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Introduction

The Ohio Militia and National Guard before 1903

The second half of the nineteenth century witnessed a profound change in the militia in the United States. Driven by the rivalry between modern warfare and militia tradition, the role as well as the ideology of the militia institution fitfully progressed beyond its seventeenth century origins. Ohio’s militia, the third largest in the country at the time, strove to modernize while preserving its relevance. Like many states in the early republic, Ohio’s militia started out as a sporadic group of reluctant citizens with little military competency. The War of the Rebellion exposed the serious flaws in the militia system, but also demonstrated why armed citizen-soldiers were necessary to the defense of the state. After the war ended, the militia struggled, but developed into a capable military organization through state-imposed reform. This organization underwent a national test in 1898 when the government federalized Ohio militia for service in the Spanish-American War. The war solidified many of Ohio militia’s reforms that had been evolving since the end of the Rebellion. In Ohio and the rest of the states, the National Guard of 1900 bore little resemblance to the militia of forty years before.

This thesis explores the development of the Ohio National Guard from 1860 through 1900. Since the various definitions for military service have changed since 1903, an important distinction must be made early regarding terminology. In the first and second chapters, the term militia is used broadly to describe Enrolled and Organized militia. The enrolled militia of a state was every male citizen aged 18 through 45 who the government could call to arms. The
organized militia was a smaller group of citizens who actively trained in military skills. The National Guard came into existence during the War of the Rebellion and replaced earlier embodiments of the enrolled militia, which did not endure.

The history of the Ohio militia in this era is defined by three important events; the War of the Rebellion fought from 1861 through 1865, the tumultuous period lasting from 1877 to 1894, and the Spanish-American War in 1898. Each of these events contributed to the growth of the Ohio National Guard by presenting the state with challenges that exposed weaknesses in its militia laws. Ohio first had to form a capable militia, the Ohio National Guard, then after a decade of near inactivity reestablish the Guard and redefine its purpose in response to working-class unrest in the Gilded Age. In 1898, Ohio had to show the War Department that its Guard was a capable military organization. This is not only a chronicle of the Guard itself; the Ohio National Guard’s saga displays how republican militia ideology evolved in the United States.

Local resistance to government control of militia came from republican ideology dating to before the Revolutionary War. After the War of the Rebellion, this ideology inspired the states to modernize their militias through their own reform efforts. There was no proscribed method for militia reform; sometimes Ohio’s military leaders were quite successful in their efforts, while other times they had to rely on Regular Army assistance. State National Guards also influenced each other and at times banded together in organizations like the National Guard Association. But, as the Spanish-American War proved, reform that Ohio and other states desperately needed was not possible on the state level alone. Throughout the late nineteenth century, Ohio resisted federal control over its military affairs until it no longer became practical or possible. Though not a failure, Ohio’s militia modernization was incomplete. This demonstrates why federal reform was necessary.
This thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter I discusses the republican ideas surrounding the militia and citizen-soldier in the United States. It examines the attitudes regarding standing armies and the Regular Army that have their roots in the reign of the English King James II. Ohio’s early militia history is then outlined. After the first chapter, the thesis focuses on the Ohio National Guard, proceeding chronologically.

Ohio militia during the War of the Rebellion from 1861 to 1865 is examined in the second chapter. This chapter describes the creation of the Ohio National Guard, the pinnacle of Ohio’s previous attempts to organize a standing militia. Threats to the state and the absence of large numbers of federal troops inspired the state legislature to form the Ohio Volunteer Militia of 1863. Under 1864 legislation, the revamped OVM became the Ohio National Guard, which served both Ohio and the federal government in the war. It was the first truly modern militia in Ohio and one of the best in the country.

The third chapter explores the militia in the period between the War of the Rebellion and the Spanish-American War. During the interwar period the National Guard emerged as the preeminent militia organization, in Ohio and elsewhere. The Guard fought for recognition from the federal government and for professionalism in its own ranks. As well as the Guard’s evolution, this chapter focuses on three major deployments: the Railroad Strike of 1877, the Cincinnati Courthouse Riot of 1884, and the multiple strikes of 1894.

Chapter IV covers the Ohio National Guard in the Spanish-American War of 1898. This mobilization fostered little but disappointment among Guardsmen, but it proved a watershed in regards to the future of the National Guard. Since the War of the Rebellion, the National Guard had fought for recognition as a fighting force. The war allowed the Guard to mobilize as part of
the United States Army, but in the end it had to give up much of its autonomy to ensure its future as a military organization.

This thesis examines a few prevalent themes in National Guard history. Foremost is republican ideology. The new United States inherited a traditional distrust of standing armies and professional soldiers. U.S. lawmakers codified these sentiments, which left the country to rely on a large and untrained militia in the event of war or invasion. The flaws in this scheme became apparent in the early republic, but it took over a century before the outmoded Militia Act of 1792 was superseded by the Militia Act of 1903. Ohio’s citizens also adhered to these republican ideas of the militia. The state showed strong support for its citizen-soldiers, and repeatedly favored using its own men over those of the U.S. Regular Army in defending the state.

Another aspect vital to understanding the growth of the militia is professionalization. Volunteer spirit, the belief that the individual was there by their own choice, crippled the militia before the Rebellion in 1861. Afterwards, it continued to be a problem that plagued state troops. State military leaders, recognizing the benefits of discipline and respect for officers, gradually implemented professional practices. Though they never completely lost their sense of independence, Guardsmen became better disciplined.

The theme of federal power and influence over the state militia is the most abstract and most difficult to articulate. Beginning during the War of the Rebellion, the Ohio National Guard was fiercely loyal to the federal government and fought to preserve the union. During the war, the state troops moved easily between federal and state service. After the war, the Guard competed with the Regular Army to serve the government during war, but insisted that the state retain control in peacetime. This relationship, marked by both loyalty and independence,
continued into the next century as the Guard gradually relinquished autonomy in return for federal support and funding.

These facets of the militia are connected by identity. Ohio Guardsmen identified with their home state first. Deployment in the War of the Rebellion and the War with Spain reinforced this identity. Legislation of the Progressive Era, however, worked against regionalism and began to erode state identity. Identity relates directly to federal power; soldiers identified more with their home state as long as the state held power over its militia. As government control expanded, state identity waned.

The Militia and the National Guard

Militia are citizens who become soldiers on a temporary basis, especially during an emergency like war. American militia origins lie in the county levies of Anglo-Saxon England.\(^1\) Opposing the militia are regulars, professional soldiers whose only role in society is to fight. In the U.S., militia were organized by their respective states, and unlike regular soldiers, identified first with their home state. Militia were average people, citizens who could rapidly, effortlessly, and temporarily assume the role of soldier. In theory they owned their own weapons and uniforms, drilled regularly in their free time, and when needed formed into companies and regiments, ready to fight for their families.

Militia were never supposed to leave their home county in England or colony in America for military service, it was a purely defensive institution. In the English colonies, the provincial

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system formed companies and regiments within the colonies to fight offensively. After the American Revolution, the country abandoned the provincial system, preferring to expand the role of the militia. In the first half of the nineteenth century the militia earned a reputation for laziness. Militia musters became opportunities for politicians to politic, and militia weapons collected rust. The militia remained popular in the country; even where no units had organized people still held militia in high esteem. Though mocked and scorned by professional soldiers, the militia had a favorable reputation thanks a popular memory of citizens fighting as soldiers in the War of Independence. After an embarrassingly poor performance in the War of 1812, state militias were reinvigorated by the War of the Rebellion starting in 1861. Despite the honorable tradition behind the term, states began dropping the word militia from their armies. Indiana christened its state militia the Indiana Legion, and the Ohio Volunteer Militia became the Ohio National Guard.

Ohio first applied the name Ohio National Guard in 1864. The Ohio Volunteer Militia had existed in usually small strengths before and during the War of the Rebellion before expanding greatly in 1863. This rejuvenated organization needed a new name, and the state decided on National Guard. State militia leaders were enthusiastic about rebranding their forces, though the exact origin of the idea is not mentioned. The term National Guard applies specifically to the Ohio organized militia of 1864, which disbanded after the war. The Ohio

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2 A thorough examination of the provincial system exceeds the scope of this thesis. For more refer to Fred Anderson, *A People’s Army: Massachusetts Soldiers & Society in the Seven Years’ War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).
4 Ohio Adjutant General’s Department, *Annual Report of the Adjutant General to the Governor of the State of Ohio, for the Year ending December 31, 1864* (Columbus, OH: Richard Nevins, 1865), 8.
Volunteer Militia of 1866 replaced the ONG of 1864. In 1870, the state created the Ohio Independent Militia. In 1876, the militia again became the Ohio National Guard.\(^5\)

The Ohio adjutant general’s office used National Guard specifically and militia broadly. This thesis uses similar nomenclature: the term militia is used throughout as a broad description of state forces while National Guard pertains only to the particular organization. For example, the Cleveland Greys is described as a militia company, not an Ohio National Guard company.

**Origin of the term National Guard**

Use of the term National Guard in the United States comes directly from a New York militia regiment that adopted the name in honor of an 1824 visit by Gilbert du Motier, the Marquis de Lafayette, who commanded the *Garde Nationale* during the earliest stages of the French Revolution in 1789 and again in 1830.\(^6\) In France, the *Garde* consisted of land-owning citizens, equipped at their own expense, and organized into companies for the protection of their communities. Like the U.S. militia, the *Garde Nationale* existed separate from government armies, except when called into service, as Napoleon did to the Paris *Garde* in 1814.\(^7\) In form and function, the French *Garde* had many similarities to the American militia.

Ohio’s adoption of the term National Guard is symbolic of the change in the militia during the War of the Rebellion. National Guard denotes a specific purpose—protecting the people—which is absent in the generalized term militia. The National Guard, comprised of

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citizen volunteer soldiers, guards a nation of people. They were not an army of conquest; they protected the country’s people and ideals. This sentiment was strong among militiamen during the War of the Rebellion and the term became widespread. National Guard became popular during the War of the Rebellion in the northern states.\textsuperscript{8} At the end of the war, the Adjutant General of the United States suggested all states rebrand their states forces National Guard. The name itself was an important factor in this suggestion, but it also speaks to the popularity and success of state militias like the Ohio National Guard.\textsuperscript{9} By 1896 every state save for three had renamed their militia the National Guard.\textsuperscript{10}

**Nature of the Ohio Militia**

A strong militia tradition exists in Ohio and the rest of the United States, dating back to the colonial era. Militia first entered the Ohio country in French and Indian War campaigns. Though no major battles were fought in Ohio during the American War of Independence, militia crossed through the countryside. Their actions were not honorable, however, and events like the Gnadenhutten Massacre, committed by militia on peaceful Native Americans, mark the earliest history of the militia in Ohio.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{8} Other terms were used, such as Legion in Indiana, but the word Guard had an appealing connotation. The rebel Confederacy called its militia the Home Guard, as did a few northern states like Iowa, Kentucky, and West Virginia. Confusingly, loyalists in Missouri formed the Home Guard, which opposed the secessionist Missouri State Guard, which had evolved from the Missouri Volunteer Militia, which had been usurped by secessionists.

\textsuperscript{9} In 1865, the Wisconsin Adjutant General suggested reorganizing the militia and giving it a new name, the National Guard. Jerry M. Cooper, *The Rise of the National Guard: The Evolution of the American Militia, 1865-1920* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 22.

