

THE ABANDONMENT OF CERTAIN MILITARY POSTS.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

CONCERNING

The abandonment of certain military posts.

APRIL 20, 1878.—Referred to the Committee on Military Affairs and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, April 19, 1878.

The Secretary of War has the honor to transmit to the House of Representatives, for the information of the Committee on Military Affairs, in response to a letter from the chairman of said committee, copies of reports from the commanding generals of military divisions and departments, stating what military posts within the limits of their respective commands can be abandoned with advantage to the service.

The General of the Army submits the reports, with recommendation that they be transmitted to the House as a partial answer to the inquiry of the Military Committee, and adds: "Before taking any definite action I advise some delay, because the occupation of some of the posts recommended to be vacated and disposed of were first occupied and still continue to be occupied at the instance of the Indian Bureau, or to give a sense of security to the inhabitants in the vicinity. The Secretary of War has experienced that, whenever we attempt to vacate military posts for reasons purely military, members of Congress often ask for delay or non-action. Before making any large sacrifice, all interests should be consulted. I approve, however, in general terms of the several recommendations."

In order that all who are interested in the matter may be advised of the action contemplated, it is respectfully recommended that this document be printed.

GEO. W. McCRRARY,
Secretary of War.

The SPEAKER, *House of Representatives.*

Copies of reports of division and department commanders concerning military posts within the limits of their respective commands which can be abandoned with advantage to the service, in reply to circular letter of January 17, 1878, from headquarters of the Army.

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSOURI,
Chicago, January 27, 1878.

GENERAL: I have the honor to make the following reply to your communication of the 17th instant:

I recommend that the posts of Forts Sully and Rice, in the Department of Dakota, be broken up. They have, so far as I can see, fulfilled all the objects for which they were built, and the troops can be quartered at other points without any additional expense. The posts of Abercrombie and Seward were abandoned during the past year. The temporary posts at the New Red Cloud and New Spotted Tail agencies are entirely dependent for their permanency upon the permanency of the said agencies. If they are removed to other localities, these posts will be abandoned.

In the Department of the Platte, I recommend the abandonment of Forts Hartsuff and Bridger, Camp Stambaugh and North Platte Station. These posts have fulfilled the purposes for which they were erected, and are no longer of vital necessity, and the troops that now occupy them can be quartered at other posts without any additional expense to the government. I think that Camp Sheridan should also be abandoned, but will recommend that it be allowed to remain until about the 1st of June next, when we can judge better what course to pursue in regard to it.

In the Department of the Missouri, I recommend that Forts Larned, Garland, Union, Selden, and Craig be abandoned. I think that these posts have also fulfilled the purposes for which they were established, and the troops now stationed at them can be quartered at other places without increasing the expense. I am of the opinion that in about another year or within eighteen months Forts Hays, Wallace, and Lyon can also be dispensed with, but the time has not yet arrived for giving them up.

In the Department of Texas, I recommend the abandonment of Forts Richardson and Griffin, as I think these posts have also fulfilled the conditions which called for their establishment, and the garrisons can be stationed at other posts without involving additional expense.

I have the honor to inclose herewith the replies of the department commanders in this division to the inquiries contained in your letter of the 17th instant.

I am, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
P. H. SHERIDAN,
Lieutenant-General.

Brig. Gen. E. D. TOWNSEND,
Adjutant-General, Washington, D. C.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF DAKOTA,
Saint Paul, Minn., January 22, 1878.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of January 17, 1878, calling upon me to report what posts in this department may be abandoned with advantage to the public service.

In reply to it, I have the honor to inform you that, in my judgment, Forts Rice and Sully can be given up with decided advantage to the service. Fort Rice is upon the right bank of the Missouri River, twenty-five miles below Fort Abraham Lincoln, and twenty-five miles above Standing Rock agency. Since the construction of these last-named posts, its only possible use has been to furnish winter quarters for mounted troops. In summer the place has been an incumbrance, for it has been necessary to send infantry there to hold it whenever the cavalry has taken the field. In consequence of the construction of the new posts on the Yellowstone, Rice is no longer needed for shelter. It has been a cavalry post; but should it be maintained as such, new stables would be required. I would, therefore, abandon it, and build three, or perhaps four, sets of stables for cavalry at Standing Rock, at which place there are spare quarters for officers and men. These stables could be built cheaply of logs, or perhaps more cheaply still of lumber from the buildings at Fort Rice. I, therefore, recommend that from the best of the lumber in the buildings at Rice sufficient be taken to build four stables at Standing Rock; that the doors, windows, and blinds be taken from all the buildings and sent to neighboring posts; and that the remainder of the lumber in the buildings be sold. This lumber is not of sufficient value to find a market as lumber, but will make good fuel for steamboats.

