiting orders should be among the first to be discharged.<sup>10</sup> Both Belknap and Sherman accurately predicted the mood of Congress, for despite the Fortieth Congress' willingness to reduce officer strength by attrition, the new Forty-first Congress was in no such mood.

To soften the blow, the Army sought to rid itself of inefficient

and dissipated officers. Commanders had previously been reminded to report the names of the officers who possessed "vicious habits" and order them to appear before "Retiring Boards" with documented evidence to substantiate their being released in a "wholly retired" status due to their own misconduct.<sup>11</sup> This release in effect placed the officer on the retired list for only one year with pay and allowances. After one year, his name was removed from the retired list and he received no more retired benefits.<sup>12</sup> Officers were also offered the opportunity to "take their chances" on consolidation and go home and await instructions. Commanders of the cavalry and artillery regiments were to report the names of **all** absent officers.<sup>13</sup> These orders accomplished little except to identify those officers who did not want to work.

Beginning in December, 1869, both houses of Congress actively campaigned to reduce government spending; tied in with these economic savings was the desire to reduce again the size of the Army. Because there had been a recent reduction in the number of regiments, initial major efforts were targeted towards eliminating the excess officers, reducing the total officer authorization, and reducing the number of enlisted men in each company. Other sections of the bills proposed to decrease the pay of the Army. Debates raged concerning the proper ratio of officers to enlisted men and the proper number of general officers desired in the Regular Army.<sup>14</sup> Although these areas did not directly effect the supernumerary list, a feeling of apprehension was created in Army circles. All of these matters came to a head in the spring and summer of 1870 in the Forty-first Congress.

Senators Henry Wilson and J. C. Abbott of North Carolina presented reduction bills and led the new fight in the Senate for retrenchment.

Wilson introduced his bill (S 348) on December 17, 1869, to "provide for the reduction of officers of the Army of the United States." <sup>15</sup> His proposal concerned itself only with the infantry officers on the supernumerary list and sought to encourage and accept all voluntary resignations of infantry officers while resorting to compulsory discharges as a last measure only. The bill also provided for a scaled severance pay plan based on the number of years active service. <sup>16</sup>

The second Senate bill (S 404), was introduced by Abbott on January 18, 1870, and provided for the standardization of all companies in the arms, the cessation of all promotions or appointments in the infantry until all unattached officers were assigned to vacancies, the halting of pay to any unattached officer and a scaled severance pay plan. <sup>17</sup>

Suprisingly, recommendations similar to Abbott's had appeared in The Army-Navy Journal the preceeding month indicating that retaining the unattached officers at home without pay was far better than ungraciously discharging these men. The article asserted that stopping all promotions and appointments would give impetus to a rapid exhaustion of the supernumerary list, estimating it to take several months. <sup>18</sup> An officer at home awaiting orders responded to this article stating that undue hardship would be imposed on the unattached officer as most could not afford to go without pay for three months. Junior officers were forced to seek employment while awaiting regimental billets. However they faced the probablility of being ordered to duty and being sent home again the following month. <sup>19</sup>

Both bills were sent to the Senate's Committee on Military Affairs. While these were deliberated members of the House of Representatives actively, and in great length, voiced their views on further reductions.

Congressman Logan, the leader of this new fight, introduced two bills in the House on January 13, 1870.<sup>20</sup> The first bill (HR 805) provided for a board of officers to screen officers on the supernumerary list and to recommend those to be retained. These officers would be reassigned to vacancies over a six month period; thereafter any remainder were to be mustered out. All officers not initially recommended were to be mustered out immediately, all officers so mustered out to receive one year's pay and all allowances. The plan also called for an increase in the retired list to 250 officers, the discontinuance of the offices of General and Lieutenant General and a new Army pay scale.<sup>21</sup>

The second bill (HR 806) contained provisions recommended by the War Department. This was similar to Logan's former measure but did not contain the provisions for a new pay scale. The additional features of HR 806 recommended standardization of all companies in the three arms with each company containing four officers versus the current three officers, recomposition of the supernumerary list with the Secretary of War nominating those to be made excess and the immediate repeal of the law prohibiting new appointments and promotions in the staff.<sup>22</sup>

The New York Times indicated that Sherman was reputed to be the author of the latter bill.<sup>23</sup> This was not true for after the submission of these bills, Sherman wrote to his friend General Philip H. Sheridan, informing him that Colonel Joseph Holt, the Judge Advocate General, had written the second bill. He advised Sheridan to correspond with Logan to "make your opinion felt."<sup>24</sup> Both Sherman and Sheridan disliked the War Department's version of the bill as they favored reduction of the officer strength by attrition and let their opinions be known on this point.<sup>25</sup> It also appeared unlikely that Sherman would favor a War Depart-

ment proposal for renewing promotions and appointments within the staff without consequent renewals in the line.

Congressman Henry W. Slocum of New York also submitted a reduction bill (HR 863) a few days later.<sup>26</sup> Although similar to the War Department's bill, its significant features called for standardization of each line company with each company having four officers; however, instead of twelve companies per regiment, the bill provided for only ten companies per regiment. It allowed Department Commanders to submit the names of at least ten percent of their line and staff officer strength who were not adaptable to military life. These officers, along with those on the supernumerary list, were to be examined by boards of officers who would recommend all officers worthy of retention. The retained officers were to be reassigned as vacancies occurred while the others were to be mustered out with one year's pay. Other measures included discontinuing the office of General of the Army and repealing the law prohibiting appointments and promotions in the staff. Once absorption of the new supernumerary list was completed, the similar ban on promotions and appointments in the line was to be lifted.<sup>27</sup>

All of the bills went to the Committee of Military Affairs where they were considered; in the meantime the Senate's Military Committee discussed their two proposals. It was apparent that the major thrust of all of the bills in both houses was the disposition of the supernumeraries. Certain bills sought to provide vacancies by expanding the retired list, (both Logan and Slocum bills), and increasing by one First Lieutenant, the number of officers in each company, (War Department and Slocum bills). Expanding the retired list would create vacancies for seventy-five officers<sup>28</sup> while assigning two First Lieutenants to each company would create

an additional 470 vacancies in a twelve company regiment or an additional 150 vacancies in a ten company regiment.<sup>29</sup> Only Logan's personal bill called for involuntary releases.

The New York Times accurately predicted that none of these measures would succeed as both Congress and the people were not in the mood. "Decrease not increase, is the watchword of the hour." The newspaper favored Senator Wilson's bill, calling it "liberal and just."<sup>30</sup> Unfortunately Wilson's bill only considered infantry officers and therefore was unfair to officers in that arm. Abbott's bill appeared to have never received serious attention as it was never mentioned again; Slocum's and the War Department's bills also faded and were forgotten.

After a few days deliberation, Congressman Logan on January 28, 1870, presented a new bill drafted by the Military Committee. It became known as the Military Committee bill (HR 987).<sup>31</sup> The significant provisions of this bill provided for the creation of a five man board of officers to examine into the fitness of all Army officers in the grade of Colonel and below and to recommend all who should be retained. Meanwhile, Departmental Commanders and chiefs of the staff sections would recommend to the same board all officers not suited to the service. The board would then consider these men and report to the President all recommendations for retention. Those determined to be unfit, and approved by the President, were to be honorably mustered out with one year's pay and allowances. The President would assign, transfer or appoint those officers recommended for retention. If any officers remained unattached six months after the bill's passage, they too would be honorably mustered out with one year's pay and allowances. Other sections of the bill provided for the discontinuance of the positions of General and

Lieutenant General, the reduction of one Major General and two Brigadier General positions, the downgrading of the rank of the chief of each staff section to Colonel, increasing the retired list to 250 officers, the Secretary of War assuming all duties pertaining to Indian affairs and assigning Army officers to Indian agencies and a new military pay scale. <sup>32</sup>

Editorials in the New York Times and Army-Navy Journal, declared that summarily releasing officers was unjust and cruel; attrition was the only fair method. Letters appearing in the newspapers recommended using unattached officers in other government positions while some others doubted that the majority of the public demanded the muster out. <sup>33</sup> On March 10, 1870, Congressman Logan adequately defended his bill in Congress pointing out that the need for involuntary releases was not a novel idea but had been employed in this country for years. He stressed that most of the officers were young enough to start a new life; a year's pay and allowances would adequately assist them in their new ventures. The retired list was expanded primarily to take care of the wounded and handicapped officers still on active service. <sup>34</sup> For more than two hours Logan spoke in support of his committee's bill. At the end of his speech the House considered the bill section by section. The bill was agreed to except that portion pertaining to the Secretary of War assuming Indian affairs duties was deleted. <sup>35</sup> The next day it was sent to the Senate, read for the first time and then passed to Wilson's Committee on Military Affairs. <sup>36</sup>

At Senator Wilson's request, General Sherman provided him a written opinion of the House Military Committee Bill on March 23, 1870. Wilson then had this letter published in newspapers. Much of the letter pertained to the proper officer-enlisted ratios and disagreements with Logan's sta-



tistics presented to Congress on March 10, 1870 while other comments were offered on the proposed pay scale. Sherman favored the proposal for increasing the retired list but saw no reason to force out any officers. Due to the cessation of all appointments, 105 Second Lieutenant positions and sixty-six staff positions were empty. These could be filled easily by allowing two First Lieutenants to each company and opening promotions to the staff vacancies. Expanding the retired list would absorb additional officers leaving about 235 unattached. Sherman thought the Army could rid itself of at least 100 unfit officers and thus the few remaining officers would be gone within a year due to natural causes. <sup>37</sup>