\textsuperscript{10} Mahon, *History of the Militia*, 110.

In the early decades of the republic, the U.S. unsuccessfully relied on militia to protect its citizens and fight its wars in lieu of a strong Regular Army. The Indian Wars of the 1790s again saw militia enter Ohio, but their record as soldiers is less than remarkable. Josiah Harmar and Arthur St. Clair’s defeats were both caused in large part by overzealous and underprepared militia.\textsuperscript{12} While U.S. regulars fought in both events, their numbers were too few to stem defeat. Militia at home were more effective though. In settlements like Marietta they were able to defend against attacks and more importantly dissuade assaults altogether.

During the Indian Wars of the 1790s, Ohioans defended their families, homes, and settlements, but these ad hoc militia groups lacked permanent military structure, let alone discipline and training. When war ended the militia essentially ended as well. Ohio’s early peacetime militia was inconsistent and lacked organization. There was no easy answer to this difficult problem. As Ohio entered statehood and the threat of attack from hostile Native Americans evaporated, so did the militia.

Ohio had laws that provided for a standing peacetime militia. Ohio became a state in 1803 and its first constitution established that the governor was commander-in-chief of the militia until the government called the state troops into federal service. The constitution also established the election system for militia officers. Ohio’s constitution of 1851 gave the governor authority to call out the militia if the state came under threat of invasion or rebellion.\textsuperscript{13} Legislators did not envision militia as serving outside of their state, so by law they could serve no longer than three months. There were no further specific rules for the militia in the state. Rather, Ohio relied on federal laws, especially the Militia Acts of 1792. The second act codified

\textsuperscript{12} Colin Calloway, \textit{The Victory with No Name} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 67.
\textsuperscript{13} Ohio Constitution of 1851, Article IX.
the traditional militia establishment, every white male citizen aged 18 to 45 years, while the first act set the stipulations that gave the president authority to call the militia into federal service.\textsuperscript{14}

In times of emergency the Ohio militia took on more proper military form. In 1812, the state created three militia infantry regiments. These were raised thanks to a complex system of military districts that divided up the state. Despite being better organized, wartime also militia lacked training. Enthusiasm did not compensate for military incompetency, and the Ohio militia are best remembered for their involvement in Hull’s Surrender.\textsuperscript{15}

The peacetime and wartime Ohio militias were entirely separate entities, in both idea and form. In peacetime the state struggled to maintain a militia. Citizens, feeling no threat to themselves or their state, were unwilling to dedicate time to military training and did not keep weapons or equipment at their own expense.\textsuperscript{16} The peacetime militia in Ohio is difficult to fully understand. Citizens could not and were not willing to practice and maintain proficiency with weapons in peacetime. The process of calling up militia and organizing them was lengthy. Militia had to be trained and familiarized with changing technology like rifled-muskets. They also never lost their independent citizen spirit and were resistant to military discipline. They did not want to become professional soldiers, however they needed to be better prepared than an armed and irate mob.

Ohio had established a modern-looking militia organization. On paper the Ohio Volunteer Militia of 1857 was a smaller, better uniformed and equipped “organized” militia, apart from the larger enrolled militia. It contained battalions of regularly trained citizen-soldiers

\textsuperscript{14} Militia Act of 1792, Second Congress, Session I. Chapter XXVIII. Passed May 2, 1792.
\textsuperscript{16} During wartime concerned citizens did join the militia, which became the basis of federal volunteer forces.
still organized along county lines.\textsuperscript{17} In peacetime, however, this organization had no willing participants and state legislatures were reluctant to fund the militia. The few militia outfits that thrived in peacetime were Independent Companies, not associated with the official state organizations.

Independent militia companies existed in the populous area of Ohio. Cleveland and especially Cincinnati were home to well-established and long-term independent militia companies. This thesis does not focus on the independent companies, a rich and fascinating subject unto themselves, though they do come into the narrative at times and their relationship with the National Guard in the later chapters is mentioned. Independent Companies did provide a model for the state militia at times, and in the reform era they integrated into the National Guard.

**Role of the Federal Government**

The relationship between the Ohio militia and the United States federal government is not easily summarized. Though it boasted one of the largest militia organizations, Ohio’s relationship with the government was like that of most other states for military matters. As the National Guard emerged, its leaders struggled against the Regular Army to ensure its function as a military force. The Guard had many supporters in the government, especially Congress, which gave it some amount of sway at critical times. The National Guard was never able to guide federal militia policy, but it was able to influence it and protect against detractors in the Regular Army.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17} Ohio Adjutant General’s Department, *Militia Law of Ohio: Being an Act to Organize and Discipline the Militia and Volunteer Militia; Passed March 28, 1857* (Columbus: Richard Nevins), 1857.

\textsuperscript{18} Martha Derthick, *The National Guard in Politics* (Cambridge; Harvard University Press, 1965), 22-23.
The Guard wanted government support but it did not want government control. At its height the National Guard only had enough tangible power to block legislation that would cede control to the Regular Army. During the Rebellion state militias were favored by the government, which did not have the strength to protect every state. Later, in the 1870s and 1880s, the peacetime National Guard did not get enough funding from their state alone. Knowing that the Guard could be called into service in the event of a war, the government provided additional funds. Ohio and other state National Guards banded together to form the National Guard Association to organize support. However, both calling the Guard into federal service and the giving states necessary militia appropriations remained contentious. This unstable relationship lasted until the Spanish-American War.

Despite their disagreements, the Ohio militia and later National Guard were loyal to their country and its government. When the War of the Rebellion erupted and President Lincoln called for troops, Ohioans volunteered in such great numbers that they exceeded their quota. When the governor offered the Ohio National Guard for a summer of federal service almost every member joined, and those few who did not were denounced by the rest.\(^\text{19}\) In the 1870s and 1880s, Ohio Guardsmen expressed their desire to serve the federal government if called to, and rejoiced at the opportunity in 1898.

Though they desired to serve in the federal army, the Guardsmen identified first with Ohio. In peacetime the regiments called themselves Ohio Infantry, and as federal soldiers sought to preserve their pre-war unit and state integrity. Upon entering federal service their regiments were designated Ohio Volunteer Infantry. This worked flawlessly in the War of the Rebellion,

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\(^{19}\)Ohio Adjutant General’s Department, *Annual Report of the Adjutant General to the Governor of the State of Ohio, for the Year ending December 31, 1864* (Columbus, OH: Richard Nevins, 1865), 32-33.
but when Congress tried to give the Regular Army control over state volunteers in 1898 this identity came under threat. Opposition from the Guard and its supporters was vehement enough to defeat this proposal. If this legislation would have passed, volunteers would be organized into new organizations irrespective of their state of origin. But the state were able to enter as their own regiments in 1898.

Once established as the only viable militia organization, the National Guard as a whole competed against the Regular Army to serve the government and country. Harkening back to republican ideals of the revolutionary era, militiamen of the Guard argued that the regulars should not be the only protectors of the state. However, the Regular Army proved time and again more reliable than the National Guard. Their performance in the Spanish-American War sealed the Guard’s reputation. Up the Spanish-American War the National Guard managed to protect its interests thanks to support from Congress.\(^{20}\) When the Guard earned a poor reputation during the war its support waned. The country saw the Guard as a military force, but believed that the only way to make it truly an effective force would be to give the Army greater oversight and the government more control. Much needed reform would finally come to the Guard, but it would be imposed by the federal government.

**Historiography**

Study of the Ohio National Guard requires a multitude of sources related to militia and military affairs on both the state and national levels. Sources devoted to the National Guard seek to show the relevancy and importance of the Guard in the history of the United States military.

They also try to explain how the militia grew into the National Guard. While these sources mention Ohio and its militia, they are not limited to a single state. This thesis uses these larger histories in close coordination with sources that deal with Ohio specifically.

The two most useful books in this study of the Ohio National Guard are broad histories of the militia in the United States. First is John K. Mahon’s *History of the Militia and the National Guard* which looks at very general trends in the militia and later the National Guard. This study lays out the nature of the militia from its Medieval origins to the Cold War. Mahon’s emphasis is on the militia’s participation in wars, but he also does a good job of relating the peacetime struggles and experiences of state soldiers.

Jerry L. Cooper’s *The Rise of the National Guard* is much less expansive in scope than Mahon and far superior in its analysis. Cooper is concerned with the National Guard, not the militia as an institution, and thus starts with the militia and its problems during the Civil War. His examination continues to the Spanish-American War and ends with the First World War. But his concern is not with federal soldiers; during these wars Cooper looks at state militias and home guards. Mahon does not limit his scope, and describes the experience of state soldiers in federal service, often with poignant quotations, but he lacks the detail found in Cooper.

Other sources that concern the National Guard are used mostly in relation to larger perceptions of the militia and National Guard. This includes Charles Royster’s *A Revolutionary People at War* which provides a great analysis of colonial and revolutionary era attitudes towards militia and regulars as well. Stephen Brumwell’s *Redcoats* is used in conjunction with Royster, as it examines the stereotypes held towards British regulars among colonial Americans mostly during the French and Indian War. *A Proper Sense of Honor* by Caroline Cox, which discusses George Washington’s army, delves into the relationship between the Continental Army and
colonial militia. John Resch’s *Suffering Soldiers* offers a brief but exemplary analysis of the memory of Revolutionary militia. These works form the foundation for the argument concerning militia ideology in the United States.

The arguments in this thesis regarding government power and the expansion of the federal government in the late nineteenth century are less obvious and draw from a variety of sources. The argument about professionalism reflects Robert Wiebe’s *Search for Order* which contends that travel and communication spurred professional development. The Ohio National Guard certainly benefitted from professionalism. This fostered a closer relationship with the federal government that in turn furthered the Guards professionalism.

Cooper provides a tantalizingly brief explanation of federal power in relation to the militia, arguing that the National Guards formed during the Rebellion were an assertion of state over federal power. Though he does not elaborate on the subject, this thesis takes a closer look at the same idea. It is difficult to establish a clear historiography for the question of government authority in its relation to the militia and National Guard. Sources are scarce, and to address this argument first the federal government itself must be looked at.

The growth of government and the expansion of federal power in the era after the War of the Rebellion has been explored. Brian Balogh’s *A Government Out of Sight: The Mystery of National Authority in Nineteenth-Century America* and Richard Bensel *Yankee Leviathan: The Origins of Central State Authority in America, 1859-1877* both do an excellent job of explaining the changing nature of government power in the latter half of the nineteenth century. However, neither author has a great deal to say about the militia.
In her brief *The National Guard in Politics*, Martha Derthick connects the relationship between National Guard and the federal government. Her arguments are intriguing and offer a good point to start from, but they lack depth. Her subject matter is also very brief, covering some of the 1870s through the 1890s before focusing largely on post-Spanish-American War reform. Still, she articulates an argument that others do not. The best evidence for the relationship between the state militia and federal government is found in the words of Guardsmen printed in Adjutant General’s Reports.

For state-level National Guard reform Cooper offers again excellent analysis but his focus is not only on Ohio. Mahon has little to contribute, giving more of a fact based narrative of the years leading up to the Spanish-American War. The most focused information on Ohio National Guard reform come from careful examination of Ohio Adjutant General’s Reports. These often under-used reports also contain accounts from regimental and company commanders; their insight into specific events, such as riots, can be crucial when most other sources are only newspaper accounts. The Adjutant Generals often make recommendations for changes to the Guard, and comment on the laws passed by the state legislature. Such contributions are invaluable but unfortunately sparse. Adjutant General Reports mostly contain financial reports and inventory statistics.