Fort Sully, a few years since, was an important post, and Cheyenne agency was a dependency upon it. Last year the post at Cheyenne was greatly enlarged, barracks having been built there for a regiment of infantry. It is now the important post in that region. The two posts are but seven miles distant from each other, and therefore Sully is useless. The new buildings at Cheyenne were hastily and very cheaply built; they need improvements which are essential to their stability, and also enlargements and additions. I therefore recommend that Sully be dismantled; that the doors, blinds, windows, and the lumber be sent to Cheyenne; the valuable portions of the lumber to be used in construction and repairs, the remainder of it to be issued as fuel. I also recommend that the military reservation at Sully be added to the Indian reservation established on the left bank of the Missouri by executive order. This last recommendation I consider of great importance. Should it not be done, the opportunity would be given to illicit traders and other border vagabonds to intrude themselves into the midst of the Indian camps, and the whole purpose for which the executive reservation in question was established would be defeated.

I respectfully invite attention to the fact that three posts in this department, viz, Forts Abercrombie, Ripley, and Seward, have been abandoned within the last year. I think no other post in the department can be safely abandoned at present.

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
ALFRED H. TERRY,
Brigadier-General Commanding.

ADJUTANT-GENERAL U. S. ARMY,
Washington, D. C.

(Through headquarters Military Division of the Missouri.)

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE PLATTE,
Omaha, Nebr., January 24, 1878.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication, dated January 17, 1878, in which I am requested to communicate

my views as to what military posts within the limits of this department can be abandoned with advantage to the service, and as to the proper disposition to be made of them.

In reply, I respectfully recommend the abandonment and sale of Forts Bridger and Hartsuff, and the post at North Platte. While no military necessity now exists for troops at Fort Fred Steele, Fort Landers, Fort McPherson, and Sydney Barracks, yet as these are cheap places for the stationing of troops, and as they may be necessary in future for the quartering of such additional troops as military necessity in this section may render necessary, I recommend that they may be retained at present. It is my belief that if the promise to the Sioux Indians to permit the movement of their agencies away from the Missouri River in the spring be made good, military posts will be required either at the present location of Camp Sheridan and Camp Robinson, or at the points where the new Sioux agencies may be established. There is now a large amount of building material and other public stores at these posts, and at present, I do not recommend their abandonment. Should it be decided that posts be established in future at the places where the Sioux Indians may be located, I would recommend their transfer to such places. All building material now at them can be transported to and used for the construction of the new posts with great advantage.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEORGE CROOK,

Brigadier-General United States Army, Commanding.

To the ADJUTANT-GENERAL U. S. A.,

Washington, D. C.

(Through office assistant adjutant-general United States Army, headquarters Military Division Missouri.)

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE MISSOURI,

Fort Leavenworth, Kans., January 23, 1878.

GENERAL: In reply to your letter of the 17th instant, I have the honor to state that at various times within the last five years I have recommended the relinquishment of several posts in this department, which, in my opinion, are no longer needed for military purposes. The difficulty has been, and still is, that if abandoned there will be no shelter for the troops which occupy them. A certain military force is needed in this department for the demands made for protection against Indians, and for other objects, and must accordingly be kept at some convenient point in the department whence they can readily be sent to the points threatened. Of course stations for these troops should be chosen fulfilling the above conditions, and at the same time possessing, as far as possible, the advantage of economy in maintaining them.

The larger the bodies of troops concentrated at any given point, the less will be the cost of supplying them. When to this fact is added the great benefit in discipline and efficiency they are certain to derive from concentration, it should seem that consolidation of posts ought to be the policy of the War Department. As before stated, the difficulty of making a concentration lies in the want of shelter at any of the points which might be chosen.

At the time the numerous small posts, at present occupied, were established, immediate local necessities and a condition of our relations with the Indian tribes, not now existing, probably rendered the posting

of troops in these localities necessary to the safety of the frontier settlers, and the overland route to Colorado and New Mexico.

These conditions are now quite changed, and the necessities of that time no longer obtain; but to concentrate now and give up the small posts no longer needed, requires the building of new quarters at the points selected for the concentration.

There is not, I suppose, the slightest doubt in the mind of any officer of the Army that such concentration would be of immense benefit to the Army in every way, and especially in the way of economy.

With the understanding, therefore, that shelter for the troops now at the posts I shall refer to, will be provided at the posts I suggest shall be maintained, I give a list of the military posts in this department which, in my opinion, can be given up.

Forts Lyon, Wallace, Hays, Harker, and Larned on the plains west of this place, and Forts Craig, Selden, and McRae, in New Mexico.

The troops now occupying the first group to be concentrated here or at Riley. The garrisons of the posts of the second group to be distributed to the other posts in New Mexico.

Fort Harker can be disposed of at any rate now, as there are no troops there. Should these posts or any of them be given up, I recommend that the reservations be divided up and sold, and that the money obtained for them be devoted to building, at the points to which these garrisons are transferred. In this way much of the cost of quarters at such points will be saved.

If it be not considered well to build quarters for the troops now occupying the posts to be given up, I have to say that the only posts which can be abandoned now are Fort Harker, Kansas, and gradually Fort Craig, New Mexico.