Evidently dissatisfied with the House version, Senator Wilson proposed a substitute bill (S 705) to "reduce the number of officers and enlisted men in the Army, and to fix the pay of the officers."<sup>38</sup> The sections of this bill were liberal and much more lenient on the officers than any other proposed to date although it did recommend a 10,000 man cut in strength. Some of Sherman's suggestions were embodied in the bill. The principal features of this bill proposed a new total strength of 25,000 men, an incentive to obtain voluntary resignations from officers by offering a sliding scale severance pay as recommended by Senator Abbott, a provision to allow officers to request retirement after thirty years service, a new retired list of 300 officers, discontinuing the grades of General and Lieutenant General and decreasing the strengths of Major Generals by one and Brigadier General by two, the constitution of a five man board of officers to examine the cases of officers, submitted by Departmental Commanders, whom they felt were unfit for their duties. The Secretary of War would discharge those officers recommended by the board, providing them with six months severance pay. The bill

further proposed the use of unattached First Lieutenants to fill Second Lieutenant vacancies, using unattached infantry officers to fill vacancies in other arms and the staff until the supernumerary officers were absorbed, the sending home of all unattached officers on half-pay to await orders, the dropping from the rolls for desertion of all officers absent without leave for three months, the resumption of promotions and appointments in the staff and a new pay scale. <sup>39</sup>

This Senate substitute was referred to the Senate Military Committee where it was considered along with the House Military Bill. After one month's consideration the latter bill was again read in the Senate with a Senate amendment. The amendment was almost similar to Wilson's substitute bill (S 705) except that the section providing for six month severance pay was changed to read one year's severance pay; a few other minor proposals were added. <sup>40</sup> Again the bill was sent back and debated. On May 12, 1870, the Senate passed a somewhat different version after a stiff fight. <sup>41</sup> Senator Wilson wanted to propose a complete substitute for the House Military Bill as he felt it most impractical to create a board of officers to examine the fitness of all Army officers below the rank of Brigadier General; such a measure, he felt, would take about two years to accomplish. He adamantly opposed forced releases indicating that many of the officers removed would be wounded veterans of long service. He believed a 25,000 man force was adequate for the nation's needs; besides, about 18,000 men were due for separation in nine months. A reduction would save the treasury about \$6,500,000. <sup>42</sup> Senator Samuel C. Pomeroy of Kansas favored a 30,000 man force and another Senator suggested that the term "unfit" not be construed to mean an officer injured or wounded in the line of duty; both of these proposals were adopted as

was a measure providing that no officer would be forced out for unfitness without receiving a hearing before the board of officers.<sup>43</sup> Surprisingly, all provisions for a new pay scale were eliminated.<sup>44</sup>

The House of Representatives predictably rejected the Senate's measures and recommended the establishment of a conference committee between the two bodies.<sup>45</sup> The House selected Logan, Slocum and James S. Negley of Pennsylvania to represent them while the Senate chose Wilson, Abbott and Oliver P. Morton of Indiana.<sup>46</sup> Meanwhile, Wilson wrote Logan to delay any committee actions while he departed the capital to be with his dying wife.<sup>47</sup>

While Wilson was away, Logan obediently honored the request. During this time senator Abbott left Washington and Congressman Logan and Slocum were instructed to go to West Point as members of a Congressional Committee. Slocum dutifully departed but Logan remained in the District. On Senator Wilson's return he hastily gathered the remaining members and succeeded in getting all four members present to agree to a bill similar to HR 987. The House overwhelmingly passed the bill.<sup>48</sup>

General Sherman was despondent over these turn of events. He sadly believed that the Senate would pass the new measure and that President Grant would approve it. He vowed he would make no further attempts to oppose reduction measures as he thought they would be futile. He was at a loss about what to do and announced that he would await developments passively.<sup>49</sup> Even when the Conference Committee Bill bogged down in the Senate in mid-June due to Senate indignation over Logan's actions, Sherman remained dejected and still believed "it will pass in some form at the close of the Session and then in as bad as form as possible."<sup>50</sup> On July 6, 1870, he was still lamenting about his status as General of

the Army and wrote Sheridan that "You and I will be sacrificed." <sup>51</sup>

There was no doubt that Sherman's depressed state robbed the Army of a spokesman which it sorely needed. His abandoning the role as leader of the officer corps and allowing himself to wallow in melancholia must have alarmed Sheridan. There was no positive indication that the rest of the officer corps knew of his despondency although the Army-Navy Journal published little information concerning these final Senate debates, a sharp departure from its extensive coverage heretofore.

On July 7, 1870, the Committee Conference Bill passed the Senate by a vote of twenty-nine to fifteen; <sup>52</sup> no changes were made to the bill which became a law on July 15, 1870. The salient sections of this law provided for a 30,000 man standing force, an inducement to obtain voluntary resignations of officers by paying them one year's pay and allowances, a voluntary retirement option for officers with thirty years service, an increase in the retired list to 300, the discontinuance of the offices of General and Lieutenant General and a decrease in the grades Major General by one and Brigadier General by two, the establishment of a five man board of officers to conduct hearings on officers who have been nominated by the General of the Army and Department Commanders, via the Secretary of War, as unfit from causes other than disabilities incurred in line of duty. On the board's recommendation, the President would discharge these men with one year's pay. A new supernumerary list was to be composed of all officers, attached or unattached; any vacancy created prior to January 1, 1871, would be filled by a supernumerary. All officers still on the supernumerary list after January 1, 1871, would be mustered out with one year's pay and allowances. Any First Lieutenants or higher ranking officers on the supernumerary list could volunteer to

fill Second Lieutenant vacancies but they must agree to revert in rank. Additional sections announced the repeal of the ban on promotions and appointments, the removal from the rolls of all officers absent without leave and a new pay and allowance scale. 53

The work left undone by the Fortieth Congress now was complete. The early proposals of Senators Wilson and Abbott, Congressman Slocum and the War Department were lenient as compared to the ever increasing severity of the resolutions recommended in the spring. The Senate differed from the House of Representatives because they favored reduction by attrition rather than enforced master outs. For some unknown reason, Senator Wilson's substitute bill (S 705) provided for a reduction in the Army's total strength while the House sought to alter the strength by fixing the number of companies in each regiment. Perhaps Wilson rightfully viewed fixing the internal organization of the Army to be an improper duty of Congress. At any rate, the Army's strength was reduced by about 5,000 men. The expansion of the retired list was a blessing to the Army; the new maximum limit of 300 officers must have surprised everyone and it afforded many handicapped officers a chance to retire immediately instead of waiting for a retired officer to die.

The creation of a board of officers to determine fitness of certain officers was a safeguard to prevent possible abuses and favoritism within the Army; as Congress was responsible for appointing most of these officers, the lawmakers did have some interest in the matter. Despite the high handed manner in which Logan employed getting "his" bill through the House, he did cause some consternation in the Senate. Much to the Army's regret, the Senate finally passed the harshest of all proposals.

The Army was to reduce its officer strength by urging voluntary

resignations and retiring a larger number of officers. Officers considered to be useless to the system were to be purged by a board of officers. Any residue among the supernumeraries were to be quietly laid aside on the New Year. It appeared to be a relatively simple and fair process, providing the requisite number could be attained by the three R's--resignation, retirement or recommendation of the board.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>War Department, "Report of the General of the Army" Washington, November 20, 1869, Report of the Secretary of War, 1869, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>General Orders Number 16, Adjutant General's Office, March 10, 1869.

<sup>3</sup>General Orders Number 19, Adjutant General's Office, March 18, 1869.

<sup>4</sup>Mills, My Story, p. 121.

<sup>5</sup>The New York Times, April 3, 1869, p. 11.

<sup>6</sup>War Department, "Report of the General of the Army," Washington November 20, 1869, Report of the Secretary of War, 1869, pp. 28-29.

<sup>7</sup>The Adjutant General, Official Army Register for January, 1870, pp. 130-168, See Appendix F.

<sup>8</sup>The Army-Navy Journal, February 5, 1870, p. 381.

<sup>9</sup>War Department, "Report of the Secretary of War," Washington, November 20, 1869, Report of the Secretary of War, 1869, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup>War Department, "Report of the General of the Army," Washington, November 20, 1869, Report of the Secretary of War, 1869, pp. 29-30.

<sup>11</sup>General Orders Number 78, Adjutant General's Office, September 21, 1868.

<sup>12</sup>United States Senate, 40th Congress, 3rd Session, Appendix to the Congressional Globe, Chapter CXXIV, Section 17, p. 319.

<sup>13</sup>General Orders Number 19, Adjutant General's Office, March 18, 1869.

<sup>14</sup>United States Congress, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, Appendix to the Congressional Globe (Washington, 1870), pp. 145-154.

<sup>15</sup>United States Senate, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Journal (Washington, 1870), p. 53.

<sup>16</sup>The New York Times, January 15, 1870, p. 4.

- 17 The New York Times, January 19, 1870, p. 5; United States Senate, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Journal, p. 111; The Army-Navy Journal, January 22, 1870, p. 352.
- 18 The Army-Navy Journal, December 25, 1869, p. 291.
- 19 The Army-Navy Journal, January 8, 1870, p. 322.
- 20 United States House of Representatives, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, House Journal (Washington, 1870), p. 131.
- 21 The Army-Navy Journal, January 22, 1870, p. 352.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 The New York Times, January 15, 1870, p. 4.
- 24 Sherman to Sheridan, Washington, January 17, 1870, The Philip H. Sheridan Papers, The Library of Congress.
- 25 Sheridan to Logan, Fort Leavenworth, January 22, 1870, The John A. Logan Papers, The Library of Congress.
- 26 United States House of Representatives, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, House Journal, p. 159.
- 27 The Army-Navy Journal, January 29, 1870, p. 367.
- 28 The Adjutant General, Official Army Register for January, 1870, pp. 169-183.
- 29 War Department, "Report of the General of the Army," Washington, November 20, 1869, Report of the Secretary of War, 1869, pp. 36-37.
- 30 The New York Times, January 15, 1870, p. 4.
- 31 United States House of Representatives, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, House Journal, p. 217.
- 32 The Army-Navy Journal, February 5, 1870, p. 384.
- 33 See The Army-Navy Journal for January 8, 1870, p. 322; January 15, 1870, p. 338; January 22, 1870, p. 349; March 19, 1870, p. 485; see also The New York Times for January 15, 1870, p. 4; March 12, 1870, p. 4; March 25, 1870, p. 4; April 26, 1870, p. 4.
- 34 United States Congress, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, Appendix to the Congressional Globe, pp. 146-154.
- 35 The New York Times, March 11, 1870, p. 1.
- 36 United States Senate, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Journal, p. 358.