This thesis uses Adjutant General’s Reports from the 1860s past the Spanish-American War in 1898. In some years the reports are sparse and the commanders laconic, and therefore not every year is referenced here. For years containing war or riot the reports are often examined in great detail. It is important keep in mind that these accounts can be very biased, as they are told from the perspective of Guardsmen, who were compelled to reiterate their own important and usefulness. This attitude reflects the defensive nature of the Guard at this time, when the Regular
Army appeared to be usurping their role of the nation’s defenders. When available, federal War Department reports on the militia are used. Their value is immense but their attention to individual states can be sparse; these reports did not include systematic examinations and evaluations of the Guard until the 1890s.

Contrasting with the official documents taken from Adjutant General’s Reports are newspaper articles from Ohio papers. Using newspapers can be problematic, but they can also be immensely helpful and they contain views and opinions found nowhere else. Newspapers provide often exciting accounts of events, and, though they can be provocative or entertaining, often contain skewed versions of what actually happened. However, they provide an interesting glance at riots and other events not from the view of the National Guard.

Newspapers in general have a complex relationship with the National Guard in Ohio. Local newspapers were often strong supporters of their local Guard outfit and reported frequently on gatherings, drill, civic appearances, and annual encampments. But they can also be critical of the Guard, chastising the state or nation for not using the Guard more often and not supporting the Guard in general. Sometimes newspaper writers are even critical of the Guard, noting its appeal only to higher strata of society.

A number of articles and short works have been written about the Ohio National Guard and are used here when appropriate. These focus on specific events, like the Cincinnati Courthouse Riot of 1884, and do not offer a cohesive narrative of the militia in Ohio. A broader history of Ohio’s Guard does not exist, but this thesis draws inspiration from studies of other National Guards. Jerry Cooper addresses state and national identity in *Citizens as Soldiers: A History of the North Dakota National Guard*, following the North Dakota Guard from its humble beginnings into major wars. *Manhood, Citizenship, and the National Guard: Illinois, 1870-1917*
by Eleanor Hannah is another broader work which emphasizes the Guard’s role in society. The time span of this thesis is narrower however, stopping before the Militia Act of 1903.

Each chapter of this thesis looks at historiography individually. Most of the works mentioned here are referenced throughout, as the scope of their arguments are broad. However, their arguments relating to the time period covered by the chapter are examined separately. In addition, sources pertinent to the specific era are utilized. Often these are scholarly articles or monographic works.
Chapter I Republican Roots

The Origins of the Militia Ideal

The specter of standing armies haunted the minds of early United States law makers and politicians. A deeply rooted fear of professional soldiers, who were motivated by greed instead of patriotism, ensured that the new United States army remained small. To protect the country during war, the United States would call forth its vast armies of citizen-soldiers, the state militias. The militia is one of the strongest examples of “small r republican” ideology, the belief that power and authority rest in the hands of citizens. This ideology holds that militia were necessary for citizens to retain their power, and allow them to protect their families as well as other citizens from standing armies. Professional soldiers were viewed with suspicion and hostility; they were instruments of oppression. Instead of keeping a populace safe from harm Regulars were seen as the source of terror. This belief did not evolve in the United States; it comes from deep-seated anxieties towards armed oppressors expressed by English Whig politicians.

Mahon summarizes it well: “The fear of standing forces—brought to American from England with the earliest settlers—looms large in the history of the militia. Behind it, to be sure, was the greater fear of arbitrary, highly centralized government…”[1] For many early settlers the fear was tangible. In 1685 the vastly unpopular James II raised a standing army that threatened live and liberty of English citizens. Fear of the regular lingered after William of Orange deposed

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1 Mahon, History of the Militia, 3.
James II. English colonists took their fear with them when they settled North America. British regulars were seldom seen in the colonies in the first part of the eighteenth century. When they were the interaction conjured Whiggish sentiments of fear and distrust.

The French and Indian War, fought in North American from 1754 to 1761, witnessed a large-scale deployment of British regulars in the colonies. They were there to protect colonists and fight the French and their Native American allies. The colonists distrusted the regulars, however, and constructed an account of the war that highlighted the incompetency of British soldiers and their officers. This characterization of regulars and standing armies carried over into the new United States. That the newly independent country would even have a standing army was not a foregone conclusion. Many patriots argued against one, and in the years immediately after independence the U.S. Army sank to as low as eighty-six men. The country’s leaders believed that an army should only be used for a defense, and when threatened the country would call on its militia.

Though their performance in war was ignominious on many occasions, the militia remained popular in the American consciousness. Citizens chose to remember the valiant successes of the militia, not their failure and cruelty. This artificial/selective memory denied credit to the regulars. The United States evolved as did war and warfare. The hatred of regulars and standing armies began to hurt the militia. By keeping the militia separate from the Regular Army, the country relegated its citizen-soldiers to amateurism.

The early history of the Ohio militia reflects the amateurism that plagued the country’s citizen soldiers in the first half of the nineteenth century. Owing to militia tradition, settlers banded together informally to protect against Natives but were saved from intense fighting by the presence of the First United States Regiment. Following Mad Anthony Wayne’s victory over the
Natives in 1794 there were no threats to Ohio and citizens were unwilling to dedicate the time to maintaining a militia. After statehood Ohio’s militia continued to languish.

The state constitutional laws that created the militia and kept it apart from the Regular Army also ensured its failure. The federal government gave very little funding to the states for militia, and the state themselves were unwilling to pay.\(^2\) Attempts by Ohio and other states to breathe new life into the institution through legislation failed, although some provisions in these laws were remarkably forward-thinking. On paper the militia could look like a trained and ready state military force, but this was seldom if ever actuality.

**Historiography**

This chapter cobbles together a variety of relevant sources. While there are many works that examine the myths of the regular and militia in United States history, and there are none that relate this to the development of the Ohio militia. However, there are many sources that look at attitudes toward standing armies in the United States and some that explore the subject in depth.

Stephen Brumwell seeks to expose the reputation of the British Regular as false and fabricated. In *Redcoats*, Brumwell argues that regulars in North America were competent soldiers adept at the warfare they were involved in. He cites examples of colonial distrust towards regulars and British officers, which contribute to their poor reputation. His focus is on the Seven Years’ War though, and he does not pay much attention to earlier examples of English distrust of standing armies. Fred Anderson looks at the example of Massachusetts and explores the interactions between provincial militia and British regulars. Fred Anderson writes that

\(^2\) The government set militia appropriations at $200,000 in 1808. This was the maximum amount the government could provide to the county’s entire militia, and the amount per state was decided by militia size.
interactions between British soldiers and Massachusetts provincial militia “gave the colonial soldiers an unflattering, disturbing impression of their comrades in arms.”

There were undoubtedly earlier tensions between regulars and civilians, but the reign of James II in England left Britons with a lasting scorn for standing armies. Steve Pincus book *1688* examines the event surrounding the Glorious Revolution in which William of Orange deposed James II. Pincus looks at James’ standing army, noting its role in the Catholic monarch’s unpopularity and eventual demise. This book, while providing excellent research on James’ army, is mostly concerned with other factors that lead to the Glorious Revolution.

John Miller’s article “The Militia and the Army in the Reign of James II” provides extra detail that Pincus omits, and accounts for the English militia’s reaction to James’ military measures. Miller’s argument that James’ anti-militia policies precipitated the Glorious Revolution are dismissed by historians like Pincus, but nevertheless provides fascinating insights into the animosity between militia and standing armies.

The effects of James II and his army were felt across the Atlantic. Over half a century later, British colonists in North America proliferated English attitudes toward regulars. Their ideas were expressed during the American War for Independence. Charles Royster in *A Revolutionary People at War* recognizes the conflicted mindset of the revolutionary American colonists. They praised the militia but knew that professional regulars were their best bet at winning the war. Royster’s analysis of militia and regulars during the war is complex and he has multiple arguments that account for the often contradictory feelings of the American rebels on the subject.

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Pre-Revolution View of the Regular

American resistance to standing armies is not an American invention. It comes from English Whig tradition and a long history of reliance on militia for protection, which originated in the county defense levies of Anglo-Saxon England. Though Oliver Cromwell’s New Model Army was the first standing professional military force in Britain, much of English hatred for regulars and standing armies originated during the reign of James II. England did not maintain a large standing army until the unpopular reign of the Catholic king James, who used his standing army to protect himself from a hostile populace. After a rebellion by the Duke of Monmouth in 1685, James expanded the army from around 9,000 soldiers to nearly 40,000, many of whom were Catholic. James modeled his army after that of France, and to the outrage of the English people ordered that private citizens take on the soldiers as boarders. His army gained a reputation as murderers and rapists, and contributed greatly to James’ own unpopularity.

While increasing the size of the Regular Army, James mitigated the militia, taking away many traditional rights of English citizens as soldiers for their own defense. England had traditionally relied on the militia, but James sought to displace citizenry who were not loyal to him with his regulars. Parliament prevented successfully prevented James from abolishing the militia but could not prevent him from raising and maintaining his army. John Miller argues that

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his neglect of the militia incited the English people to rebellion in 1688.\textsuperscript{9} Though the Glorious Revolution ousted James, the rebellion ushered in a century of near constant war for England, necessitating a standing army.

While Britons grew to accept the need for professional regulars due to war with France, distrust of standing armies remained and extended into colonies. In North America, colonial scorn for regulars was common during the French and Indian War. American colonists cast their distrust of regulars onto the British soldiers and officers who fought against French and Native American incursions.\textsuperscript{10} During the seven years of conflict thousands of British regulars served in North America. Though many of these recoated regulars had come from colonies and joined their regiments recently, they were still held in low regard by civilians.

The moral laxity of regulars played a large role in the negative opinion of professional soldiers held by colonial Americans. According to Fred Anderson, the lack of religious morality among regulars instilled upon the New Englander’s a poor opinion of the professional soldiers. He argues that most of the “haughty” attitude of the British came from the officer corps, while provincials admired the bravery and discipline of regular enlistedmen.\textsuperscript{11}

General Edward Braddock became the epitome for regular incompetence in the eyes of Americans. Braddock’s defeat at Monongahela on July 9, 1755 became a story of professional overconfidence and arrogance. This was compared to the adeptness of colonials like George Washington, who tried to intervene and show the general the how to succeed only to be

\textsuperscript{11} Anderson, \textit{A People’s Army}, 111-13.
This story endured while examples of British capabilities, like the defeat of Dieskau at Lake George only two months later, were forgotten.

These were the memories held by the rebels in the American War of Independence who became the founders of the United States. The feelings were so strong that a few revolutionaries did not want the new country to maintain a standing army even during war.\textsuperscript{13} The myths of regular incompetence from the French and Indian War were perpetuated as new myths of militia prowess from the Revolution were added.

**Ideology**

The revolutionary colonists who declared their independence from Great Britain were strong opponents of standing armies and professional soldiers. Revolutionaries feared the oppression that a standing army could carry out on the orders of an autocratic government. They put their pro-militia ideology into use during the War for Independence. However, the war showed that on their own militia could not defeat a force of regulars. The rebel government was willing to raise and maintain a Regular Army, knowing that regulars would be best able to defeat the British and hoping to show that the new country could control standing army. In the wake of the successful fight for independence, the pro-militia and anti-regular ideology became more entrenched as the new country formed a durable government and political factions emerged.\textsuperscript{14}


\textsuperscript{13} Charles Royster, \textit{A Revolutionary People at War: The Continental Army and American Character, 1775-1783} (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 36.