That my opinions on this subject may be fully known, I insert extracts from my annual report of 1871, in which the advantages of consolidating the many small posts into a few large ones are fully discussed, both as a measure of economy and of general benefit otherwise to the Army and the government.

The buildings at nearly all the frontier posts now occupied by troops are very cheap log or frame structures, put up hastily and for temporary occupation. They need constant repair to keep them in habitable condition, and will need more every year. Every dollar spent on them, I consider, in my view of the future, a waste of money. I do not doubt that the sums spent for repairs, would, in the course of four or five years, amount to a sum sufficient to put up substantial new quarters at better points, and so as to concentrate the troops where they would be more efficient for the service required of them, and where they could be maintained at much less cost, and with great advantage to their discipline and morale. I do not think that any of the posts in this department and of New Mexico should have a garrison less than a regiment. The office now imperfectly performed by numerous small and expensive posts could be better, more cheaply, and more completely performed by movable camps established in the neighborhood of the present small posts, during the summer season, the only time during which Indian hostilities on the plains may be expected or are indeed practicable. I append what was said on this subject in my last report more fully than it is necessary to repeat it here.

The completion of the Kansas Pacific Railway to Denver, and the changed condition of the Indians, both as to their location and relations with the military, have greatly simplified the question of the number and position of military posts, and have, I think, enabled us to determine, in most cases, with some degree of certainty, the location of the permanent military posts in this department, and the military dispositions necessary for the future.

The railroad, traversing the department from east to west, furnishes cheap and rapid communication, and puts most of the posts within easy reach of supplies. It becomes practicable, therefore, to conduct military operations with facility over the larger part of this department, to receive immediate intelligence, and to concentrate troops with rapidity. It seems, therefore, more practicable now to defend the numerous exposed points on the frontier from some large central posts, on or near the railroad, than it

was in times past imperfectly to effect the same object by the establishment of numerous small posts.

The Indians on the southern reservations cannot reach the settlements exposed to them in Kansas and Eastern Colorado without crossing, or very nearly approaching, the line of the railroad where their appearance and number can be rapidly communicated by telegraph, and the necessary force sent by rail. Small detachments placed at the important stations along the railroad, in proper defensive buildings, easily protect such stations until assistance telegraphed for can reach them.

The depredations of Indians on the settlements in Kansas and Colorado must of necessity be committed during the warm weather. There is no grass for animals on the plains in the winter, and the violent snow-storms and severe cold altogether prevent the Indians from traversing them at that season.

Summer camps of cavalry or infantry sent out in the early spring to important points from some large central posts accomplish all the objects to be expected from small posts kept up all the year at the same points, and I am satisfied that they can accomplish these objects much more completely and at vastly less cost.

It may be safely asserted that the same number of troops stationed at a large post can be subsisted at much less cost than would be incurred if they were distributed at a number of small posts. The administrative machinery of a small post, the police, the service in the quartermaster's and subsistence departments, and for daily extra duty, are nearly as great as for a large post. The waste of supplies—a large item—is greater when issued in small quantities than in large. It will be apparent without detail that the general statement as to expenses is well founded.

The *esprit*, the discipline, and efficiency of troops are greatly promoted by assembling them in large bodies, equal at least to one regiment. Every officer knows this fact well.

In the service on the frontier the want of men for active pursuit of Indians and other military operations in the field has been severely felt, and this want has been largely due to the distribution of the troops at small posts. With a thousand men at one post, it is easy to put into the field on the shortest notice eight hundred and fifty men. Distribute the thousand men to four small posts, and it will not be found practicable to put into the field six hundred men.

If, therefore, the needed protection to settlements and routes of travel can be as completely secured by a few large posts as by many small ones, three very important things can be accomplished: 1st, a large reduction of expense; 2d, better discipline and *morale* among the troops; 3d, the power to use much more of any given force for field service.

In my own opinion, the only posts needed in that position of this department east of New Mexico are Forts Sill, Reno, Elliott, and Camp Supply, all in the Indian Territory, and Forts Leavenworth and Riley.

The four first-named posts entirely command all the reservation Indians south of the Arkansas River, and, if properly garrisoned, completely inclose the Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowas, Comanches, Apaches, Pawnees, and Osages on their reservations.

Fort Riley is located in a region which produces almost everything needed for the subsistence of troops, which can be bought at a lower price than in any other place in the West, except perhaps Leavenworth. It is in an open country sufficiently wooded for necessary purposes, and at the junction of two large streams, giving abundant running water at all times. It has a reservation of about twelve thousand acres, and is, in every respect, an admirable place to concentrate at least one regiment of cavalry, which, placed there with the means of rapid transit westward, would fulfill every requirement of protection on the plains better than when distributed among several small posts.

Fort Leavenworth is the best point I know west of the Mississippi for the concentration either of infantry or cavalry. It is central, and communicates by rail in every direction and with every place where troops may be needed.