- <sup>37</sup> Sherman to Wilson in The Army-Navy Journal, April 2, 1870, p. 518.
- <sup>38</sup> United States Senate, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Journal, p. 411.
- <sup>39</sup> The Army-Navy Journal, April 2, 1870, p. 519.
- <sup>40</sup> The Army-Navy Journal, April 30, 1870, pp. 575-576; United States Senate, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Journal, p. 553.
- <sup>41</sup> The Army-Navy Journal, May 21, 1870, p. 621; The New York Times May 13, 1870, p. 5.
- <sup>42</sup> The New York Times, May 11, 1870, p. 5.
- <sup>43</sup> The New York Times, May 13, 1870, p. 5.
- <sup>44</sup> The Army-Navy Journal, May 21, 1870, p. 621.
- <sup>45</sup> United States House of Representatives, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, House Journal, p. 804.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid., pp. 814-815.
- <sup>47</sup> Sherman to Sheridan, Washington, June 13, 1870, The Sheridan Papers.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid.; United States House of Representatives, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, House Journal, p. 795; The Army-Navy Journal, June 18, 1870 p. 688, July 2, 1870, p. 718.
- <sup>49</sup> Sherman to Sheridan, Washington, June 13, 1870, The Sheridan Papers.
- <sup>50</sup> Sherman to Sheridan, Washington, June 29, 1870, The Sheridan Papers.
- <sup>51</sup> Sherman to Sheridan, Washington, July 6, 1870, The Sheridan Papers.
- <sup>52</sup> United States Senate, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Journal, p. 998.
- <sup>53</sup> United States Congress, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, Appendix to the Congressional Globe, pp. 720-722.

## CHAPTER V

### ESTABLISHING THE BENZINE BOARD

The Secretary of War is hereby authorized and directed to constitute a board to consist of one major general, one brigadier general, and three colonels, three of said officers to be selected from among those appointed to the regular Army on account of distinguished services in the volunteer force during the late war, and on recommendation of such board the President shall muster out of the service . . . but such muster out shall not be ordered without allowing such officer a hearing before such board to show cause against it. <sup>1</sup>

Congress allowed the Secretary of War only five and half months to accomplish a task which promised to be unpleasant. However, before any board could be constituted, certain preliminary actions were necessary in order to collect data for the members. Surprisingly, no preliminary work had been undertaken despite the almost certainty that a board of officers would be created. This lack of foresight caused a flurry of activity in Army Headquarters.

The next few weeks were an administrative nightmare for the Army as commanders were inundated with requests from the Adjutant General. First they were required to submit names of unwanted officers on one list while on another they had to send in names of those who should be retained. A third request required them to send forth the names of any officer desiring a transfer to another arm. Still another order asked for their comments on the desirability of retaining or discharging certain officers identified by the Adjutant General's Office as possible candidates for elimination.

Concurrent with these requirements, which can best be described as hodge-podge, commanders were urged to obtain the voluntary resignations of their officers, particularly those that the Army could afford to lose. No quota system was established and no definitive ground rules were established by the Commanding General of the Army or the Secretary of War. Instead, commanders were expected to respond in a decentralized manner to a centralized elimination system. This serious flaw in the implementation of the Congressional act would prove more disruptive than the actual elimination process.

Due to the wide dispersion of Army units on the frontier, many company commanders served in different geographical departments than their regimental headquarters; many of these also served at posts which garrisoned troops of other regiments. Lines of command often proved hazy and so the post commander often became the command authority in a particular area in lieu of the regimental chain of command. Hence Department Commanders issued their instructions to post commanders as well as regimental commanders. Specifically, this entailed twelve Department Commanders monitoring an elimination program for forty regiments and 239 posts scattered throughout the United States and the several territories.<sup>2</sup> All of these commanders became involved in some degree with the recommendations for retaining or eliminating officers. Without specific guidance, their standards and opinions of unfitness differed considerably as did their ideas of adequate documentation to substantiate such eliminations.

The War Department issued the first of these implementing instructions on July 26, 1869 calling for voluntary resignations and Department Commanders to submit the names and documented evidence of all unfit officers assigned to their departments. Documentation would include "The cause,

degree, nature, and duration of the disqualification . . . and list of witnesses to sustain the allegation of unfitness." Regimental and Department Commanders were also urged to submit the names of efficient officers who "from choice or peculiar fitness" desired transfers to another arm of service. <sup>3</sup>

While commanders of all the regiments and posts were drafting their "black lists", encouraging resignations and inquiring into transfers, the Adjutant General's Office was examining its files to ascertain which officers had unfavorable actions or remarks filed in correspondence files, personal files or courts martial records. The names of 174 officers were recorded as "delinquent." <sup>4</sup> Letters were sent to the regimental commanders informing them of the delinquent status of these officers and requesting the commanders to advise the Adjutant General which officers warranted retention. The Adjutant General's Office monitored the delinquent officers who were unattached. Because most of these infantry officers were unknown to the Adjutant General, another communication was dispatched requesting commanders to submit the names of any known unattached officers worthy of retention. Additionally, those unassigned officers were advised to inform the Adjutant General if they wished to remain in the Army. <sup>5</sup>

Still another delinquent list was prepared by the Adjutant General's Office indicating any officer who had ever incurred a debt and had failed to repay the debt to the lender's satisfaction. The amount of the debt was not a determining factor. <sup>6</sup> The Adjutant General appeared to have been most diligent in his search for adverse marks in the voluminous records of the War Department.

Eventually responses to all of these requests arrived and were turned over to General Sherman and Secretary of War Belknap. These data were

consolidated and submitted to the elimination board after careful consideration. Some cases were immediately discarded while others retained; many of the officers in the latter instance eventually were assigned to the supernumerary list and eased out of service.

Under Section Twelve of the law of July 15, 1870, officers from all arms could be transferred to the list of supernumeraries at the discretion of the President.<sup>7</sup> The intention of this section was to provide the commander with an opportunity to get rid of "deadwood". Once nominated for the revised supernumerary list, the chances for retention for these officers were remote; an officer's only hope was to pray that sufficient unfit officers were eliminated. Many commanders recognized this "golden opportunity" and submitted the names to the War Department. In most cases a brief justification was provided. To illustrate this process, one list of eighty-three names was provided to the Secretary of War for his consideration for the supernumerary list; no justification was given for thirty-seven cases. Secretary of War Belknap and General Sherman scrutinized the recommendations and eventually placed fifty-one of these names on the supernumerary list; of the remainder, three elected to resign voluntarily, another two retired while no action was taken against the remaining twenty-eight. Of these twenty-eight men, eighteen were reported without justification; although they may have been of little use to the Army, both Belknap and Sherman were unable to judge their cases without supporting documentation. Interestingly, half of the officers retained belonged to the Department of the Gulf, whose commander, General J. J. Reynolds neglected, or refused, to document any of his cases.

Commanders evidently employed different means to identify standard officers. In addition to General Reynolds' inaction, other commanders were also careless. Colonel John Gibbon, commander of the Seventh

United States Infantry Regiment submitted the names of the ten least desired officers in order of priority. No reasons were cited in most of the cases. Colonel Benjamin H. Grierson of the Tenth United States Cavalry Regiment allowed his regimental officers to provide him the names of officers unworthy of the uniform;<sup>8</sup> the possible abuses in using this system were obvious. One officer used the unique method of writing directly to General Sherman requesting that an officer be placed on the supernumerary list because he was having an "intrigue" with his wife. The complainant was undoubtedly pleased to learn that his request was approved.<sup>9</sup>

To provide for the removal of old and disabled officers, the War Department created three retirement boards in early August. Brigadier General Irvin McDowell was appointed President of a board in New York City, Colonel Galusha Pennypacker headed the board in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas and Brigadier E. O. C. Ord presided at the board in San Francisco. These boards conducted examinations of many officers and recommended retirements for 111 officers which were approved.<sup>10</sup> Thus an equal number of vacancies were created for many relieved officers on the supernumerary list.

By October 15, 1870, the Army-Navy Journal commented that many officers were resigning from the Army; either they were delighted with the idea of an entire year's pay and allowances in their pockets or they were badly disappointed with recent events.<sup>11</sup> At the end of September fifty three officers either resigned or were discharged under the provisions of the Act of July 15, 1870; by October 31, another forty-four were gone.<sup>12</sup>

On October 5, 1870, Special Orders Number 265 announced the appointments to the "Board." Heading the Board was Major General Winfield S.

Hancock, Commander of the Department of Dakota and one of two Regulars allowed by law. The other Regular was Colonel Ranald S. Mackenzie, commander of the Twenty-fourth United States Infantry Regiment. The three former volunteer officers were Brigadier General Alfred H. Terry, Commander of the Department of the South, Colonel Edward Hatch of the Ninth United States Cavalry Regiment and Colonel Charles H. Smith, regimental commander of the Nineteenth United States Infantry. Hatch never served on the board as Colonel Thomas H. Ruger of the Eighteenth United States Infantry Regiment replaced him one week later. Completing the military membership was Captain James McMillan of the Eleventh United States Infantry Regiment who served as Board Recorder.<sup>13</sup> Why the War Department waited this long to constitute the board was a mystery because this time could have been used to good advantage screening the Adjutant General's files and establishing procedures for the conduct of the hearings. Thus almost three of the five and a half months allotted were wasted.