\textsuperscript{14} Resch, \textit{Suffering Soldiers}, 65
Royster provides a description of both the militia and the Continental Army, the first United States Regular Army. He states that the militia had been popular among the colonists after Bunker Hill, but by 1776 the Continental Army became the favored military force. Militia, according to Royster, were only used out of necessity. He identifies one of the major tenants of the militia that would later become a fundamental flaw: citizen militia “would not serve the army before all others by issuing or obeying orders that violated civil authority.”\textsuperscript{15} Questioning command was a slippery slope that made for unreliable soldiers.

The Continental Army was undoubtedly the American’s primary fighting force during the war. Every state sent recruits into it and preferred it to defend them over militia. Revolutionaries did not put aside their misgivings about regular forces, however. As Royster shows, “practical calls to use the army often failed to overcome the popular aversion to permanent military institutions—an aversion than ran deeper than theoretical warnings.”\textsuperscript{16} The Continental Army remained small and poorly funded throughout the war. After the war its status as a professional army diminished and it became synonyms with, as Resch puts it, “dregs and mercenaries.”\textsuperscript{17}

The relationship between the Continental Army and the militia was strange and often confusing, as Royster’s analysis shows. In many way the Continental Army, though commanded by many professional soldiers with experience in the armies of Britain or Prussia, was a glorified militia, often comprised of colonists with little military experience and short enlistments. Their frequent training and discipline made them superior soldiers. After the war, however, the new republic ignored the benefits of a well-trained and reliable standing army while celebrating the

\textsuperscript{15} Royster, \textit{A Revolutionary People at War}, 39.
\textsuperscript{16} Royster, \textit{A Revolutionary People at War}, 38.

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supposed exploits of the militia. In popular memory, even the Continental Army became “filled with citizen-soldiers from all ranks of society according to Resch.\textsuperscript{18}

The size of the army plummeted after independence. Not only were standing armies the enemy of democracy, they were expensive, and many early politicians thought the newly minted United States would only ever fight defensively. Framers of the government believed that the militia, a defensive military force, would suffice as the country’s only military force. As the country became involved again in offensive military operations the militia proved slow to act. Shays and the Whiskey Rebellions as well as the Indian Wars of the 1790s demonstrated why the country needed a Regular Army as well as a competent trained militia.\textsuperscript{19}

Some in government supported a stronger military and the question became a point of disagreement between Federalists who believed in strong government, and Anti-Federalists who adhered to a republican system of beliefs. The Anti-Federalist derived their republican values from English Whigs. Fundamentally they were against strong central authority and powerful monarchs. They viewed armies as the means by which tyrants retained power. Federalists supported strong central authority in government, and were willing to maintain a standing army. Weariness from the recent war made for strong popular opposition to their arguments.\textsuperscript{20}

In the 1790s, U.S. politicians debated the issue. Anti-Federalist letter X, addressed to the people of the state of New York, concisely states the republican stance regarding armies of professional soldiers. The letter begins:

\begin{quote}
The liberties of a people are in danger from a large standing army, not only because the rulers may employ them for the purposes of supporting themselves in any usurpations of power, which they may see proper to exercise, but there is great hazard, that an army will
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{18} Resch, \textit{Suffering Soldiers}, 65.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Palmer, 1794, 75, 278-82.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Palmer, 1794, 41.
\end{footnotes}
subvert the forms of the government, under whose authority, they are raised, and establish one, according to the pleasure of their leader.

Brutus, the pen-name of the pen-man, argues that standing bodies of soldiers should exist only in peacetime to protect arsenals. During times of war, however, the legislature would be authorized to raise large armies. The militia would be the core of these large wartime armies. Anti-Federalists held that the militia should be purely a state organizations. Anti-Federalist expressed the fear that government control over militia would lead to tyranny.

The Militia Acts of 1792 reflect prevailing republican attitudes towards the militia. Lack of government oversight in state militia matters was no accident. Fearing a strong central authority, the militia law’s drafters gave the federal government very little control over the forces that were meant to protect the entire country in time of emergency. Except in times of invasion or insurrection, when it was “lawful for the President of the United States, to call forth such number of the militia of the state or states,” each state was left in charge of its own citizen-soldiers. This proved problematic when enthusiasm in the states for their militias declined.

The Militia Acts of 1792 were successfully implemented to subdue to the Whiskey Rebellion. However, the system that they instituted was cumbersome and inefficient, even in the 1790s. The second law, passed May 8, 1792, established that every male citizen between ages 18 and 45 of each state would be part of the enrolled militia. Once enrolled, by law the new militiamen were required to attain a musket or rifle and necessary accoutrements. From then on they were required to participate in semi-annual musters that included training and the election of

21 Anti-Federalist X
22 Anti-Federalist 29.
23 Militia Act of 1792, Second Congress, Session I. Chapter XXVIII, Passed May 2, 1792.
officers. The states were required to organize their militias into divisions, regiments, battalions, and companies, which for simplicity was done geographically.

Unsurprisingly, the militiamen themselves were strong adherents of these republican sentiments. As Ricardo Herrera writes, “Because of their self-governing and voluntary nature, militiamen and volunteers believed themselves more patriotic and worthier of trust with the Republic’s Liberty than were the regulars.”

Memory of the Militia in the United States

Militia were a common feature of wars in America from the colonial period until the industrial age when they came under closer federal regulation. Unable to wage war with its small standing army, the United States had to call on state militias or raise state volunteer regiments from militia. Each time the militia proved themselves incapable of winning a war on their own, though they did at times achieve victories. Despite their checkered military careers, the militia remained popular as the country chose to remember (or fabricate) the militia’s successes.

The militia’s popularity stems from near fanatical republican support for the institution. Royster writes that colonial rebels in America believed that virtue made their soldiers superior to British regulars. American zeal and righteousness could overcome the discipline and training of the professional. He adds that for some this was more of a hope than a belief. Civilians trusted

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25 Royster, A Revolutionary People at War, 11.
and gave their support to the militia. Leaders like Henry Lee evoked the militia rhetorically to

Militia celebrated the American War of Independence as a crowning achievement of the
citizen-soldier, but the reputation they hold is exaggerated. Royster shows that the militia were
popular following the victory over the British at Bunker Hill, but afterwards were only used
when convenient. Instead it was the Continental Army on which rebel generals relied and it was
the presence of French regulars that provided the troops necessary to end the war.27

Following independence, the United States waged its first wars against Native Americans
who saw an opportunity to remove Europeans from their lands. Militia during the Indian Wars of
the 1790s proved excessively violent and cruel towards the Native Americans, yet were
unreliable. They deserted during marches and fled during battle. They were poor soldiers,
motivated by lust for blood and concerned with their own well-being.28

The United States’ first war with a European power after the War of Independence
demonstrated the inherent problem with republican military ideology. The War of 1812 was an
unmitigated disaster for the militia. Though the war ended inconclusively, in every major action
the militia performed disastrously. Periodicals like the Port Folio blamed the militia’s poor
military skill for loosing battles and called for the government to recruit more forces.29 Forced to
raise regular infantry regiments, the government struggled to field a capable army, and arguably
did not succeed during the war’s entirety.30

26 Royster, A Revolutionary People at War, 41.
27 Royster, A Revolutionary People at War, 37
29 Resch, Suffering Soldiers, 78.
30 Mahon, History of the Militia, 77. Coffman, The Old Army, 40.
American militia failed as competent, or even useful, soldiers during times of war. Regardless of their military prowess, the militia earned a position of respect and admiration in U.S. history. Americans remembered not the failures but the successes of the militia. In his address to the Ohio National Guard Association, General Ebenezer Finley stated that during the Revolution militia “did effective service in many well contested battles… many other battles of the Revolution witnessed the heroic achievements of the militia of the colonies.” Republican ideology of the valiant citizen-soldier clouded popular memory, creating a new version of the militia’s past.

Celebration of the militia and hatred for the regulars put the United States at a military disadvantage. The War of 1812 proved this, but again the public consciousness created a new memory that collaborated with American ideology. Instead of emphasizing the militia’s disastrous performance at Bladensburg, where 15,000 militia ran in the face of British regulars and allowed them to burn Washington D.C., Americans remembered the Battle of New Orleans, where Andrew Jackson led a hastily amalgamated force of irregulars and defeated a frontal assault from improvised defenses.

Men prided themselves in enrollment and especially rank in the militia, though turn out remained low and were often used as political stumping grounds more than military drill grounds. Even as they failed to attend muster, citizens vaunted irregular forces. A mythos grew around the Continental rifleman, despite General Washington’s anger over their unreliability. This is the memory perpetuated late in the nineteenth century by artist Howard Pyle, whose nostalgic art depict an undisciplined but patriotically motivated rabble.

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31 Adjutant General’s Department, *Annual Report of the Adjutant-General to the Governor of the State of Ohio, for the Year 1885* (Columbus: The Westbote Co., State Printers, 1886), 11.
Two of Pyle’s works best illustrate this attitude; *The Battle of Bunker Hill* painted in 1897 and *The National Makers* painted in 1903. In the first, British regular infantry are depicted in the second assault on the entrenched American rebels. They march towards the enemy in near-flawless formation, upright and perfectly unformed, like a group of automatons. They may succeed in their endeavor, but these soldiers are bereft of enthusiasm for their task. In the second, the group of American rebel soldiers charge forward waving a tattered flag. Their patriotism replaces any semblance of discipline as their formation bows in attack.

Pyle, who was and remains well-known for his illustrations of children’s books, painted both works over a century after the war in an era of military professionalization. These two works and others harken back to an era when rage militaire compensated for skill on the battlefield. However, the idea that ever enthusiasm outweighed training and precision in war was a myth. As flawed as it was commonplace in the nineteenth century, this image allowed the militia to continue its existence.

**The Ohio Militia before 1860**

Before the War of the Rebellion, the Ohio militia was sporadic in existence as well as competence. During wartime armed citizenry existed out of necessity. While many young men entered federal service, those at home, either too young, too old, or with family commitments, formed militia outfits to guard their homes and communities. During peace the state struggled and at times gave up on the idea of maintaining trained militia. The militia only endured in Ohio because of tradition and occasional threats during war.
Outside of genealogical interests, little work has been done on the early Ohio militia. Even during mobilization and war Ohio maintained few troops. Most of the information here comes not from military histories but histories of Ohio as a state. They present mostly a narrative account of Ohio’s soldiers in the first half of the nineteenth century, but such an understanding is essential to grasping the latter changes to Ohio’s militia.

In the twenty first century, the Ohio Army National Guard traces its origins to the settlers in the pre-statehood era who banded together to defend their communities from Native Americans.\(^{32}\) However, settlement in the region did not become viable until after General Anthony Wayne defeated the Native American coalition at the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794. Marietta, established in 1788, is the exception. Militia were present in the fledgling community, but the First Regiment of the United States occupied Fort Harmar, located across the Muskingum river from Marietta, which protected the emerging town.