Nowhere can troops be more cheaply subsisted or more easily supplied. With a regiment of cavalry at Riley and two regiments of infantry here, or even one regiment, the posts of Larned, Hays, Wallace, Lyon, and Dodge can be given up, and it is not too much, in my opinion, to say that one-third the expense of subsisting such a force would

be saved, whilst the service now performed would be better done and the troops kept in all respects in a better state of efficiency and discipline.

I am, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,
 JNO. POPE,
Brvt. Major-General, U. S. A., Commanding.

Gen. E. D. TOWNSEND,
Adjutant General United States Army.
 (Through headquarters Military Division of the Missouri.)

[Telegram.]

SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS, — 25.
 (Received at Chicago, January 25, 1878.)

To General R. C. DRUM,

Assistant Adjutant-General, Chicago, Ill.:

Under previous recommendation, having been authorized to abandon Forts Richardson and Griffin, and it being directed to reoccupy Fort Quitman, which I still consider unnecessary, I have no stations in the department which I think, with due regard for public interests, should be abandoned.

ORD, *Brigadier-General.*

[Indorsement on telegram.]

CHICAGO, *January 28, 1878.*

General Ord was not ordered from these headquarters to reoccupy Quitman.

The order was to reoccupy it when, in the judgment of the department commander, it was deemed necessary to protect public interests.

P. H. SHERIDAN.

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE ATLANTIC,
New York, April 12, 1878.

SIR: In further response to your circular letter of January 17, 1878, requesting my views as to what military posts in my command could be abandoned with advantage to the service, &c., I have now the honor to report concerning those posts which are not now, and have not for some time been, occupied by troops, but are in charge of ordnance-sergeants, &c.

David's Island, New York Harbor, near New Rochelle, N. Y.—It was used as a recruiting depot and rendezvous for troops during the rebellion. It is a large fine island, and well suitable for such purposes, or for a general hospital in time of war. There is no present demand for it, unless it is necessary for like purposes now or in the future. The buildings have, with a few exceptions, been removed, and the island is in charge of an agent.

Fort Standish, Plymouth, Mass.; Fort Andrews, Plymouth, Mass.; Fort Sewall, Marblehead, Mass.—These are temporary earthworks, erected for coast defense during the rebellion. So far as known here, the lands on which they are located were deeded to the United States, and no doubt

the Engineer Department has the correct record. They might be useful in case of hostilities affecting our seaboard, as was anticipated, during the rebellion.

The following are permanent works, and should, in my judgment, be retained :

- Fort Wood, New York Harbor, Bedloe's Island.
- Fort Lafayette, New York Harbor, at the Narrows.
- Fort at Sandy Hook, N. J., eighteen miles from New York City.
- Fort Griswold, Connecticut, east from New London.
- Fort Montgomery, New York, Rouse's Point.
- Fort Winthrop, Massachusetts, Governor's Island, Boston Harbor.
- Fort Phoenix, harbor of New Bedford.
- Fort at Clark's Point, near New Bedford.
- Fort Constitution, New Hampshire; Goat Island, Portsmouth Harbor.
- Fort McCleary, Maine, Kittery Point.
- Fort Scammel, Maine, House Island, Portland.
- Fort Gorges, Maine, Portland Harbor.
- Fort Knox, Maine, near Bucksport.
- Fort Sullivan, Maine, Eastport.

NOTE.—This is an old work. It would require very extensive fortifications to make it valuable in the defense of the waters of the harbor. As its importance in this respect is understood to be undergoing the consideration of the Engineer Corps, I make no recommendation concerning it.

- Fort Topham, Maine, near Parker's Island.
 - Fort on Dutch Island, Rhode Island, west from Newport.
 - Fort Delaware, Delaware, Pea Patch Island, 42 miles below Philadelphia.
 - Fort Mifflin, Pennsylvania, Delaware River, near Philadelphia.
 - Fort Washington, Maryland, Potomac River, 14 miles below Washington.
 - Fort Carrol, Maryland, Patapsco River, below Baltimore.
 - Fort Macon, North Carolina, near Beaufort, North Carolina.
 - Fort Jefferson, Florida, Garden Key, Dry Tortugas.
 - Fort Taylor, Florida, southwest shore of island of Key West.
 - Fort Pickens, Florida, Santa Rosa Island, Pensacola Harbor.
 - Fort Marion, Florida, in Saint Augustine.
 - Fort Clinch, Florida, Amelia Island, near Fernandina.
 - Fort Pulaski, Georgia, Cockspur Island, 15 miles from Savannah.
 - Fort Moultrie, South Carolina, Sullivan's Island, Charleston Harbor.
 - Fort Caswell, North Carolina, near Smithville.
 - Fort Jackson, Louisiana, west bank of Mississippi River, 70 miles below New Orleans.
 - Fort Saint Philip, Louisiana, east bank of Mississippi River, opposite Fort Jackson.
 - Fort Macomb, Louisiana, right bank of Chef Menteur Pass, 25 miles from New Orleans.
 - Fort Livingstone, Louisiana, on Grand Terre Island, 25 miles from New Orleans.
 - Fort Pike, Louisiana, on Island Les Petites Coquilles, entrance to Lake Pontchartrain, 28 miles from New Orleans.
 - Fort Massachusetts, Mississippi, Ship Island, Gulf of Mexico.
 - Fort Gaines, Alabama, Dauphin Island, Mobile Bay.
 - Fort Morgan, Alabama, Mobile Point, entrance of Mobile Bay.
- I have already expressed my views, in letter of February 18, and in