The War Department referred to these men as the "Special Board" or "Board" throughout the board's existence; the Army-Navy Journal called it the "Hancock Board." The term "Benzine Board" was not widely used in 1870 and its derivation is unknown although it was likely coined to indicate a cleansing or purging process. By 1905 the term "Benzine Board" was common Army vernacular.<sup>14</sup> Whatever the origin, the term was appropos and accurately described the Board's mission.

The first task of the Board was to develop regulations for its proceedings. These rules were provided to each officer appearing before the panel and a copy filed in the documents for each individual case. The rules stated that an officer could produce any sworn or unsworn

testimony, submitted by himself or others, rebutting any allegations made against him. Any desired witness who was present in Washington would be summoned to appear before the board; those outside the District of Columbia would submit depositions unless the board determined that the witness' personal presence was necessary or the witness volunteered to make a personal appearance. Depositions submitted in behalf of the officer were to be made under oath; depositions requested by the Benzine Board were to be shown to the officer who had the right to file cross-questions. The Board would receive all allegations submitted by the War Department as proper evidence but each officer had the right to cross-examine, under oath, the originator of each unfavorable statement. <sup>15</sup>

The proceedings of the Board were to be kept secret although every reader of the Army-Navy Journal knew the identities of the summoned officers, as all Special and General Orders were published in the newspaper. For example, a Special Order dated October 20, 1870, named seven officers to appear before the board to answer allegations made against them. Another Special Order dated November 9, 1870, announced the names of two officers whose cases had been withdrawn. <sup>16</sup> The dispositions of these cases were not released for publication and no one knew who was retained or mustered out until the general orders were published after the first of the year.

At his first appearance, the officer was provided a copy of the rules of procedure and asked how long it would take to prepare an adequate defense. In most cases the officer was given two weeks. Many brought letters attesting to their good character but some did not know the specific allegations they had to answer. Sufficient time was provided each officer to prepare questions or cross-examinations they wanted taken by



deposition. It was not unusual for the returned depositions to create doubt in the mind of the board and cause the board to write the responding officer and request clarification or respond to new inquiries. The accused officer then had the right to cross-examine again the witness based on the new inquiries. Much time was consumed in this lengthy process as mail delivery to the remote frontier posts might range from slow to doubtful. In general the board wrote certain witnesses based on data provided them by the War Department, who in turn had received them from the various Department Commanders. If the Departments were diligent, sufficient documentation might accompany the allegations. In many instances this was not the case.

Twelve standard "interrogatories" were prepared by General Hancock. Six of these questions pertained to intemperance or any drinking habits during the previous two years. Four questions covered other habits, character, conduct and capacity or incapacity in relation to the allegations made. Specific incidents of neglect and inefficiency were requested. The other two questions requested the names of the witness and his relationship and length of association with the officer before the board.<sup>17</sup> After receiving all responses, the officer was brought before the board and the case judged on its merits. On reaching a finding, the individual was directed to report back to the Adjutant General for orders. As the board was not a final authority, their findings were recommendations only.

After establishing its regulations, the Benzine Board readied itself for an expected heavy caseload. Over half of its scheduled existence had elapsed without one piece of business being accomplished owing to the War Department's myopic foresight. Commanders were forced to respond hurriedly to many urgent requests from the Adjutant General's Office; they were hard

pressed to provide these demands efficiently and punctually.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>United States Congress, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, Appendix to the Congressional Globe, p. 721.

<sup>2</sup>War Department, "Report of the Secretary of War," Washington, November 20, 1869, Report of the Secretary of War, 1869, pp. 6, 23, 33.

<sup>3</sup>General Orders Number 96, Adjutant General's Office, July 26, 1870.

<sup>4</sup>Records Group 94, Appointment, Commission and Personal Branch, Adjutant General's Office, Letters Received, National Archives, 2169 ACP 1871, 2208 ACP 1871. See Appendix G.

<sup>5</sup>RG 94, LR, 2109 ACP 1871, 2152-2155 ACP 1871, 2166 ACP 1871.

<sup>6</sup>RG 94, LR, 2165 ACP 1871.

<sup>7</sup>United States Congress, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, Appendix to the Congressional Globe, p. 721.

<sup>8</sup>RG 94, LR, 2151 ACP 1871, 2170 ACP 1871, 2176 ACP 1871; see also 2164 ACP 1871, 2173 ACP 1871, 2175 ACP 1871. Appendix H provides a summary of this specific list.

<sup>9</sup>Mizner to Sherman, Camp Gaston, California, December 3, 1870, The William T. Sherman Papers, Library of Congress.

<sup>10</sup>See Special Orders dated August 9, 1870, and October 17, 1870, (Numbers unknown), Adjutant General's Office, appearing in The Army-Navy Journal, August 20, 1870, p. 7 and October 29, 1870, p. 167; The Adjutant General, Official Army Register for January, 1870, pp. 145-167.

<sup>11</sup>The Army-Navy Journal, October 15, 1870, p. 133.

<sup>12</sup>The Adjutant General, Official Army Register for January, 1871 (Washington, 1871), pp. 186-190.

<sup>13</sup>Special Order Number 265, Adjutant General's Office, October 5, 1870; Special Order Number 272, Adjutant General's Office, October 12, 1870.

<sup>14</sup>McAlexander, Thirteenth Regiment, p. 75.

<sup>15</sup>See for example the case of Edward G. Mathey, Records Group 94, Appointment, Commission and Personal Branch, Adjutant General's Office, Letters Received, National Archives, M304 CB 1870.

<sup>16</sup>The Army-Navy Journal, November 5, 1870, p. 182, November 19, 1870, p. 215.

<sup>17</sup>See for example RG 94, LR, B 378 CB 1870 (ACP file for William H. Beck).

## CHAPTER VI

### THE CONDUCT OF THE BOARD

The Secretary of War sent General Hancock a total of ninety-eight cases which had to be decided within a two month period.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the pressures exerted due the allotted time of the Board's existence, the Benzine Board suffered the frustrations of wading through inadequate and incomplete documentation. More time was needed to gather all possible evidence. Additionally, some of these cases arrived late and never were decided. To some observers, it appeared that the Board accomplished little.<sup>2</sup>

The main problem was not the fault of the Benzine Board but due to the disappointing responses of the many post and regimental commanders in forwarding the names and evidence. Statistical data indicated that many commanders opted for the easy approach to eliminate their unwanted officers, that is, transfer to the supernumerary list, where lengthy documentation was not required and where muster outs promised to be more certain. Examination of the total number of officers sent before the Benzine Board and those officers recommended for transfer to the supernumerary list indicated that some commanders tried to "sweep house" in earnest, particularly the regimental commanders of the Second Artillery, Third and Tenth Cavalry, and Twelfth Infantry. Commanders of the Fifth Artillery, and Second and Fifteenth Infantry Regiments failed to submit a single name of a substandard officer.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps all the officers in

these last three regiments were satisfactory although that prospect seemed highly unlikely. Undoubtedly some commanders persuaded a few of their inadequate officers to resign after presenting them with the choice of going before the Benzine Board or departing quietly. At least nine such officers resigned after their cases were in progress before General Hancock and the other four board members. <sup>4</sup>

The Benzine Board did not act on fifty of the cases submitted; this represents slightly over one-half of the total number of cases received. Nine of the fifty officers chose to resign after their cases were in process; another seven cases were "not reported." <sup>5</sup> Six of these seven men were subsequently transferred to the supernumerary list and were mustered out while one officer was returned to duty. <sup>6</sup> Four cases were never completed owing to insufficient time to hear the entire case. Evidently sufficient evidence had been accumulated by the Secretary of War to decide the matter himself as he placed three of the men on the supernumerary list and retained the fourth. This last man was immediately brought before a General Court Martial and subsequently cashiered for incapacity due to extended use of drugs and alcohol. <sup>7</sup> The Secretary of War withdrew another thirty cases from the Board. Eight of these men were allowed to resign, <sup>8</sup> one was removed from duty while the Board was in session, <sup>9</sup> twelve were transferred to the supernumerary list, <sup>10</sup> and the remaining nine were retained in the service. Perhaps the Secretary of War took these actions to provide the Board sufficient time to deliberate on the other cases.

General Hancock's Board rendered decisions on forty-eight cases; slightly less than half of these resulted in favorable actions for the men. This high percentage of retention was due primarily to the fairness

and efficiency of the Board members and the lack of well documented cases against the officers. Some of the allegations can only be classified as frivolous while others evidently were vindictive and petty. For example, Colonel Samuel D. Sturgis, commander of the Seventh United States Cavalry Regiment, accused Lieutenants Charles H. Rea, Charles R. Brady, Donald McIntosh and Edward G. Mathey of undermining his command. Rea and Brady elected to resign but the other two decided to oppose Sturgis. The commander submitted his statement calling Mathey "a chronic grumbler and consequently a disorganizer, one of that large class of officers now infesting the Army, who whilst they are careful to commit no offence of sufficient magnitude in itself to bring them to trial, yet delight in sowing discord among their followers."<sup>11</sup> Sturgis classified McIntosh as lazy and inefficient. "If he were an enlisted man he would pass for a malingerer," he wrote.<sup>12</sup> Fortunately Mathey convinced the board that the true reason for Sturgis' wanting to get rid of McIntosh and himself was due entirely to a petition which they and several other officers signed protesting the transfer of First Lieutenant Wallingford out of the regiment in exchange for First Lieutenant Rawolle of the Second United States Cavalry Regiment. Wallinford had committed a serious offense and was before a General Court Martial which, considering the serious offense, probably would adjudge his dismissal and thus open vacancies for the promotion of a Second Lieutenant and permit the advance of all First Lieutenants junior to him on the regimental seniority list. McIntosh drafted a petition of protest, obtained the signatures of his brother officers and sent the petition to the Adjutant General of the Army, a custom practiced in those times. He seriously blundered however in not sending this petition through Colonel Sturgis. Sturgis, evidently a pompous man and conscious of his self-importance, was slighted and thus took action to "benzine" all invol-

ved. Fortunately, Mathey was able to obtain the regimental adjutant and the regimental second-in-command, Lieutenant Colonel George A. Custer, as witnesses to corroborate his testimony. Both Mathey and McIntosh returned to their duties in the regiment.<sup>13</sup>