The first real use of the Ohio Militia came during the War of 1812. Ohio’s militia were unruly and unwilling to follow orders. They discharged their weapons at inappropriate times while on the march. Ohio’s militia would have refused to follow Hull to Detroit but were forced by regulars.\(^{33}\) Other regiments of Ohio militia marched towards Detroit, but did not reach the besieged fort before General Hull’s surrender. With their term of service expired, the Ohio militia blended back into civilian life. New regiments formed and rendezvoused with William Henry Harrison, but were turned back since the Kentucky militia had arrived first.\(^{34}\) However,


\(^{33}\) Hurt, \textit{The Ohio Frontier}, 331.

\(^{34}\) Hurt, \textit{The Ohio Frontier}, 332.
Ohioans did see action in the war. The government raised a U.S. regular infantry regiment in the state, the 19th, recruited from the populous regions of Ohio.\textsuperscript{35}

Ohio’s citizens faced no threats after the war of 1812. During this era of peace in the Old Northwest citizens and government alike demonstrated little enthusiasm for the militia. By the 1830s there was no Ohio militia, and at one point the legislature struck the militia from the books. Following this low point the state reestablished its militia and created the Organized Militia, which on paper looked fairly modern.

Ohio militia served in the Mexican-American War, but not as militia under militia laws. Knowing that militia term of service would end before the war could be won, the U.S. Army mustered the militiamen into federal volunteer service. The Ohio volunteers were men who had been part of the militia as well as newcomers. They served in the army that approached Mexico from the north, traveling through Texas.\textsuperscript{36}

The Ohio militia badly needed conformity and professionalism. Regardless of their ideological opposition, the state troops needed to model themselves after professional soldiers. If the state could find a balance between size and professionalism, perhaps it could maintain a moderately sized and effective militia. However, there was no impetus pushing anyone in Ohio to find this balance. It would take a direct threat to Ohio and its citizens before the state established a viable militia.


Chapter II A Vulnerable State

The Expansion of the Ohio Militia during the War of the Rebellion

On May 2, 1864, 36,000 citizens of Ohio swore an oath to join the United States Army for one hundred days.¹ After a week spent gathering equipment and forming into regiments, the soldiers left the state; some marched on foot and others boarded trains, destined for service throughout vital areas along the porous North-South border. During what became known in the annals of Ohio history as the ‘Hundred Days,’ these men protected important cities, railways, and other potential targets of marauding rebel raiders. Their presence freed up countless veteran soldiers for campaigns deep in the heart of the rebellion. The Ohioans skirmished with rebel guerillas and lost men to sickness and accident. When their time was up these men blended back into civilian life, yet they remained ready to take up arms. Before and after their time in the United States Army these men were members of the state militia, the Ohio National Guard.

The Ohio National Guard was a product of the war. When open conflict broke out in 1861, Ohio had a small state military force, the Ohio Volunteer Militia. Mobilization of Ohio’s soldiers in 1861 drained the prewar militia. To meet the quota of troops called for by President Abraham Lincoln, Ohio’s militia entered federal service often as companies or even regiments at near full strength and were augmented by fresh recruits. For a while the state reorganized Ohio Volunteer Militia regiments, but these too were fed into the president’s call for more soldiers. For the first years of war the militia existed as a system to supply the government with volunteer

¹ Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1864, 30.
regiments. If Ohio was threatened, it would be forced to rely on existing federal armies or local ununiformed militia raised for protection.

Ohio did come under direct threat in 1862. First rebel cavalry under Albert Gallatin Jenkins raided the Southeastern part of the state along the Ohio River; then the victorious army of Edmund Kirby Smith threatened the vital city of Cincinnati. Lacking any standing organized state militia, Governor David Tod called for citizens to form new militia units to defend Cincinnati from possible attack. The Ohio legislature also responded to the rebel threats. As session neared its end in 1863, it passed a new militia law that effectively gave Ohio a new standing militia. By this law, all earlier militia legislation was repealed and Ohio Volunteer Militia formations were ordered raised in Ohio’s counties. Though it retained the name of earlier Ohio militia’s, the Ohio Volunteer Militia of 1863 was different in a fundamental way: this body of citizen-soldiers existed for the protection of the state.

The Ohio Volunteer Militia of 1863 was a watershed; it was Ohio’s first organized professional military force that existed for the protection of the state, not as a quick means to feed federal mobilization during war. Before the Act, if the state were to come under threat, under trained and under prepared militia would have to be called out to defend it. Ohio’s Militia Act of 1863 helped ensure that prepared militia would be able to respond to any future threat to the state.

Ohio’s greatest threat came in the form of a cavalry raid led by rebel General John Hunt Morgan. In June of 1863, over 2,000 rebels rode through Indiana then Southern Ohio. The incursion caught Ohio in the process of forming the Volunteer Militia. Unable to resist with trained and properly armed soldiers, Ohio had to rely on newly formed militia companies to protect towns and slow the raiders. The Morgan Raid demonstrated the need for a standing
militia. Pursuant to the 1863 Militia Act, Ohio citizens formed Ohio Volunteer Militia regiments and battalions in the wake of the raid. In 1864, new legislation simplified the militia and gave it a new name, the Ohio National Guard. These were the soldiers who served the state and country during the Hundred Days.

During the latter part of the War of the Rebellion the Ohio National Guard ranked among the most professional, efficient, and modern militias of any state. Its significance to military history is not tied to its service during the war, however. Ohio’s National Guard of 1864 is remarkable for the training and uniformity among its many thousands of soldiers. It effectively remained a standing force for the protection of the state that could also easily enter service with the federal army. The Ohio National Guard was the culmination of militia laws passed by the state; years of war and legislation forged the Ohio militia into the Ohio National Guard, one of the most modern and effective state forces of the era. Necessity dictated rapid militia reform during the war.

At the cessation of hostilities in 1865, the Ohio National Guard consisted of over 35,000 citizen soldiers. Though no part of the Guard ever engaged in a major battle during the war, it was fundamental to the security of Ohio. Ohio’s Guard was unmistakably a militia, but by war’s end the Ohio National Guard attained standards that aspired to those of the U.S. Regular Army. Like a regular army, Guardsmen drilled regularly and belonged to semi-permanent battalions during the war.

The men of the militia as it existed during the Civil War were not the most likely candidates for soldiering. The bulk of Ohio’s men in their early to mid-twenties who served in the war did so in volunteer regiments in federal service, leaving the very young and the older
men to form bulwark of the militia. In 1864 the Ohio National Guard benefitted from the enrollment of veterans who had served in the federal army and had returned to Ohio. Just like their brothers, cousins, neighbors, and fellow Ohioans in federal service, however, they took up arms to protect their homes, families, state, and government against rebellion.

The U.S. Army swelled to an unprecedented size during the war. This ran counter the republican ideals of the country. Republican thinkers equated professional soldiers, who fought for money rather than their home and country, with mercenaries. During an emergency the government relied on the militia, armed citizens fighting as soldiers in order to protect their homes and their country. The Rebellion of 1861 necessitated an exception; in order to save the republic and subdue the Southern states the federal government needed to temporarily expand the army. By recreating, improving, and professionalizing the state militia Ohio attempted to create its own standing army that stood separate from that of the federal government.

Even within the state, both the Ohio Volunteer Militia of 1863 and the Ohio National Guard of 1864 have been given little attention and no major work has been entirely devoted to studying either organization. There are a few possible causes for this. First, the nature of the organizations is confusing. Both were state militias, but their regiments and battalions were organized like federal regiments made from state volunteers. Second, neither organization fought in any major battle. This unexciting though vastly important career leaves the OVM and the ONG outside of the scope of histories that cover the major battles and campaigns of the war.

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2 This assertion comes from looking over the National Guard regiments information found in the Roster of Ohio Soldiers.
3 Zanesville Daily Courier, “The Ohio National Guard,” October 6, 1865.
What little scholarly attention that has been paid to the National Guard comes from historians who have studied the broader militia institution in the United States.

Mahon attributes the mobilization of the federal and rebel armies to the militia structures of the various states in *History of the Militia and the National Guard*.

Though he does not entirely ignore the existence of state militias during the war, he emphasizes the role militia played in forming volunteer regiments and fighting in federal service. This line of argument contributes to understanding the Ohio militia’s role in forming federal armies in 1861 but stops rather abruptly. Omitted entirely from Mahon’s chapter on the Civil War is the story of the evolution of the militia during the war.

In *The Rise of the National Guard*, Cooper begins his study with a concise treatment of militia during the Civil War. Both Cooper and Mahon mention Ohio, but their concern is not with a single state. Cooper argues that the expansion of the active militia or National Guard in Ohio and in other states during the latter part of the Civil War was an effort on behalf of the states to reaffirm their power in military affairs. Ohio’s National Guard is no exception. By creating a new militia Ohio asserted its control over its own military affairs. Ohio used its militia to protect itself as well as augment federal military might during the war.

Cooper’s analysis of the state reaction to the expansion of federal power draws on the assertions made by Richard Bensel in the book *Yankee Leviathan*. Bensel argues that federal government conducted its war effort through capitalist markets. Politically, the Republican administration managed to fuse party and state within the federal government. Though it is not

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5 Cooper, *Rise of the National Guard*, 20.
the central point of the work, Bensel does mention the increase in federal authority over military matters during the war. This increase is most evident in the federal Militia Act of 1862, which took control of recruitment away from the states. Ohio’s militia of 1863 and 1864 restored state control of militia by creating a new organization, free from the volunteer quotas of the federal army. Ohio supported the government and the war, and used its expanded militia to this end.

This examination of Ohio’s wartime militia will unravel the complexities of the organization while showing how the militia developed during the war, adapting to practical needs. It will answer the basic question of why a state militia remained necessary when the United States military comprised hundreds of thousands of well-equipped state volunteer soldiers deployed across South and much of the North. A dependable militia was necessary to Ohio’s security because the U.S. Army, though larger than ever before, was spread out across an enormous front. The army’s reaction to Ohio’s threats was too slow, which forced the state to make emergency calls for militia. The relationship between federal and state power in the loyal states is also explored, and the Ohio militia is viewed as an assertion of state control over local military matters. This relationship was exceptional, however. The federal government, barely able to meet its own military needs, supported and encouraged reinvigorated militia in the states.

Ohio’s Militia at the Outbreak of War

War drew imminent over the winter of 1860-61. As the rebellious southern states marshalled their forces Northern states loyal to the federal government reacted by strengthening their militia, through raising new or expanding existing companies. Though Ohio’s citizens spanned the entire political spectrum, support for military action to suppress rebellion was
overwhelming in the state. Interest in Ohio’s militia grew and its ranks swelled with men eager to fight for the preservation of the Union and safety of their state.

Ohio’s earlier Militia Act of 1857 governed the state’s militia when war broke out in the Spring of 1861. This and other laws determined that every white male citizen aged 18 to 45 years was in some way part of the militia. Every male citizen of voting age was automatically considered part of the Enrolled Militia. As militiamen, they were responsible to attend an annual county muster with arms and accoutrements. Despite their notoriously poor turnout, Enrolled Militia musters were often chances for politicians to garner voter support. Though expected to have weapons and equipment and fined if they did not, the men of the Enrolled Militia possessed little in military panoply or enthusiasm.