indorsements of February 25, 1878, as to the posts now garrisoned by troops in the Departments of the East, South, and Gulf.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WINF'D S. HANCOCK,
Major-General, Commanding.

The ADJUTANT-GENERAL UNITED STATES ARMY,
Washington, D. C.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE EAST,
February 18, 1878.

SIR: In reply to the circular-letter from the Adjutant-General's Office, of January 17, 1878, requesting my views as to what military posts in the Department of the East could be abandoned with advantage to the service, and the proper disposition to be made of such as can, and stating that the Secretary of War has under consideration the propriety of reducing the number of military posts in the United States, I have the honor to state as follows:

Fort Mackinac is only occupied at present as quarters for troops sent there from the South and West, from time to time, for rest and recuperation, after serving in western and southern regions. If posts are used for such purposes, however, the vicinity of the National Park, on that island, would make it judicious that this post should be retained; but except on these grounds, there seems to be no reason why it should not be abandoned.

Fort Niagara is an important position, and should not be given up, although in time of peace its occupation is not necessary.

Fort Ontario is a defensive position for the city of Oswego in time of war. I do not, however, consider it of any great importance unless the system should be adopted of protecting all such cities by works, and there are now greater cities on the lakes which have no such protection. Then, too, the location of this fort (since the modern extension of the city) makes it probably a not very useful structure.

Madison Barracks at present seems to serve no important purpose save as quarters for troops, and if not used in that connection could be turned over to the charge of an ordnance-sergeant. There is the skeleton of a navy-yard adjoining which may or may not be used in the future. Upon that I think depends the propriety of retaining the post or not. The buildings are of stone.

Plattsburgh Barracks is now only used as quarters for troops who have served on southern stations, and are sent there for recuperation.

Carlisle Barracks furnishes excellent quarters for troops, but serves no other purposes.

I know of no reason for the retention of a command at Washington arsenal any more than at any other arsenal.

In reference to the following posts in Department of the East, namely, Forts Wayne, Gratiot, Brady, Porter, Preble, Independence, Warren, Adams, Trumbull, Hamilton, Wadsworth, Schuyler, McHenry, Foote, and Monroe, I consider that they occupy positions which cause their retention to be a matter of wisdom; but of course they need not be garrisoned in time of peace, save in so far as we desire them as quarters for troops not actually employed elsewhere.

In connection with this matter, it is well to say that all posts are bet-

ter cared for when garrisoned than when left in the care of ordnance-sergeants or agents.

There are several posts in the department unoccupied or in charge of ordnance-sergeants; a report concerning them will be made hereafter.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

By W. S. Hancock, major-general, commanding:

JAMES B. FRY,

Assistant Adjutant-General.

The ADJUTANT-GENERAL OF THE ARMY,
Washington, D. C.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE GULF,
New Orleans, La., February 4, 1878.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your circular-letter of January 17, desiring my views as to what military posts within the limits of this department can be abandoned with advantage to the service, and as to the proper disposition to be made of such as can.

The only military posts now occupied in this department are Jackson Barracks and Baton Rouge Barracks, in Louisiana; Little Rock Barracks, Arkansas; and Mount Vernon Barracks, Alabama.

Of these, Little Rock, Baton Rouge, and Mount Vernon were arsenals, and never intended to be garrisoned by troops. During the war and reconstruction times it was found necessary to make use of them, and additional buildings were added to those formerly used as arsenals.

I know of nothing in the present condition of affairs that renders their longer occupation as military posts necessary. Jackson Barracks, just below New Orleans, should, in my opinion, be retained as a military post, and a full garrison kept there.

As to the disposition to be made of those posts, if abandoned, I should say the government ought to retain possession of them. All the buildings of any present value are brick or stone, and will deteriorate but little each year. They would sell but for little now, and might eventually be of great value to the government. An old non-commissioned officer could be placed in charge of them, or some retired officer might be very glad to take charge of them for the privilege of occupying quarters there. At all events, the preservation of the buildings can cost but little, and in my opinion the government should not dispose of them.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. C. AUGUR,

Brigadier-General, Commanding.

The ADJUTANT-GENERAL OF THE ARMY,
Washington, D. C.

[Indorsement.]

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE ATLANTIC,
New Orleans, La., February 25, 1878.