These men were not the only ones to suffer from Sturgis' vanity. Captain Edward S. Godfrey appeared before the Board to respond to picaresque charges of inefficiency based on his overheard remark that "cavalry service interfered with his domestic comfort and ease."<sup>14</sup> His case was withdrawn by the Secretary of War. Other commanders also submitted allegations without sufficient justification. First Lieutenant William Borrowe appeared before the board because his commander stated that Borrowe's wife was ostracized due to her having been someone's mistress during the war. This "prostitute" was socially unacceptable to the others in the regiment. Borrowe denied the allegations, and as no proof arrived before the end of the year, the Secretary of War transferred him to the supernumerary list.<sup>15</sup> A brother officer of First Lieutenant James B. Hazelton, wrote through command channels stating that Hazelton participated in a bar brawl while he was home on leave and therefore had disgraced the regiment's name. No one bothered to investigate the matter at the regiment and so Hazelton came to Washington to testify that he had been the victim of an assassination attempt by one of his former soldiers. Hazelton was in a tavern when the maniac entered and shot him in the face with a pistol. The case was quickly decided in Hazelton's favor.<sup>16</sup> Captain Nicholas Nolan was accused of flogging one of his soldiers; his commander allowed the case to go forward and then submitted testimony indicating that Nolan did not order the flogging and did not learn of it until afterwards. His case was also thrown out.<sup>17</sup> Captain Guy V. Henry



submitted the unsubstantiated case against Second Lieutenant Gilbert P. Cotton, describing him as a man of "perfect indifference, inattention, want of interest and knowlege of his duties as a soldier." The Secretary of War wrote Henry requesting that he provide specific examples of his failings. Henry's response revealed only that Cotton had been late a few times at drill and stable call, but exact instances in his case was "one of those peculiar cases where it is not possible to furnish it." Cotton was ordered back to his regiment. <sup>18</sup>

The case of First Lieutenant Jacob Almy was submitted because of alledged "scandalous conduct" with the wife of Captain Edward H. Leib. The regimental commander reviewed the accusations against Almy and recommended that he be transferred to another regiment; later the recommendation for transfer was withdrawn and Almy elected to oppose the elimination action. He easily refuted the allegations by summoning Captain Leib who denied there was any truth to the allegation. Almy's case was decided in his favor. <sup>19</sup>

Twenty-one officers were immediately returned to their regiments although there can be no doubt that hard feelings were harbored between the returning officers and their accusers. Perhaps even the witnesses had to bear some of this ill will. One of the officers immediately resigned under the provision of Section Three of the Act of July 15, 1870 after he cleared his name, <sup>20</sup> while three others resigned within the following two years. Three of the retained officers were later dismissed for other reasons with one of these later being restored and then dismissed again. <sup>21</sup> Two of the officers, Lieutenants McIntosh and Smith owed their continued service in the Army to the testimony of Lieutenant Colonel Custer and later died with him at the Little Big Horn. <sup>22</sup> The

remainder performed honorable service for the duration of their military careers. The Benzine Board judged twenty-seven officers to be undesirable and wanting in qualities desired in an Army officer.<sup>23</sup> The majority of these men were found to be intemperate; eleven men had drinking problems while another two were effected by alcohol to some degree. This high percentage probably came as no great shock to many as the Regular Army soldier was pictured traditionally as a hard-drinking man, the officers in some cases no better than the most dissipated private. The loneliness and boredom of many frontier posts coupled with an abundance of liquor proved too much temptation for many officers. That only eleven officers were required to appear before the Benzine Board was revealing. Either the Army purged alcoholics as they became known or commanders did not identify all of their drunks for actions of the Special Board. The latter reason was probably the case. The remaining sixteen were forced out for a variety of other reasons.

Second Lieutenant Charles F. Roe was identified as both inefficient and immoral. He was accused of scandalous conduct with the wife of Second Lieutenant Thaddeus Roberts, another officer who was benzined. He did not help his situation by counter-charging his commander with incestuous activities with his mother. Roe was mustered out subsequently but within a year succeeded in returning to the Army with a new appointment.<sup>24</sup> Captain William M. Maynardier was benzined due to his heavy drinking; he too exerted sufficient influence to be reappointed to the Army as a Major.<sup>25</sup> These were the only two who returned to the Army's ranks.

The case of Second Lieutenant Thomas G. Tracy is unique in that he was eliminated for neglect of duty, when in reality he probably should have been charged with gross stupidity. After playing cards all night,

Tracy reported that he was too sick to attend parade. After obtaining permission to be absent someone observed him viewing the parade and reported him as a shirker.<sup>26</sup> His absence of common sense probably would have drowned what leadership ability he possessed.

These twenty-seven officers departed the Regular Army on December 31, 1870. Statistically four West Pointers were mustered out in this manner, while seven of the men were former non-commissioned officers in the Regular Army and the remaining sixteen received their appointments as civilians. Three of the latter attended West Point but did not graduate. Twenty-three of the men were veterans of the Civil War, nine of those having entered the Army before the war.<sup>27</sup>

The duties of the board proved distasteful to the members as evidenced by a letter written by General Terry to Colonel Cyrus B. Comstock, the aide to General Sherman, on the eve of the dissolution of the board; he wrote,

Tomorrow I suppose that it will end and I shall be heartily glad to exchange back to the work of reconstruction. I hardly supposed that I should ever be glad to go back to Atlanta from Washington but anything is better than being a member of a "Benzine Board".<sup>28</sup>

On December 31, 1870, General Hancock wrote the Adjutant General of the Army requesting orders for himself and the other members of his board thus completing the Army's implementation of the actions of the Forty-first Congress.<sup>29</sup> If the Secretary of War's intention was to weed out many officers, the Benzine Board failed him; if the intention was to provide fair hearings for the officers identified as substandard by their commanders, then General Hancock and his board accomplished their task.

The Army's task however remained incomplete; resignations, retire-

ments and recommendations of the Benzine Board had not done the job despite a predicted bright outlook of the press. On November 26, 1870, The Army-Navy Journal had reported that it appeared as though the supernumerary list might become exhausted before the deadline, January 1, 1871.<sup>30</sup> The Secretary of War did not share this optimism and consequently he requested Congress to extend the deadline date by six months in order to ensure all supernumeraries were absorbed and thus preclude "the injustice which it is so difficult to avoid."<sup>31</sup> The Senate introduced and passed such a measure but the House Committee would not act on the bill. General Sherman disapproved of a six month extension indicating that it was kinder "by informing them of their fate at once than keeping them in suspense."<sup>32</sup> By then it was obvious that his prediction of easily weeding out 100 incompetents was much more difficult than he imagined. Despite the many resignations and retirements, the Hancock Board found very few officers unfit.

Secretary of War Belknap and General Sherman were forced to resort to the supernumerary list to meet the required number of officers who were to be mustered out by the beginning of the year. The following day, 124 less fortunate men also departed the ranks of the Army. They were less fortunate because they had no opportunity to fight the allegations made against them.<sup>33</sup> The decision to recompose the supernumerary list was sound as it was most unfair to discharge only infantry officers. The significant fact of the matter was that this list was not redesigned to any great extent until the last moment as evidenced by the fact that only forty-three unassigned officers on the supernumerary list were mustered out and thirty-seven of these had been on the list for well over one year.<sup>34</sup>

Of the 124 officers, thirteen were graduates of West Point, and

three others were former cadets. Thirty men received appointments from the ranks and the remaining eighty-one were appointed from civilian life. After these men were released, at least nineteen returned to the uniform. Six officers were reinstated. They were Major Joseph B. Collins (1879); Captains Isaac Dunkelberger (1901); John A. Darling (1878); Philip W. Stanhope (1879) and Tenodor Ten Eyck (1891) and First Lieutenant Michael O'Brien (1879). Eleven others received new appointments. They were Majors George A. Gordon (to Major in 1873) and Samuel Ross. Ross originally entered the Army in 1837 and had accumulated slightly less than thirty years service, not quite enough for retirement. He applied for and received a new appointment to Second Lieutenant in 1872; he remained in the Army for three months until he attained thirty years total service and then retired with the rank of Brigadier General. He probably was the oldest Second Lieutenant in the Army! Others included Captains Charles Parker (to Captain in 1874), James B. Sinclair (to Second Lieutenant in 1871); and Enno F. Wenckebach (to Second Lieutenant in 1881); First Lieutenants Ballard S. Humphrey (to Second Lieutenant in 1872), Lorenzo Cooke (to Second Lieutenant in 1871), Redmond Tully (to Captain in 1881), William S. Johnson (to Second Lieutenant in 1871) and Charles F. Larrabee (to Second Lieutenant in 1871) and Second Lieutenant Stephen P. Jocelyn (to Second Lieutenant in 1871). At least two others, First Lieutenants Patrick W. Horrigan and August Kaiser, enlisted in the Army.<sup>35</sup> The others left the service forever, probably not without bitterness.