The Active Militia stood in contrast to the cumbersome masses of the Enrolled Militia. Designated the Ohio Volunteer Militia, Ohio’s Active Militia consisted of young men who voluntarily entered state militia service. True to their name, the active militia organizations were more active in their military training; units were supposed to gather more frequently than the annual muster in order to drill and elect officers. Ohio Volunteer Militia (OVM) companies and regiments were organized and maintained by the state. If called into service, these citizen-soldiers were financially compensated for their time. During peacetime members were responsible for supplying their own arms and uniforms. Such a financial burden proved too much

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7 Adjutant General’s Department, Militia Law of Ohio: Being an Act to Organize and Discipline the Militia and Volunteer Militia: Passed March 28, 1857 (Columbus: Richard Nevins, 1857).
8 Counties were the basic unit of organization. This had been the same for centuries, being common practice during the Anglo-Saxon period in England and later brought to the colonies. (Mahon, History of the Militia, 7-9.)
9 Various articles discuss the poor state of militia before war in 1861. Information here comes from John K. Mahon’s sixth chapter, Decline of the Militia: Rise of the Volunteers. Mahon, History of the Militia, 78.
for most citizens and few were willing to pay for the equipment required by the Active Militia. Independent Companies were the exception.

Private citizens, many of whom were city-dwellers, formed the state’s Independent Companies. Younger men joined these outfits, which were often funded and commanded by the wealthy elite. Because of their members’ affluence and freedom from the restraints of working for a living, Independent Companies were often the only standing militia units in peacetime. Many wealthy communities were able to maintain Independent Companies; Cincinnati for example had the well-known Guthrie Grays. Though not part of the Volunteer Militia, Independent Companies were still governed by the Ohio Adjutant General and could answer a call to volunteer for federal service.

In the nineteenth century, the volunteer was the type of soldier on which the republic relied. The government intentionally kept the Regular Army small: a mere 15,000 soldiers made up the entire U.S. Regular Army at the beginning of 1861. During wars and expeditions the government issued calls for volunteers from the states. These state volunteers often came from existing militias, many of which formed when the threat of war was imminent. Active militias like the OVM and Ohio’s Independent Companies frequently volunteered for federal service en masse, effectively ending the Active Militia for the duration of the conflict.

By recruiting existing state militias the federal government could raise state volunteers quickly. As Mahon points out, the militia allowed for mobilization of huge government armies in 1861.\textsuperscript{10} Ohio’s experience during the mobilization in 1861 reinforces Mahon’s assertion. Acts passed by the Ohio Legislature in 1861 provided for a small contingent of active militia. The

\textsuperscript{10} Mahon, \textit{History of the Militia}, 102.
state retained nine OVM regiments; however these units entered federal service when the government called for more state volunteers.\footnote{An Act to provide for the rapid organization of the militia of Ohio, enlisted under the requisition of the president of the United States (passed April 23, 1861).} The loss of Active Militia, however, left the state’s protection in the hands of the notoriously unreliable Enrolled Militia.

In addition to the lack of enthusiasm in the Enrolled Militia, its members were not usually ideal candidates for military service. Ohio sent tens of thousands of its most able young citizens away to war; those left behind were the very young, the old, and the sickly. Able-bodied men remained in the state, unable to volunteer because of economic obligations; many of these men were farmers and others who had to work to support families. If an emergency were to occur, these men would be forced into hastily organized militia companies until federal armies could come to the aid of the state. These units would be especially ineffective since the Enrolled Militia did not drill and rarely if ever held muster.

No serious threats exposed this weakness in Ohio’s militia during the first year of the war. Other than fighting between Unionist and Secessionist factions in Kentucky and West Virginia, 1861 saw little action near Ohio. Yet the idea of a threat to Ohio was not unimaginable to Ohio’s Adjutant General Henry B. Carrington. Carrington addressed those who were left in the state in a General Order circulated throughout state newspapers in May of 1861:

> It is therefore urgently enjoined upon those, subject to military duty, that, while they prepare themselves, during leisure hours, for any service the State may require of them, they still devote themselves to their farms and he arts of peace, until an emergency shall call them to a different service.\footnote{Daily Zanesville Courier, “General Order–No., 16,” May 6, 1861.}

By directly mentioning those citizens who were left to their farms, Carrington acknowledged many citizens had already joined federalized volunteer regiments raised in the state. He
recognized that if war overflowed Ohio’s borders, the governor would be forced to call on farmers and others who remained in the state to form a new militia.

A federal law, the Militia Act of 1862, clarified the definition of militia in the states. An amendment to the Militia Act of 1792, this act gave the government power over militia drafts, thus extending federal power over that of the state. This was part of a larger trend of growing government strength during the Civil War, as centralization was necessary for effective conduct and coordination of war efforts. As Cooper points out in *The Rise of the National Guard*, the states lost control over their own militias early in the war.\(^\text{13}\) When, in 1862, President Lincoln called for more state volunteers the role of the governor and his adjutant general were limited to facilitating federal efforts. The federal government had taken control of standing state militias, and if threatened Ohio and other states would have to quickly organize new militias.

**The Threat Proves Real - Jenkin’s Raid and Smith’s Advance on Cincinnati**

The War of the Rebellion entered its second year in 1862. The first year had seen men and materials mobilized towards the war effort in a scale unprecedented in the Americas.\(^\text{14}\) Both federal and rebel armies conducted military operations throughout the Border States and into the southern secessionist areas. Like other northern states near the border, Ohio was not safe from rebel incursion. 1862, only one year into the war and when many of its most able soldiers were away fighting for the federal government, the threat to Ohio became real.

\(^{13}\) Cooper, *Rise of the National Guard*, 20.
\(^{14}\) James Abercomby raised the single largest pre-1861 army for his attack on Fort Carillon in 1759: it numbered a mere 20,000 men.
Ohio’s military leadership knew that the state could potentially come under threat from the rebels. Adjutant General Catharinus P. Buckingham called for the state to approve recruiting new Ohio Volunteer Militia units. As envisioned by General Buckingham, the OVM would be a reliable contingent of state troops, out of federal control, able to defend the state on a moment’s notice. Still governed by the Militia Act of 1857, Ohio could legally raise and recruit new OVM regiments. However, budgetary appropriations from the state legislature were necessary to allow for training and equipping the militia. Members of the legislature were unwilling to spend public money on militia until rebel threat became a widespread concern.

Though marked by the Ohio River, Ohio’s southern border facing Kentucky and western Virginia was not immune to hostile incursion. The first exploitation of Ohio’s weak southern border came on September 4, 1862. With 550 rebel cavalrmen, Albert Gallatin Jenkins crossed into Ohio from western Virginia using the ford at Buffington Island in Meigs County, Ohio. Jenkins and his troopers rode twenty-five miles along the Ohio River, recrossing into western Virginia near Gallipolis, Ohio. Jenkins’s only reported victim was a deaf and dumb Ohioan who could not understand rebel threats to move from their path, but the raid still proved that more cognizant Ohioans were also vulnerable.

Even as Jenkins’s cavalrmen marauded through southeastern Ohio, a new and far more serious threat brewed in Kentucky. Commanding an army of over 20,000 men, rebel Major General Edmund Kirby Smith defeated a much smaller federal force under Major General

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William “Bull” Nelson at the Battle of Richmond, Kentucky, on August 30. This victory over an army of untested federals left the path to Ohio and the industrial city of Cincinnati open.

Due to its prime location on the Ohio River, Cincinnati in 1862 was a major northern city and vital to commerce in the Midwest. It served both as a large northern terminus for Mississippi river traffic and as an important railway hub for commerce into and from the West. As Smith’s forces pressed north, Major General Lew Wallace assumed command of the city’s defenses and declared martial law. Under Wallace’s orders laborers built fortifications around the city and across the river in Covington, Kentucky. Labor battalions, constituted by blacks pressed into service, constructed the defenses while whites were ordered into militia formations.

Faced with the threat of a large rebel force and with few federal soldiers available in the department, General Wallace had to rely on militia to defend the city. Governor Tod issued a statewide call for militia and new regiments were raised to serve for the defense of the city. These regiments were recruited from areas outside of Cincinnati, paid by the state, and given the name Ohio Volunteer Militia. The Ohio state arsenal supplied arms to these hastily organized OVM regiments. Cincinnati’s existing Independent Companies expanded with an influx of new members; the Guthrie Grays became a full regiment.

Citizens from surrounding counties answered the governor’s call, eager to defend their home state and show their militia prowess. They earned the name “Squirrel Hunters” and it became a term of pride. David E. Roth describes these men:

They came at their own expense from the backwoods, the Great Lake region, and farms and small towns all over Ohio… Some were family men, others were drifters. Age was of no consequence. They toted every manner of weapon, including old flintlocks, fowling

19 Geoffrey R. Walden, "Panic on the Ohio!: Confederates March on Cincinnati, September 1862."
pieces, squirrel guns and, as one contemporary put it, "all the arms usual to the unwarlike citizen-we...  

Esprit de corps was high among the Squirrel Hunters and they came to Cincinnati itching for a fight. Like members of the OVM and Independent Companies, “Squirrel Hunters” were compensated for their service with pay from the state. They poured into Cincinnati from the southern half of the state: Brown County, located east of Cincinnati, contributed the largest number of Squirrel Hunters, 1,326; Gallia County, located across the state, contributed the second most, 1,093. The turnout was impressive, but since these counties were mostly rural they had probably not been scoured by recruiters for the army.

Wallace managed to organize a force of around 60,000 armed men and militia to defend Cincinnati, but it was a hurried effort. The rebels withdrew before this huge assembly of men could be tested. Despite days of preparation, the new militiamen were undertrained and inexperienced in military affairs. If forced into a pitched battle outside of protective fortifications the militia would have likely turned and fled the enemy, like Nelson’s forces at Richmond.

Adjutant General Charles W. Hill spoke of the emergency of 1862 in his annual report: “when many thousands of the people were called upon to go, without organization or the means of efficient service, to the defense of the Southern border…” They served their purpose and were compensated by a grateful state, but General Hill and others knew that ad hoc militia could not be permanently relied upon for defending Ohio and possibly augmenting federal soldiers if necessary. With this in mind, the Ohio legislature approved appropriations for the purpose of

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21 Ohio Adjutant General’s Department, Annual Report of the Adjutant General to the Governor of the State of Ohio, for the Year ending December 31, 1863 (Columbus: Richard Nevins, 1864), 78.
raising and supporting new militia forces. This new Ohio Volunteer Militia would exist for the defense of the state, in case of another emergency like the threat to Cincinnati or Jenkin’s Raid.

**Ohio’s Great Emergency - The Morgan Raid**

Ohio’s Militia Act of 1863 passed through the state legislature on April 14, 1863. Adjutant General Charles Hill hoped that organization would take place over the summer and by autumn the militia would be ready to start drilling. During that summer, while the state militia companies were still taking form, Ohio suffered its greatest emergency. As militia companies across the state took roll and elected their officers, over two-thousand rebel cavalrymen entered Ohio, part of the most daring rebel raid into the North during the entire war.

At the head of the raiding cavalry rode Kentucky-born Rebel General John Hunt Morgan. In early June of 1863 Morgan set out on his most audacious cavalry raid. For over a month Morgan led 2,500 men, a division size force, through Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio. Overall the raid accomplished very little strategically: no major supply depots were destroyed, no sizable enemy forces routed or destroyed, and in the process Morgan lost much of his command. Morgan did, however, distract federal forces in the Western Theater and cause panic in Northern states.  

23 The federal military reaction to Morgan was powerful but slow to catch the rebel general and his raiders. Cavalry from the Army of the Ohio finally caught up with Morgan near the Buffington Island ford in Meigs County, Ohio.  