Respectfully transmitted to the Adjutant-General of the Army.

In reference to the posts in the Department of the Gulf, I may state, in comment on the recommendations of the commander of the Department of the Gulf, that if Little Rock, Baton Rouge, and Mount Vernon arsenals are no longer necessary as arsenals, I see no possible necessity for their occupation by troops, save so far as they may furnish quarters for such as may for the time being be not actively employed in active service.

If sold, these properties would not bring great prices at the present time especially; and as the buildings are of durable material it would be better to retain them, even if each should only be occupied by an ordnance-sergeant in charge. Some future service for them would no doubt be found.

If a system of regimental recruiting should be established in the future as has been at times suggested, by districting the country according to the number of regiments in the service, these places would serve good purposes for the permanent headquarters of such recruiting establishments, and together with others of like nature owned by the United States would provide suitable and ample facilities at those for regimental nurseries.

Jackson Barracks, near New Orleans, La., should be retained and a garrison maintained there. It has served useful purposes in the collection and distribution of troops during the Mexican war and on other occasions, and if like events should transpire again similar services would be required of it. Besides, its occupation would maintain a garrison for the several permanent defenses on the Gulf and around the passes leading from the Gulf to New Orleans and the Mississippi River.

WINF'D S. HANCOCK,
Major-General, Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE SOUTH,
Atlanta, Ga., January 29, 1878.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of letter of the 17th instant, making inquiry as to what posts within the limits of this department can be abandoned with advantage to the service, and as to the proper disposition to be made for such as can be abandoned, and to say in reply that I am of opinion that the post of Newport Barracks, Kentucky, might be permanently abandoned, and should abandonment be decided on, that the property—real estate—should, to avoid any further expense for care and repairs, be sold as soon as authority therefor can be had.

There seems, since the removal of the recruiting depot, to be no real necessity for a permanent garrison there, and the ground is of too limited extent to make the retention of the post specially desirable for possible future use as a rendezvous for volunteer troops or militia.

At the time of the return to this department, in November last, of the Eighteenth Infantry from Pennsylvania, I recommended that Newport Barracks, then vacant, be regarrisoned; but the reasons related to convenience at the time; the two companies, with the officers, could, all concerned, be more comfortably provided for there than at McPherson Barracks, and the cost for supplies at Newport would be no more, certainly, and the expenses attendant on the reoccupation of the post no greater than the additional expense for transportation of the companies to Atlanta; in addition to which reasons was the consideration that a small force would be at hand should further occasion arise requiring the presence of troops anywhere within easy reach of Newport.

The post of Chattanooga, Tenn., might now be abandoned without special detriment; but as the post is on government ground, I think it would be advisable, with the force at present in the department, to retain it for the fiscal year, for which time but little expense for its maintenance will be required.

When abandoned, the buildings, which are of little value, should be sold.

The ground pertains to the tract on which is the national cemetery at that place.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

THOS. H. RUGER,
Colonel Eighteenth Infantry,
Bvt. Brig. Gen. U. S. A., Commanding.

The ADJUTANT-GENERAL OF THE ARMY,
Washington, D. C.,

(Through headquarters Military Division of the Atlantic.)

[Indorsement.]

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION ATLANTIC,
New Orleans, La., February 25, 1878.

Respectfully transmitted to the Adjutant-General of the Army.

Newport Barracks might be abandoned, the space occupied being too small for any great concentration of troops; yet it is one of the places which would furnish suitable facilities for a regimental recruiting establishment, should that system be adopted in the future for procuring recruits for the Regular Army, as has been frequently suggested.

In the mean time, with such views as to the future, an ordnance-sergeant might be placed in charge when it should be thought advisable to remove the two companies of the Eighteenth Infantry, now there, to Atlanta, Ga., where the headquarters of the regiment are stationed, or elsewhere. The removal had better, probably, in such case, be made about the close of the present fiscal year (June 30, 1878), when the supplies there would be about exhausted.

The present garrison was sent there for winter quarters, after the labor riots of last summer. The property is of value—real estate, as well as the material of the buildings. The walls of the buildings are generally of brick. If sold, I presume a later period would be better than the present.

Chattanooga can be abandoned at any time, in my opinion (the ground on which it stands belongs to the national cemetery there), and only the buildings (of frame and not important) need be disposed of. The troops (one company Eighteenth Infantry) might be transferred to Atlanta, where the regimental headquarters are.

If these troops should be ordered to Atlanta or elsewhere for quarters merely, the removal should be deferred, probably, until the present supplies shall have been exhausted, say to end of present fiscal year (June 30).

Atlanta furnishes quarters for a regiment, and as long as a regiment of infantry is maintained for service in the Department of the South, Atlanta might be the point. There is no other such place in this department offering the facilities for that number of troops. The buildings are of frame, and belong to the United States. They are built on leased land, however, the rent of which is \$4,000 a year and the taxes (the latter not onerous).