On February 18, 1871, The Army-Navy Journal stated,

The Army has reasons to be well satisfied with the manner in which the reduction of its strength in the closing months of 1870 was conducted. Individual cases of hardship undoubtedly occurred and there may be many officers discarded who felt that their services merited other treatment. But of the method pursued at headquarters there can be no criticism.<sup>36</sup>

No criticism was ever leveled at General Hancock or his board. However, disapproval concerning reductions was voiced by senior Army officers testifying before the House Military Affairs Committee in 1876. General Alfred H. Terry, former Benzine Board member, stated that the 1869 and 1870 reductions brought the strength of the Army too low. Additionally, the officer cut backs severely damaged morale and "this confidence in the stability of their positions has been rudely shaken by the discharge . . . and by repeated propositions to still further reduce the military force."<sup>37</sup> Another officer testified that "the frequent effort to reduce the Army or to cut down the pay produces uncertainty and uneasiness, and is more productive of demoralization than any other single cause."<sup>38</sup> Brigadier General Christopher C. Augur summed up the matter best when he referred to the yearly Congressional appropriation action as "annual apprehension" because measures may be taken for additional reductions thereby causing officers to be "thrown out of service."<sup>39</sup> Reductions in total strength would bring proportional losses in the officer corps; with Congress already having demonstrated that they would not wait for attrition to pare down officer strength, many officers worried about the stability of their profession. For the middle-aged officer with growing children to educate, these worries were causes of great concern.

Some officers thought the Benzine Board performed a much needed service to the officer ranks. Captain Ulysses Grant McAlexander, writing years after the events of 1870 stated "time has amply justified the conduct of General DeTrobriand in 'benzining' the Thirteenth."<sup>40</sup> There can be no doubt that many lazy and inefficient officers departed the ranks who probably would have remained in service for years, receiving promotions as their time came due. Many of these men entered the Army during

an emergency period when appointment standards were lowered. With no military schools to provide them with the rudiments of the profession of arms, these men could only develop providing they had initiative and self-discipline; many of them lacked these attributes. With no system of quality control the Benzine Board proved a blessing for the efficiency of the Army.

FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>The Daily Patriot, January 19, 1871, p. 1.
- <sup>2</sup>The Army-Navy Journal, December 24, 1870, p. 301.
- <sup>3</sup>The Adjutant General, Official Army Register for January, 1871, pp. 188-193; Official Army Register for January, 1872 (Washington, 1872), p. 191; The Daily Patriot, January 19, 1871, p. 1. See Appendix I.
- <sup>4</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup>Ibid., RG 94, LR, 2171 ACP 1871, 2208 AGO 1870, 2169 AGO 1871. See also the forty-two case files of the Benzine Board located in RG 94, LR, ACP. See Appendix J.
- <sup>6</sup>Heitman, Historical Register, I, p. 756. See the entry for Robert H. Offley.
- <sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 708. See the entry for William H. H. Michler.
- <sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 468 (entry for John C. Graham), p. 200 (entry for Albert F. Bayard), p. 239 (entry for Charles B. Brady), p. 398 (entry for John Edwards), p. 809 (entry for John H. Purcell), p. 308 (entry for Henry deB. Clay), p. 243 (entry for Charles Brewster) and p. 472 (entry for Robert Gray).
- <sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 232 (entry for John R. Bothwell).
- <sup>10</sup>Ibid., see entries for William C. Bayliss (p. 200), Lorenzo W. Cooke (p. 324), George W. Cradlebaugh (p. 332), John A. Darling (p. 354), John R. Eschenburg (p. 408), Jacob D. Jones (p. 581), Lambert L. Mulford (p. 734), Lewis Nolen (p. 750), Benjamin R. Perkins (p. 783), James Riley (p. 831), Harlow L. Street (p. 931) and Redmond Tully (p. 973).
- <sup>11</sup>See the case of Edward G. Mathey in RG 94, LR, 82 AGO 1871.
- <sup>12</sup>See the case of Donald McIntosh in RG 94, LR, 168 ACP 1871.
- <sup>13</sup>RG 94, LR, 82 AGO 1871 and 168 ACP 1871.
- <sup>14</sup>Robert M. Utley to David P. Perrine, Arlington, Virginia, November 15, 1875.
- <sup>15</sup>See the case of William Borrowe, RG 94, LR, 3518 ACP 1871.
- <sup>16</sup>See the case of James B. Hazelton, RG 94, LR, 4613 ACP 1873.



- <sup>17</sup> See the case of Nicholas Nolan, RG 94, LR, 5397 ACP 1871.
- <sup>18</sup> See the case of Gilbert P. Cotton, RG 94, LR, 3531 ACP 1871.
- <sup>19</sup> See the case of Jacob Almy, RG 94, LR, 2518 ACP 1873.
- <sup>20</sup> This officer was Major Meredith H. Kidd. See Heitman, Historical Register, I, p. 596.
- <sup>21</sup> The three officers who resigned were Joseph B. Rife, William D. Fuller, and Eugene H. Townsend. The officers later dismissed were Thomas J. Spencer, James B. Hazelton and Edward H. Leib; Spencer was dismissed twice. See entries in Heitman.
- <sup>22</sup> See entries for Donald McIntosh and Algernon E. Smith in Heitman.
- <sup>23</sup> See Appendix K. All cases were located in RG 94, LR, AGO, ACP.
- <sup>24</sup> See the case of Charles F. Roe, RG 94, LR, 1110 ACP 1872 and entry in Heitman, Historical Register, I, p. 842.
- <sup>25</sup> See the case of William M. Maynadier, RG 94, LR, 1955 ACP 1871 and entry in Heitman, Historical Register, I, p. 699.
- <sup>26</sup> See the case of Thomas G. Tracy, RG 94, LR, 3686 ACP 1871.
- <sup>27</sup> See Heitman, Historical Register, Vol. I for entries of the twenty-seven officers mustered out.
- <sup>28</sup> Terry to Comstock, Washington, December 30, 1870, The Papers of Cyrus B. Comstock, Library of Congress as quoted in Sefton, Army and Reconstruction, p. 207.
- <sup>29</sup> RG 94, LR, 14 AGO 1871.
- <sup>30</sup> The Army-Navy Journal, November 26, 1870, p. 229.
- <sup>31</sup> War Department, "Report of the Secretary of War," Washington, November 30, 1870, Report of the Secretary of War, 1870, (Washington, 1870), p. VI.
- <sup>32</sup> The Army-Navy Journal, December 24, 1870, p. 301.
- <sup>33</sup> The Adjutant General, Official Army Register for January, 1871, pp. 191-192; Official Army Register for January, 1872, p. 191.
- <sup>34</sup> The Adjutant General, Official Army Register for January, 1870, pp. 130-168; Official Army Register for January, 1871, pp. 191-192; Official Army Register for January, 1872, p. 191.
- <sup>35</sup> See individual entries in Heitman and The Army-Navy Journal, July 15, 1871, p. 765.
- <sup>36</sup> The Army-Navy Journal, February 18, 1871, p. 428.

<sup>37</sup>United States House of Representatives, 44th Congress, 1st Session, "Reduction of Army Officers' Pay, Reorganization of the Army, and Transfer of the Indian Bureau," House Report Number 354 (2 Vols. Washington, 1876), Vol. II, p. 35.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 120.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>40</sup>McAlexander, Thirteenth Regiment, p. 75.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE BENZINE MYTH

After reshuffling ~~the~~ officer corps, the Army resumed its day-to-day tasks. During the next six years, Congress enacted five pieces of legislation further reducing the size of the Regular Army. By 1876, the enlisted strength was 25,000 men and the officer strength was 2,472; for the next twenty-two years the enlisted strength remained at 25,000 men until increased by the activation of two regiments of artillery. During this time no officers were involuntarily released as decreases in authorization was insignificant and easily managed by attrition.<sup>1</sup> Thus there were no additional reduction measures endured by the Civil War veterans.

Years later Colonel W. A. Ganoë, designated this postwar period, "The Army's Dark Ages."<sup>2</sup> Writing of the officer reduction program, he stated,

Many officers, who happened to be absent from their commands, were peremptorily cut off from the service. Excellent men of heroic record in the war and on the plains who had a few years before been practically promised a life vocation by the government, were cast back into their communities with lost years and a sorry face before their friends. They had borne their share of suffering and hardship for their country only to have the sieve of politics hold them as dross. The 'Benzine Board' had the unwholesome task of sending out over 750 officers with one year's pay.<sup>3</sup>

Another historian, Colonel R. E. DuPuy, also wrote of the release of 750 officers by the Benzine Board, although he did acknowledge that "some of these men were misfits. The majority, as they proved after their assimi-

lation became the warp and woof of the profession." 4

Both of these historians grossly erred in stating that 750 officers were thrown out of the service. The Benzine Board did cause twenty-seven to be released but these were proven incompetents who received fair hearings. The Army was well rid of these few men. Another 124 supernumeraries were also released but these men were also found wanting as leaders; their release was unfair only in that they did not have the same opportunity to argue their cases before an impartial panel. Still these men were more fortunate than their Civil Service counterparts who were let adrift everytime there was a change of Presidents; also, the officers received severance pay to assist in starting a new profession.

The most serious damage dealt to the Regular Army was the brutal reaffirmation that Congress controlled the size of the Army; what determined the optimum size of the Army was not necessarily the actual requirements for troops in the States and Territories but more likely the state of the Nation's economy. That the officer and soldier were fighting and occasionally dying in the far West was of little concern to the public. The Easterner had long since defeated the Indian tribes without vast numbers of troops; there was ample reason to believe the rugged Westerner could do the same. The Army was better armed and better equipped than the half-naked Indian and Congress would be better advised to divert needed funds elsewhere. The Regular Army at one time was three times the size of the pre-war Army but after 1867 many of the reasons causing the Army's growth no longer existed. Some prominent Congressmen, notably Logan and Butler, were outspoken critics of the Regular Army and sought to snipe at them at any opportunity. The divided Regular Army staff and line refused to join ranks and actively defended their position by

justifying their needs; perhaps they put all their hopes on a grateful Congress rather than a hateful one.