24 Until the fight near the ford, militia were the only force available to counter Morgan’s cavalry.

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The first major resistance to Morgan’s Raiders came in Indiana on July 9, 1863. At the Battle of Corydon, Indiana, Morgan out maneuvered and routed local elements of the Indiana Legion. The Legion, augmented by local unorganized militia, attempted to stop Morgan’s men with defensive works. The rebels outnumbered the militia by over one thousand men and were able to deploy on a wide front and effectively flank the Indianans. After inflicting around fifty casualties on the raiders and stalling their advance for a few hours, the militia fled.25

After raiding through Indiana, Morgan entered Ohio on July 13. Morgan’s men rode through Southern Ohio, spreading panic among civilians who never expected the war would come to them. The Army of the Ohio pursued Morgan; cavalry followed him across the state while infantry boarded Army steamships for transport along the Ohio River. The only way to catch Morgan was to slow him down. The Ohio militia accomplished this crucial task.

In Ohio, 587 militia companies totaling 49,357 men responded in arms the threat Morgan and his mostly Kentuckian horsemen posed to the state. This emergency muster cost the state $212,318.97,26 and Morgan’s defeat and capture were for the most part the responsibility of the Union Army of the Ohio. Likely owing to the larger area under threat, the Governor’s call for militia resulted in a broader statewide turnout compared to the Squirrel Hunters in 1862.

Adjutant General Hill reported that “the only means at hand to check the devastation and stay the course of the invaders, was to call a multitude of citizens, liable to military duty, and then improvise an organization.”27 Of the hundreds of militia companies hastily raised to protect homes and communities from the raiders, few were involved in any battle, skirmish, or

26 *Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1863*, 82.
encounter. Most encounters between the militia and the raiders came to nothing more than a few shots fired. There were two major instances, however, when the militia played an important role in slowing the raiders.

At a crossroads in Jackson County, 2,500 militiamen from Chillicothe under Colonel Benjamin P. Runkle stalled Morgan’s division for three hours.²⁸ Participating militiamen referred to the engagement as the Battle of Berlin Heights, though it was really more of a standoff than a true battle. The militia exchanged fire with the raiders, killing a few of the rebel cavalrymen. After firing a couple artillery rounds the raiders rode around the militia, continuing on their raid having lost valuable time.

The most critical role played in stopping the raid by any militia came on the evening of July 18. The southeastern Ohio militia that had responded to Governor Todd’s call were sent to Marietta, where they remained during the raid. Marietta’s own militia company was equipped and ready before the larger muster, and travelled down the Ohio River to guard the ford at Buffington Island. Using two small cannon taken from the town, the Marietta militia dug a simple redoubt. Seeing the earthworks and not knowing that the forces occupied the works amounted to two hundred militia, the raiders opted to rest for the evening and try the ford in the morning.²⁹

On the morning of July 19, cavalry from the Army of the Ohio caught up with Morgan and his raiders. In the ensuing Battle of Buffington Island, Morgan’s division was effectively destroyed. Though the Marietta militia withdrew across the ford during the night, the raiders

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²⁸ Defiance Democrat, “Morgan Scare in Ross County,” August 8, 1863. Colonel Runkle commanded the 45th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. When the raiders entered Ohio he was on detached service in Columbus where Adjutant General Hill quickly put him in command of the Chillicothe militia.
²⁹ Horwitz, The Longest Raid of the Civil War, 234.
were unable to cross because of federal gunships operating in the unusually high waters. After escaping northward looking for another route into western Virginia, Morgan and a handful of remaining men were captured few days later near Salineville, Ohio. These battles were fought largely by Ohio soldiers in federal service. The Ohio militia did not actively participate in the fighting at Buffington Island or Salineville, but militia did slow Morgan enough for the Army of the Ohio to catch up with him.

The Morgan Raid of 1863 showed how essential an organized and active militia was to the state during war. The militia that responded to the governor’s call performed valiantly when needed, but they did not have the strength to stop Morgan’s raiders on their own. Ohio needed trained and ready forces in case of another emergency. As the Army of the Ohio demonstrated during the Morgan Raid, federal forces could be slow to react. Luckily for Morgan, his most daring raid came before the Ohio Volunteer Militia of 1863 was organized or trained.

The Ohio Volunteer Militia – Ohio’s Militia Act of 1863

Cooper argues that federal control over governors and their state military policies grew, first by the militia amendment of 1862 and the Enrollment Act of 1863.\textsuperscript{30} The effect was clear: governors’ control of state-raised forces diminished in favor of that of the federal government. Once in federal service, state governors and adjutant generals retained essentially no control over volunteer regiments.\textsuperscript{31} Ohio’s Militia Act of 1863 reasserted state control by reestablishing the

\textsuperscript{30} Cooper, \textit{Rise of the National Guard}, 20.
\textsuperscript{31} A concept that was difficult for many governors to understand. \textit{All for the Regiment: The Army of the Ohio, 1861-1862} by Gerald J. Prokopowicz discusses the problems that arose from governors interfering with federalized state regiments and how US Army commanders dealt with the politicians.
Ohio Volunteer Militia and resurrecting the Enrolled Militia. Both of these organizations were under the control of the governor and adjutant general of the state of Ohio.

By 1863 many of Ohio’s Volunteer Regiments had already served two years in federal service and had at least one more before enlistments expired. For all intents and purposes, Ohio’s volunteers had become regulars. Aside from recruiting men to replenish depleted ranks, Ohio had no control over these volunteer regiments. In the event of an emergency the governor could not recall soldiers in federal service to serve the state. Ohio needed its own soldiers out of federal control.

State soldiers were authorized by the Ohio Militia Act of 1863, which passed through the Ohio legislature easily after the threats of 1862. The law stipulated that the Ohio Volunteer Militia would be raised in July of 1863, but the Morgan Raid interrupted the plan. The call for militia did assist the OVM’s formation in an essential way though: many militia companies raised to stop Morgan remained after the raid and continued their existence as part of the OVM.32

In many ways the Act of 1863 looked a lot like the Militia Act of 1857. Again there were two distinct militia organizations: the Enrolled Militia and the Active Militia. For the Enrolled Militia the law created a complicated district and division system. Each county contained between two and four Enrolled regiments or battalions. The Active Militia, again designated the Ohio Volunteer Militia, was spread across the state with each county given a numbered regiment or battalion.

The OVM forces were further arranged into fourteen brigades. Comprising each brigade were between twenty and thirty infantry companies. Few of the brigades had cavalry or artillery,

and those that did contained almost negligible numbers.\textsuperscript{33} As had been the case for decades prior, the responsibility of raising the militia battalions fell on the sheriff. County sheriffs were to keep militia rolls and oversee the elections of militia officers.\textsuperscript{34} Though infantry heavy and encumbered by complex brigade structures, the OVM units were organized well and could assemble rapidly if called to by the governor.

On paper the state arsenal contained enough weapons to equip a moderately sized Volunteer Militia. In actuality these weapons were barely serviceable. They were older muskets of large caliber, which had been made obsolete by the proliferation of rifled-muskets during the war. Such weapons had been in service with federalized volunteer regiments at the beginning of the war but by 1863 most soldiers were equipped with rifled-muskets in standard .58 caliber. If the OVM regiments were to serve with federalized regiments, they would need newer weapons that used the standard ammunition.

Most members of the OVM of 1863 were similar to soldiers of other incarnations of the Active Militia; many were rural citizens who because of economic reasons could not volunteer for federal service. However, unlike the earlier OVM, the wartime Ohio militia contained a large number of veterans. Many soldiers who had served in the federalized regiments and had not reenlisted returned home only to join the militia. These veterans brought military proficiency and discipline to the organization.\textsuperscript{35} If the OVM were to ever serve alongside federal volunteers under the command of federal officers the presence of these experienced veterans would allow for easier assimilation.

\textsuperscript{33} Compared to cavalry and artillery, equipping infantry was cheap, hence the large disparity in numbers. \textit{Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1863}, 153.

\textsuperscript{34} An Act to provide more effectually for the defense of the state against invasion (Passed April 11, 1863).

\textsuperscript{35} Ohio Adjutant General’s Department, \textit{Annual Report of the Adjutant General to the Governor of the State of Ohio, for the Year ending December 31, 1865} (Richard Nevins: Columbus, 1866), 30.
The Ohio Militia Law of 1863 was important in that it reestablished the militia for the protection of the state. Though the Defense of Cincinnati and the Morgan Raid provided the impetus to form and organize the new Ohio Volunteer Militia, the law itself was unimpressive. There was no real effort to update or improve the militia over to the 1857 law. The military effectiveness of the organization was very questionable. Despite the presence of many veterans, the OVM was poorly equipped and stuck in rigid brigade structures. In the following year new militia legislation made drastic changes to the Ohio Volunteer Militia.

The Ohio National Guard – Ohio’s Militia Act of 1864

In 1864, An Act to Organize and Discipline the Militia passed by the Ohio legislature repealed and replaced the 1863 law. Radical in its nature, this new Act streamlined the militia service, removing aspects that that proved unnecessary, ineffective, or superfluous. As it appeared after the Act, the Ohio militia was much closer to the professional and reliable state army envisioned by the Adjutant General. The Militia Act accomplished this through a series of improvements and changes to the militia.

The 1864 Act abolished Enrolled Militia regiments and battalions in Ohio’s counties. Prior to the Civil War interest in the Enrolled Militia across most of the country had waned to such a degree that it effectively did not exist. Citizens did not maintain the required arms and accoutrements while sheriffs did not enforce fines or other penalties for missing militia musters. The Enrolled Militia existed only on paper and in statute; abolishing it was a

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formality. This allowed the Adjutant General’s department to focus attention on the Active Militia.

The most apparent change to the militia to come from the law was a name change. Ohio’s Militia Act of 1864 renamed the Active Militia, changing it from the Ohio Volunteer Militia to the Ohio National Guard. Renaming the militia was symbolic; it represented a fresh start for a radically improved organization. The name itself, National Guard, harkened back to the French Revolution, and reflects a *Rage Militaire* sentiment felt by Ohioans at the time. Other states adopted the name change; in 1865 Wisconsin Adjutant General Augustus Gaylord advocated giving the militia “a new name, the ‘National Guard.’”

There were other changes to the militia that accompanied rebranding. Standing brigades were dissolved making the militia formations more flexible. Ohio National Guard regiments and companies were organized into brigades and divisions only when needed, making the process more natural and the resulting formations more effective. The 1864 law also contained greater financial incentive for young working-class men to join and remain in the Guard. Guardsmen were compensated with funds from a tax collected by their respective county. Residents who opted not to serve in the militia though eligible paid four dollars per year for commutation of military service. These funds were kept by the county then used to pay Guardsmen for attending drill. Not long after these changes went into effect, Ohio had an opportunity to demonstrate the capabilities of its new militia.

“One of the brightest pages in Ohio’s history will be that on which is inscribed the story of her National Guard, and its magnificent rally on the 2d day of May,” Adjutant General B. R.