We can abandon the post and remove the buildings in any year before its expiration, by giving the owner of the land three months' notice of such intention.

Years of rent expire about the 31st of October, I believe; but that date is a matter of record in my office, as well as in the War Department.

I write this while absent from my headquarters, and not having access to the papers in the case.

WINF'D S. HANCOCK,
Major-General, Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE PACIFIC
AND DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA,
San Francisco, Cal., March 25, 1878.

SIR: In answer to your letter of January 17, 1878, communicating the directions of the General of the Army that the division and department commanders should express their views as to what military posts within the limits of their respective commands can be abandoned with advantage to the service, and as to the proper disposition to be made of such as can, I send herewith letters from the commanders of the Departments of the Columbia and Arizona, giving their views on the questions submitted, and have myself to report as follows:

DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA

At the breaking out of the hostilities with the Nez Percés under Joseph, I caused the post of Camp Independence to be broken up and left in charge of an agent of the Quartermaster's Department. I then intended not to reoccupy this post, and had the public property withdrawn.

The post consists of buildings recently put up at a cost of many thousands of dollars, and has two or three reservations of valuable land—one for the post, and the others for grazing and wood.

Now that the completion of the Southern Pacific Railroad gives a speedy access to the country in which Camp Independence is situated, and the Indians have become harmless, I recommend the abandonment of the post, and that the land be sold in small bodies, in such way as the law may allow. The land, even without the buildings, is worth more than the usual price of \$1.25 per acre. The buildings will have to be sold with the land.

This is the only post in this department I can at this time recommend to be abandoned, unless it be McDermitt.

I am aware that the posts of Camps Halleck, McDermitt, and Bidwell have been thought to be out of position; and I am informed that an effort was ineffectually made by my predecessor to break them up and unite the troops at some central point near the railroad at Reno.

I concede that, were it now an original question, I might recommend a different place or places for the troops now stationed at these posts. But having in view the recent failure to do so, I had put the quarters at Halleck in good repair, at a cost of several thousand dollars, and as it is a healthy post I do not recommend it to be abandoned.

As to Bidwell, it has the great advantage of being healthy and being one of the cheapest posts in the department. It is sufficiently near Indians for troops to operate from in three directions.

In this connection I must ask attention to the reports of General Howard and the agents (Reinhart and Turner) of the Indian Department. The latter, for reasons in which I do not concur, and which are set forth in my letter to you of the date hereof, recommends that the posts of Bidwell and McDermitt be broken up, and the troops sent to Fort Klamath and Camp Harney, on the Klamath and Malheur reservations. General Howard, on the other hand, recommends that Harney be broken up and the troops be sent to Boisé.

Camp McDermitt is on the mail-route from California and Nevada to Idaho, and is useful in this connection merely. The cost of supplies is great, particularly for wood and forage; yet the post was of importance when the Nez Percé hostilities broke forth.

Still, if either of the posts are to be given up, I prefer to abandon this

one, mainly because of its comparative expense. If it is to be vacated, it should be utterly dismantled, for, if not occupied, it would soon be plundered of everything.

I do not know anything of Camp Harney, except from the reports of General Howard. He was, during the Nez Percé affair, solicitous about this post not being left weak-handed, and I sent troops from Bidwell to re-enforce it. A portion of the quarters have been recently destroyed by fire. If the Indian Bureau do not want the post on the reservation, I concur with General Howard, and recommend its being given up, or transferred to the Indian agent.

If it is to be abandoned, I recommend that Bidwell be strengthened. It is central as to Indians to the north, northwest, and northeast. It is one of the cheapest posts for supplies we have.

This would give Klamath, Bidwell, Bois , and Halleck, abandoning Harney and McDermit.

In such case additional buildings would have to be put up at Bois  and Bidwell.

Camp Gaston is still necessary, and I think of adding to it an additional company, till the question of the Indians on the Lower Klamath and Trinity is settled.

DEPARTMENT OF THE COLUMBIA.

I have already spoken of one of the posts (Harney) in this department, and I recommend no other post be given up.

Fort Stevens, at the mouth of the Columbia, could be left in charge of the ordnance sergeant and a small guard from Fort Canby. This I would do now if there were any funds available for transporting the troops.

General Howard refers to Fort Townsend, but there are many Indians in that vicinity. The post is healthy, has accommodation for two companies, and is easily supplied; and I do not recommend its being given up.

The other posts in this department are Vancouver, Walla Walla, Lapwai, Colville, and the new post at C ur d'Alene—all needed. The last two are, by recent decision of the General of the Army, to be four-company posts.

DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA.

I concur in the main with the department commander's report, except—

First. As to Fort Yuma. This post I have already abandoned as a station for troops, removing the garrison of this post and that of Independence to Benicia Barracks. There they are more economically supplied, and more healthy than at Yuma. The completion of the Southern Pacific Railroad enables this to be done, as these troops can now be sent to Yuma on telegraphic notice in time for any emergency. A small guard is kept at the post to protect the public property. I recommend this to be continued. In any case, I recommend the retention of the quartermaster's depot, and so much of the reservation as lies on the left bank of the river where the depot is built.