General Sherman's actions proved disappointing in this, his first skirmish with Congress. At a time when the officers sorely needed him, Sherman appeared to be more concerned with maintaining his rank, pay and allowances than with maintaining the size of the officers corps. There was some evidence to suspect that he might not have been adamantly opposed to a Special Board as he voiced his belief that the Army could easily rid itself of 100 or so "unfit" officers. This suspicion was reinforced by his disagreement with Secretary of War Belknap's request for a six month moratorium for the compulsory muster out program. These were hardly the actions of a "die-hard" opponent of forced releases.

Commanders evidently preferred to transfer their unwanted officers to the supernumerary list rather than submit their names and documented evidence to a board whose decisions were uncertain. Less factual data was required for the transferring of the officer to this list and perhaps the short time to gather and forward the allegations made this the preferred method. Had there been more time allotted with stronger urging from General Sherman's Office, there is no doubt that Commanders would have been more thorough in their implementation of the Congressional act.

The House of Representatives refused to agree with the Senate's proposals for reduction by attrition. The Senate provided no positive justification for the attrition process, only remarking that such eliminations were unkind to the veteran officers. Logan's rebuttal pointed out that the Army always demobilized after a war and many officers and men had to be released. Congress and the people appreciated their sacrifices and services but no stigma was intended for the officers thus

mustered out. The major argument against attrition appeared to be the lengthy time required to completely exhaust the list (Appendix L.). Despite stopping all officer gains and increasing the retirement list, about three years were required to completely absorb all the officers. Even then the rank structure within the unassigned list might require a longer period of time for absorption of specific grades. Unfortunately, the removal of the section in the Congressional bill pertaining to the transfer of the Indian Bureau's responsibilities to the War Department negated any possibility of creating justifiable duties in any significant numbers.

Thus the officer corps was decreased by a total of 151 officers and not 750 as recorded by historians. Most of these men, in the opinion of their commanders, failed to satisfactorily perform their duties. While there is no doubt that a few good men submitted to the command pressures of voluntary resignation, there is no evidence to indicate that this section of the Act of July 15, 1870 was abused in this way. Transferring a man on the supernumerary list did not demand as much documentation as did the Benzine Board; still some, cogent reasoning was required.

There is also sufficient evidence to indicate a screening process did prevent unsubstantiated requests for transfer to this list. The Benzine Board performed its duties fairly and efficiently considering its short existence; the twenty-seven men mustered out undoubtedly merited their fate. An appeal system existed for the officer who felt himself wronged as evidenced by the twenty-one men who successfully returned to the officer ranks as a result of reappointment or reinstatement. Most of these later served with credit.

Rigid standards were demanded of each officer professionally, and

morally. Most of these ideals were derived by custom and tradition and therefore were difficult to embrace by many newcomers. General Anson Mills wrote of the importance of these intangibles in the officer's life as "The sworn duty to maintain the unwritten laws, the customs of the service as they find them--which they have done, often knowing themselves to be the sufferers."<sup>5</sup> Failure to adopt these standards brought embarrassment to other regimental officers. New appointees were expected to "fall quickly into ranks and work out their own destiny."<sup>6</sup> The 151 officers who failed to "measure-up" to these standards departed the ranks abruptly. The loss of their vacancy would be sorely missed; the loss of their leadership would not be felt.

FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup>Heitman, Historical Register, II, p. 612-617.
- <sup>2</sup>Gano, The History, p. 298.
- <sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 324-325.
- <sup>4</sup>DuPuy, The Compact History, p. 146.
- <sup>5</sup>Mills, My Story, p. 362.
- <sup>6</sup>The Army-Navy Journal, December 7, 1872, pp. 264-265.



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APPENDIX A  
 ACTUAL AND AUTHORIZED STRENGTHS  
 OF THE REGULAR ARMY,  
 1861-1871

YEAR	AUTHORIZED STRENGTH		ACTUAL STRENGTH		PERCENTAGE ACTUAL STRENGTH
	OFFICER	ENLISTED	OFFICER	ENLISTED	AGGRAGATE
1861 <sup>a</sup>	2009	37264	1004	15418	41.81
1862	2009	37264	1720	23761	48.81
1863	2009	37264	1844	22915	63.04
1864	2009	37264	1313	19791	55.01
1865	2009	37264	1605	20705	56.81
1866 <sup>b</sup>	3036	51605	2020	31470	61.29
1867	3036	51605	2853	53962	103.98
1868	3036	51605	2835	48081	93.18
1869 <sup>c</sup>	2277	35036	2700	34074	98.56
1870 <sup>d</sup>	2264	32788	2541	34535	105.77
1871	2261	30000	2105	26848	89.75

a. Acts of July 29, 1861 and August 3, 1861.

b. Act of July 28, 1866.

c. Act of March 3, 1869.

d. Act of July 15, 1870.

Source: Heitman, Historical Register, II, p. 626.

APPENDIX B

POSTWAR APPOINTMENT SOURCES, 1866-1870

<u>YEARS</u>	<u>CIVILIAN</u>	<u>(FORMER VOLUNTEERS)</u>	<u>RANKERS</u>	<u>WEST POINTERS</u>	<u>REINS</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
1866	503	(485)	21	39	8	571
1867				63		63
1868	1027	(950)	46	54	16	1143
1869	11		4	39	6	60
1870	<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>58</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>68</u>
	1542	(1435)	71	253	39	1905
LESS	Cancellations of commissions					210
LESS	Commissions negated by Congress and revoked					18
	TOTAL:					<u>1677</u>

PERCENTAGE COMPARISONS OF APPOINTMENT SOURCES,  
DURING AND AFTER CIVIL WAR

<u>YEARS</u>	<u>CIVILIANS</u>	<u>RANKERS</u>	<u>WEST POINTERS</u>
1861-1865	53.77	31.91	14.32
1866-1870	82.99	3.73	13.28

Sources:

Official Army Registers for 1866-1870.

Lenney, Rankers, p. 134.

APPENDIX C

A SAMPLE OF

WARTIME REGIMENTAL APPOINTMENT SOURCES

<u>REGIMENT</u>	<u>COLONEL</u> Reg/Civ	<u>LIEUTENANT COLONEL</u> Reg/Civ	<u>MAJOR</u> Reg/Civ	<u>CAPTAIN</u> Reg/Civ	<u>FIRST LIEUTENANTS</u> Reg/Civ
3rd Cavalry	1/0	0/1	0/2	5/5	3/9
5th Artillery	0/1	1/0	1/2	6/6	13/11
11th Infantry	1/0	0/1	2/1	7/11	4/19
6th Cavalry	1/0	0/1	0/1	7/4	2/8

Sources:

General Orders Number 33, Adjutant General's Office, June 18, 1861.

General Orders Number 65, Adjutant General's Office, August 23, 1861.

APPENDIX D

WRITTEN TEST ADMINISTERED TO APPLICANTS FOR APPOINTMENT

AS SECOND LIEUTENANT IN THE

UNITED STATES ARMY

A. Geography and History

1. Define latitude and longitude.
2. How many zones are there and what are their boundaries?
3. Name the Continents.
4. What are the boundaries of the USA? of Europe?
5. Where is the Amazon and what zone is it in?
6. What principal rivers in the USA flow to the Pacific? to the Atlantic?
7. What states border Maryland?
8. What are the countries of Europe? Name their capitals.
9. What islands are in the Mediterranean Sea?
10. Give a brief history of the USA, listing the important events.

B. Mathematics

1. What is arithmetic?
2. List the five principal operations of arithmetic.
3. What are the names of the different kinds of fractions and give an example of each.
4. Reduce  $7/8$  to a decimal.
5. Multiply  $.302 \times 305$ .
6. Reduce  $6 \frac{3}{4}$  to an improper fraction.
7. If 750 men require 22,500 rations of bread for one month, how many rations will 1200 men require?
8. How many men should be detailed from each of the following companies to fill a detail for a guard of eighty men?  
(A Company - 60 men; B Company - 75 men; C Company - 50 men)
9. How many pounds each of pork, flour, coffee and sugar will it take to supply an army of 16,000 men for 20 days if each man is allowed a daily ration of  $3/4$  lb. pork,  $1 \frac{1}{4}$  lb. flour,  $1/16$  coffee, and  $1/8$  lb. sugar?
10. Add  $1/3 + 3/4 + 5/6$ .
11. Multiply  $3/4$  of  $8/9 \times 6$ .
12. Divide  $3/4$  of  $5/6 \div 1/3$ .
13. What is the interest of \$16,000 at 6% from March 8, 1865 to February 3, 1867?



**Sources:**

Records Group 94, Appointments, Commission and Personal Branch, Adjutant General's Office. Personnel Files of:

Hiram F. Winchester (2592 ACP 73) and

James Hook Sands (425 ACP 74).

(Both of these men received appointments in September, 1867).

APPENDIX E  
REDUCTION ATTEMPTS, 1868-1869

<u>AUTHOR OF BILL</u>	<u>NEW STRENGTH</u>	<u>NR. REGTS.</u>	<u>DISPOSITION OF OFFICERS</u>
Blaine (Feb 68)	Not Specified	37	attrition
Wilson (Feb 68)	Not Specified	Not Specified	attrition
Garfield (July 68)	25,000	41	attrition
Wilson (July 68)	30,000	42	attrition
Garfield (Feb 69)	35,000	45	attrition
Butler (Feb 69)	25,000	33	immediate muster out
Dodge (Feb 69)	Not Specified	45	attrition
Blaine (Feb 69)	Not Specified	30	attrition
Act of March 3, 1869	35,000	40	not mentioned

Sources:

The New York Times, February, 1868 - March, 1869.

The Army-Navy Journal, February, 1868 - March, 1869.

APPENDIX F

THE SUPERNUMERARY OFFICER LIST, 1869

Rendered Supernumerary	622
Attrition and filling of Vacancies	- 122
Supernumeraries as of January 1, 1870	<u>500</u>

<u>DISTRIBUTION BY RANK</u>		<u>DISTRIBUTION BY MILITARY DUTIES</u>	
Colonels	17	District & Department Staffs	120
Lieutenant Colonels	18	Indian Agents	64
Majors	20	Recruiting	58
Captains	177	West Point or College Duty	16
First Lieutenants	211	Freedman's Bureau	15
Second Lieutenants	55	Staff and other arms	24
Chaplains	2	Miscellaneous	41
Total:	<u>500</u>		<u>338</u>

Source:

Official Army Register for January, 1870, pp. 130-168, 227A.

APPENDIX G

DELINQUENT OFFICERS AND REASONS THEREFOR

<u>REASON</u>	<u>MAJOR CAUSE</u>	<u>SECONDARY CAUSE</u>
Previous Court Martial	96	
Intemperance	22	5
Pending Court Martial	19	3
Inefficiency	10	3
Pay Fraud	3	
Mental Problems	2	
Gambling	2	
Falsely Accused Another	1	
Previously Dismissed	2	7
In Civilian Jail	1	
Age	1	
Educational Defects	2	3
Disobedient/ Insubordinate	2	2
Deserter	2	
Sickness	1	
Indebtedness		5
Tyrant		1
None Stated	8	

Source:

RG 94, AGO, LR, 2208 AGO 1871, and 2169 AGO 1871.

APPENDIX H

OFFICERS RECOMMENDED FOR SUPERNUMERARY LIST

<u>REASON</u>	<u>MAJOR CAUSE</u>	<u>SECONDARY CAUSE</u>
Inefficiency	8	
Immoral	8	1
Mismanage Funds/Debts	5	3
Intemperance	5	3
Insubordinate/Indifference	5	2
Previous Court Martials	3	
Pending Charges	1	2
Sickness	2	
Age	2	
Unadaptable	2	
Tyrant	1	1
Educational Defects	1	1
Absent without leave	1	
Shirker	1	
Might not retire	1	
None Stated	37	

Sources:

RG 94, AGO, LR, 2151 ACP 1871 and 2176 ACP 1871

APPENDIX I

NUMBERS OF OFFICERS, BY REGIMENTS, INVOLVED IN

THE CONGRESSIONAL ACTIONS

	RECOMMENDED TO BENZINE BOARD	TRANSFERRED TO SUPERNUMERARY LIST	VOLUNTARY RESIGNATIONS	TOTAL		RECOMMENDED TO BENZINE BOARD	TRANSFERRED TO SUPERNUMERARY LIST	VOLUNTARY RESIGNATIONS	TOTAL
1st Art	5	1	2	8	3rd Inf	1	4	1	6
2nd Art	5	4	4	13	4th Inf	1	1	3	5
3rd Art	2	0	4	6	5th Inf	4	1	0	5
4th Art	4	2	3	9	6th Inf	3	1	1	5
5th Art	0	0	1	1	7th Inf	0	5	0	5
1st Cav	2	6	2	10	8th Inf	3	1	0	4
2nd Cav	2	1	1	4	9th Inf	3	0	2	5
3rd Cav	6	7	3	16	10th Inf	0	1	1	2
4th Cav	3	4	1	8	11th Inf	0	1	1	2
5th Cav	5	0	5	10	12th Inf	4	5	4	13
6th Cav	0	2	1	3	13th Inf	4	1	3	8
7th Cav	7	0	5	12	14th Inf	1	0	3	4
8th Cav	6	2	5	13	15th Inf	0	0	1	1
9th Cav	0	3	1	4	16th Inf	0	2	0	2
10th Cav	10	2	5	17	17th Inf	0	2	1	3
1st Inf	1	1	1	3	18th Inf	0	3	0	3
2nd Inf	0	0	0	0	19th Inf	3	1	4	8

## APPENDIX I CONTINUED

REGIMENT				
20th Inf	0	3	2	5
21st Inf	3	3	6	12
22nd Inf	1	0	2	2
23rd Inf	2	3	4	9
24th Inf	0	3	1	4
25th Inf	0	4	4	8
OTHERS	8	44	111	163
TOTAL:	98	124	199	422

## Sources:

Official Army Register for 1871 and 1872.

The Daily Patriot, January 19, 1871, p. 1.

APPENDIX J

DISPOSITION OF CASES BY BENZINE BOARD

	FOUND UNFIT	FOUND NOT UNFIT	WITHDRAWN	RESIGNED	NOT REPORTED	INSUFFICIENT TIME	TOTAL
UNKNOWN	1	4	12		1		18
INTEMPERATE	11	2	6	3	3	1	28
INEFFICIENCY	4	6	6	1	1		18
LOW MORALS	2	1		1		1	5
PREVIOUS COURT MARTIAL	2		2	1	1		6
NEGLECT	1	1	1	1			4
LAZY	1	2					3
INTEGRITY	1	1				1	3
GAMBLER	1	1		1			3
PREVIOUSLY DISMISSED			1	1		1	3
EDUCATIONAL DEFECTS	1	1					2
DEBTS	1						1
PENDING COURT MARTIAL			2		1		3
INSUBORDINATE		2					2
PHYSICALLY DISABLED	1						1
TOTAL:	27	21	30	9	7	4	98

SOURCES:

The Daily Patriot, January 19, 1871, p. 1.

RG 94, AGO, ACP: 42 various files.

RG 94, AGO, LR, 2171 ACP 1871, 2208 AGO 1871, 2169 AGO 1871.



APPENDIX K

THE BENZINE LIST

<u>NAME</u>	
Major John P. Sherburne	disregard of pecuniary obligations (1889 ACP 1871)
Capt. Dudley Seward	inefficiency (366 ACP 1871)
Capt. William M. Maynadier	overindulgence in liquor (1955 ACP 1871)
Capt. Richard C. Duryea	excessive use of intoxicants (466 ACP 1879)
Capt. Charles H. Pierce	intemperance (3651 ACP 1871)
Capt. George S. Peirce	intemperance (3653 ACP 1871)
1 Lt. William P. Bainbridge	physical disability not in line duty (B 1358 CB 1864)
1 Lt. William J. Cain	intemperance (6247 ACP 1886)
1 Lt. Edward P. Doherty	lack of good moral character (D184 CB 1866)
1 Lt. Robert Carrick	intemperance; overbearing disposition; violent temper (21 ACP 1871)
1 Lt. George F. Raulston	intemperance (300 ACP 1889)
1 Lt. John J. Driscoll	immoderate use of liquor; lacks knowledge of profession (3546 ACP 1889)
1 Lt. Melville R. Loucks	neglect of duty; avoided staff duty (3616 ACP 1871)
*1 Lt. Edward S. Smith	incapability and ignorance (2171 ACP 1871)
1 Lt. John H. Hardie	inefficiency; lack of aptitude to learn (3589 ACP 1871)
2 Lt. Charles F. Roe	inefficient; immoral character (1110 ACP 1872)
*2 Lt. William E. Doyle	intemperance; bad conduct (2171 ACP 1871)
*2 Lt. Edward M. Merriman	intemperance (2171 ACP 1871)
*2 Lt. Thomas A. Reily	intemperance (2171 ACP 1871)
2 Lt. Richard Rees	inattention and want of zeal; inclined to dissipation (3660 ACP 1871)
*2 Lt. Julius Stommel	unknown (S 269 CB 1870)

## APPENDIX K CONTINUED

*2 Lt. Robert S. Fletcher	identified as delinquent due to one court martial (F 82 CB 1870)
2 Lt. Thomas G. Tracy	Negligence in duties (3686 ACP 1871)
2 Lt. Thomas Newman	defective education, immoderate use of alcohol (3630 ACP 1871)
2 Lt. William L. Wann, Jr.	deficiency of moral principle; gambling (2553 ACP 1880)
*2 Lt. Smith J. Gurney	identified as delinquent due to one court martial (G 97 CB 1868)
2 Lt. Thaddeus Roberts	low moral character (3664 ACP 1871)

\*cases not found; data taken from another source as indicated

## Source:

Records Group 94, Adjutant General's Office, Appointment, Commission and Personal Branch. Case file numbers are adjacent to cause for recommendation.

APPENDIX L

GAINS & LOSSES, AUGUST 1, 1865 - JANUARY 1, 1870

YEAR	GAINS			LOSSES						
	APPT + REAPPT	- CANCEL		RESIGN + DIED + DISM	CASH + RETIRE	RETIRE + MISC	(wholly)			
1866	563	8	11	159	57	24	11	2	13	29
1867	63		148	87	67	2	1	1	14	4
1868	1127	16	68	93	97	13	17	8	21	6
1869	54	6		95	54	19	10	7	43	
1870	59	9	1	33	11	5	4	2	1	
NET GAIN			1677					NET LOSS		1010
								AVERAGE ANNUAL LOSS		229

Source:

Official Army Registers for 1866-1871.

VITA

David Perry Perrine

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

**Thesis:** THE BENZINE BOARD: THE UNITED STATES ARMY REDUCTION OF  
1870

**Major Field:** History

**Biographical:**

**Personal Data:** Born in Winthrop, Massachusetts, January 13, 1936,  
the son of Lieutenant Colonel and Mrs. Henry P. Perrine.

**Education:** Graduated from Admiral Farragut Academy, Toms River,  
New Jersey, in June, 1953; received Bachelor of Science degree  
from the United States Military Academy in 1957; enrolled in  
Master's program at Oklahoma City University in 1974; trans-  
ferred to Oklahoma State University in January, 1975; comp-  
leted requirements for Master of Arts degree at Oklahoma  
State University in December, 1976.

**Professional Experience:** United States Army Officer from 1957 to  
the present, serving in varied assignments in this country,  
the Far East and Europe. Currently assigned as an advisor  
to the Oklahoma National Guard in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.