Second. I do not recommend the abandonment of Mojave. It is in a position whence troops will be available, is comparatively cheaply supplied by river, and the barracks and quarters have been recently rebuilt and repaired.

I recommend the retention of Whipple, Verde, McDowell, Apache, Bowie, and Thomas, and recommend the abandonment of Grant and

Lowell, provided a post be established on the Southern or Mexican frontier, either at Camp Huachuca or some suitable place in that quarter, and additions are made to the quarters at Thomas.

I have heretofore recommended a post in Southern Arizona, but without success; it was judged premature, and that it would be best to wait for the construction of the railroad. But the same reasons that will cause posts to be established in the northern portion of this division, as at Spokane Falls and at Lemhi, just east of the division line, apply with at least equal force to Southern Arizona. The building of the railroad will be of advantage in the matter of administration, but the post is needed with reference to the frontier, which, it is to be hoped, is fixed.

The need of this post will be seen to have commenced with the Gadsden purchase. Then Fort Buchanan was established, succeeded at intervals by Calabasas, Tubac, Crittenden, Wallen, and now Huachuca.

This question has been and is still complicated by the difficulties in getting a site not covered by a Spanish title, and one that is not unhealthy.

The present camp is furnished from the posts of Lowell and Grant, which I recommend be discontinued, provided, as I said, the troops there can be provided for at a new post south and at Camp Thomas. The troops are needed but are not advantageously posted, either with respect to operations or military administration.

In saying this I beg it may be kept in mind that this thing of abandoning posts and establishing new ones has been going on constantly ever since the Mexican war, and has been caused by the constantly changing condition of our relations with the Indians as they are pressed and pushed from place to place by the intruding whites.

But the end of the Indian question is rapidly approaching, and in a few years it will be a thing of the past.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

IRVIN McDOWELL,

Maj. Gen., Commanding Mil. Div. Pac. and Dept. Cal.

The ADJUTANT-GENERAL, U. S. A.,

Washington, D. C.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE COLUMBIA,
Portland, Oreg., February 1, 1878.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of your communication of the 17th ultimo, relative to the propriety of reducing the number of the military posts in this department.

I think the Malheur Indians could just about as well be controlled from Fort Boise, by sufficient force, as from Camp Harney. This would dispense with the post at Harney.

The temporary force at Mount Idaho should not be disturbed at present.

In case of great emergency and absolute necessity of great reduction, which in my judgment does not now exist, the posts of Townsend, Canby, and Stevens could be evacuated and placed in charge of ordnance-sergeants, the artillery companies being concentrated in the vicinity of San Francisco.

In any event, while the immigrants and Indians are restless and unsettled, it does not appear to me to be wise to diminish the force in this

geographical department, and therefore, as the troops are quickly available where they are, at healthful posts, I would not advise a change in the posts on the coast at present.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

O. O. HOWARD,
Brigadier-General, Commanding.

The ADJUTANT-GENERAL OF THE ARMY,
Washington, D. C.,
(Through Division Headquarters.)

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA,
Prescott, February 18, 1878.

SIR: In reply to your communication of January 17, asking for my views as to what military posts within the limits of this department can be abandoned with advantage to the service and as to the proper disposition to be made of those that can be, I have the honor to submit the following:

I do not think that any of them can be abandoned with advantage in a pecuniary view. The posts, as now built, are only sufficient to quarter the present number of troops in the department. To abandon a post would necessitate the construction of new quarters elsewhere for the troops that would come from the abandoned post.

In a military point of view, several posts might be given up for the purpose of concentration. The troops at Camp Lowell are not needed there, and could go to the camp in Huachuca Mountains; Camp Grant could be abandoned and the troops sent to Camp Thomas; Camp Bowie should remain until the few renegades that are still out can be disposed of; Fort Whipple and Camp Verde, being but forty miles apart, could be united preferably at the former post; Camp McDowell should be continued as a protection to the Salt River settlements, so long as the San Carlos reservation contains as many uncontrolled Indians as are now there; Camp Mojave could be abandoned.

Fort Yuma should have enough men to keep the post in repair, as it may require to be occupied, as it commands a strategic position where a navigable river enters foreign territory. The concentrations suggested will necessitate the building of additional quarters at the posts where the troops are concentrated and involve a large expense; for this reason only, I do not recommend it.

Camp Apache, on the White Mountain reservation, cannot soon be given up.

In a few years, if the population continues to increase, the troops can be withdrawn from most of the posts, as they will no longer be needed against the Indians.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

AUGUST V. KAUTZ,
Colonel Eighth Infantry, Bvt. Maj. Gen. (assigned),
Commanding Department.

ADJUTANT-GENERAL UNITED STATES ARMY,
Washington, D. C.,

(Through Headquarters Military Division Pacific and Department California.)