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37 Cooper, *Rise of the National Guard*, 22.
38 *Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1865*, 33
Cowen wrote proudly in his 1864 report. That rally was the answer to the call for the National Guard to join for federal army for the summer. Along with the governors of Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin, the new Ohio Governor, Democrat John Brough, offered President Lincoln 85,000 militia for one hundred days. Thirty thousand of those would come from Ohio alone. In late April the orders came through, and starting on May 2 the National Guard served in the federal army.\textsuperscript{39}

After assembling in rendezvous camps, the government provided the Guardsmen with the uniforms, arms, and equipment required for federal service. Governor Brough included this stipulated in his original offer, knowing that the state would not be able to outfit and equip so many men so quickly. National Guardsmen were given a clothing allowance for purchasing uniforms, but many remained without, since, as General Cowen noted, the $5 allowance was insufficient.\textsuperscript{40} As for weapons, those on hand at the state arsenal, aside from being too few, were not of a standard caliber. For the Ordnance Department, providing ammunition for so many different calibers would have been a nightmare. U.S. Army officers outfitted and equipped National Guard regiments as they formed up and departed the state. By May 16 the last National Guard Regiment was ready.\textsuperscript{41}

Once mustered in and equipped, the U.S. Army sent the federalized Ohio National Guard regiments into important areas that needed constant watch. Guardsmen arrived in West Virginia, Virginia, and Washington D.C. where they protected railroads, warehouses, and manned defenses. They alleviated pressure on the rest of the army, freeing veteran regiments to fight in

\textsuperscript{39} Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1864, 20
\textsuperscript{40} Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1864, 12.
\textsuperscript{41} Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1864, 30.
campaigns that now pushed deep into the South. Regiment historians relayed the Guardsmen’s picaresque records, which were immediately lauded and celebrated by Adjutant General Cowen.

This service did not detract from the National Guard’s purpose of protecting Ohio. Though the Guard regiments served as far away from Ohio as Crown Point, Virginia, other regiments guarded important sites in bordering West Virginia. Not only was protecting these areas vital to the security of Ohio, if another rebel raid had been conducted against Ohio these regiments would have been close enough and better equipped to fight effectively, having been issued government weapons and equipment.

Opposition to federal service from within the Ohio National Guard was common and vehement. General Cowen wrote that those opposed believed temporarily federalizing the Guard was a “danger to the interests of the state, financial and political.” One organization refused to serve: Co. B, 40th Battalion, from Brown County was dishonorably dismissed in its entirety and barred from future military service. Their case was unusual. By General Cowen’s count, 38,000 men reported for muster, 8,000 more than the state originally offered.

Ohio and its Guard were duly compensated for its generous offer. Their time as federal soldiers left the Ohio National Guard’s soldiers better trained and more accustomed to the soldierly life. General Cowen believed that the Hundred Days made the Guard into a cohesive force that could repel any threat to the state: “Our enemies realize the power of this organized army,” he wrote in 1864. Ohio alone could never have so effectively organized and trained the National Guard as the government had during the Hundred Days.

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43 Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1864, 32-33.
44 Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1864, 35.
45 Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1864, 37.
The Hundred Days was the heyday of the Ohio National Guard during the Civil War. Though more ready than ever to protect their state, the National Guard was not called to defend the state and Ohio did not see another military threat for the rest of the war. As spring gave way to summer in 1865 the war came to an end. The soldiers of the vast armies ammassed by the federal government in the four years of war had performed their duty and were mustered out.

Just as it did for the federal armies, demobilization went quickly for the Ohio National Guard. Over the course of 1865 the state dissolved the National Guard battalions and issued discharges to Guardsmen. Adjutant General Cowen reported in 1866: “One year ago the State had a military force of thirty-five thousand men, organized, equipped and drilled; to-day she has eleven companies, numbering in the aggregate three hundred and twenty-seven men… scattered all over the State.”

Adjutant General Cowen defended the continued existence of state soldiers, but ruefully acknowledged in his 1866 report that in peacetime it would be impossible to maintain interest and enthusiasm for the militia. Ohio’s legislature would not be willing to allocate the funds necessary to maintain such a large defense force in peacetime, and a citizenry no longer under threat provided few recruits. Within a year the Ohio National Guard returned to a more traditional militia, characterized by understrength companies in the counties and large but sporadic Independent Companies in the cities. Adjutant General Cowen alluded to the Independent Companies later in his 1866 report: “I have no suggestions to make on the subject of recruiting the militia, and do not think much can be done towards it outside of the cities and

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46 Ohio Adjutant General’s Department, Annual Report of the Adjutant General to the Governor of the State of Ohio, for the Year ending December 31, 1866 (Columbus: Richard Nevins, 1867), 31.
larger towns.” Across the state Ohioans were war-weary. The militia would smolder until agitated by a new threat.47

**Evaluation – “Vast Importance to the State and Nation”**

To Ohio’s wartime adjutant generals, the militia was a source of immense pride. Buckingham, Hill, and Cowen each in turn advocated for the growth and refinement of Ohio’s militia system. By the end of the war Adjutant General Cowen believed that the Ohio National Guard occupied a place of “vast importance to the state and nation.” Hyperbole aside, the Ohio National Guard was a revolutionary system in many regards. General Cowen defended “the Ohio [militia] system,” and argued in his 1865 report that the rebellion might have amounted to no more than “the John Brown raid” if the states had possessed effective militia systems in 1861.48 His assessment reflects his pride in Ohio, but is relevant.

Ohio’s National Guard of 1864 was the epitome of necessity. Emergencies during the war provided the impetus for the Ohio legislature to pass laws that created a modern, flexible state military force envisioned by Ohio’s Adjutant Generals. The purpose of the Ohio National Guard separated it from the earlier Ohio Volunteer Militias. It did not serve as a means to mobilize soldiers for federal service as the early war militia had, nor was it the lax occasional organization that defined the prewar militia. The Ohio Volunteer Militia of 1863 and the Ohio National Guard of 1864 were standing state armies, meant for Ohio’s defense but compatible with federal service.

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Ohio strived to attain U.S. army standards of training and uniformity within its militia. Within the Guard complete uniformity was never attained. Sufficient arms for equipping the battalions could not be procured, and those weapons that were bought and issued by the state were often second-rate and of irregular calibers.\(^{49}\) The Adjutant General’s department can be lauded for holding the militia to higher standards, however. Unlike the prewar militia the state enforced military discipline among the Guard. Members of the 49\(^{th}\) Regiment were fined for dereliction of duty in 1863,\(^{50}\) and the soldiers of Co. B, 40\(^{th}\) Battalion were permanently barred from military service and publicly shamed for refusing to serve with the rest of the Guard during the Hundred Days.

Aside from being crucial to the defense of the state, the resurrection of the Ohio Volunteer Militia and the attempts to professionalize the Ohio National Guard were reactions to the growth of federal power during the war. Many citizens, especially Democrats, still viewed the nation as a small republic that relied on its citizens, not professional standing armies, for military protection. The Zanesville Daily Courier wrote in 1865 that “the spirit of our Government distrusts standing armies, and makes the militia the standing defense of the nation.”\(^{51}\) Though citizens were more accepting of a large federal army for the purpose of putting down the rebellion, fears of standing armies had not dissipated. Protection of the home was still the responsibility of the individual; the militia provided the means to effect this belief.

Growth and centralization of the U.S. government was as necessary as it was unprecedented during the Civil War. As Bensel argues in Yankee Leviathan, departments of the

\(^{49}\) For example, the 36\(^{th}\) battalion had 370 effective members, all uniformed in 1864. However, only 200 .71 caliber smoothbore muskets and the necessary accoutrements were provided for these men. Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1865, 161.
\(^{50}\) Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1864, 279-83
\(^{51}\) Zanesville Daily Courier, “The Ohio National Guard,” October 6, 1865.
government had to be strengthened to effectively conduct a war and suppress rebellion. The military is perhaps the most obvious example. The federal Militia Act of 1862 effectively stripped governors of control of state military power. When Ohio’s state legislature, spurred by the Adjutant General, reestablished the Active Militia in 1863 it was a reaffirmation of the traditional duty of the citizen to serve in a military role to defend the state. Even though the militia would never attain the military power of the U.S. Army, the presence of an organized state army ensured that the government would not monopolize military force. They offered less of a challenge to government power as they did a reminder of American republican ideal.

Conclusion

A stark contrast exists between the Ohio Volunteer Militia that existed at the outbreak of war in 1861 and the Ohio National Guard as it stood in 1865 when the war ended. In 1861 Ohio’s militia existed as a means to facilitate raising regiments for federal service. Repeated calls for many thousands of state volunteers exhausted the state militia. Ohio was left vulnerable, and the raid of Albert Gallatin Jenkins and Kirby Smith’s threat to Cincinnati reminded the state why a militia was necessary. This was the impetus behind new militia legislation passed by the state legislature in 1863. The new law came too late to confront Ohio’s greatest emergency, the Morgan Raid in the summer of 1863, though, by that autumn, the state was well on its way to forming a competent standing militia.

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52 Bensel, *Yankee Leviathan*, 2. Though Bensel talks little about the militia in particular, he does discuss Ohioan Benjamin Stanton’s proposal in congress to extend rational for calling up the militia to include suppression of insurrection (Bensel, *Yankee Leviathan*, 79).
Militia laws passed in 1863 and 1864 were a quick and effective means of reestablishing and refining Ohio’s active militia. During the war, when hundreds of thousands of Ohioans were serving in the federal Army, Ohio managed to organize, discipline, and equip its own force of 30,000 soldiers. Not only that, Ohio created a force that was militarily viable, consisting of battalions that could enter and leave federal service. The significance of the Ohio National Guard is not found in what it did during the war, in many ways it never reached its full potential. Its significance is in what it was at its core: a semi-professional state army. This ideal could not be fully realized during the chaos of the war, but Ohio came closer at this time than ever before.

By creating this semi-professional militia Ohio asserted its own authority over military affairs. Federal government control over the states in military affairs extended considerably during the first years of war. By 1863, governors and adjutant generals in loyal states could do little else than assist in raising new regiments for federal service. When Ohio recreated the Volunteer Militia in 1863 it formed a new force that was under the control of the governor and adjutant general. Ohio remained steadfast in its loyalty to the union, but denied the federal government a monopoly on military power by striving to make the militia as disciplined and efficient as the Regular Army. The government alternatively encouraged states to form capable militias. This was not an overt contest for power, but rather a struggle to provide soldiers for defense. The federal government protected itself by allowing the states to protect their own borders.

The idea of a well-disciplined, well-equipped, and regularly trained militia, as envisioned by Adjutant General Charles W. Hill in 1863, did not die with the Rebellion. Later Adjutant Generals looked back on the ONG of 1864 fondly, hoping to again attain that level of military proficiency. The Guard had served its function and enjoyed a popular reputation thanks to its
service during the Hundred Days, but citizens were tired of war and eager to continue with their lives. Ohio’s legislature was unwilling to dedicate funds to any military organization during peace. In the 1870s, with military interest renewed, the state began further improving on the militia through legislation and reform.
Chapter III Riots and Strikes

The Ohio National Guard from 1865 to 1898

Late on July 20, 1877, four companies of the Ohio National Guard arrived in Newark in response to call for assistance from the Licking County sheriff. That evening the Guardsmen billeted in shops of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company. On the morning of July 21, the Guardsmen deployed to protect railroad workers from striking employees. Everything seemed routine until Monday, July 23, when a large contingent of miners from Shawnee and nearby coal mines approached Newark; their goal was to “clean out the troops.” Prepared to meet the threat with force, the Guardsmen were saved from a fight by concerned citizens of Newark, who persuaded the miners to return.1 The events in Newark were only the beginning, however. Quickly the strike spread to every major rail center in the state. Ohio’s troops remained on duty to protect citizens and workers not on strike for nearly a month, while in other states Army Regulars and Guardsmen were also called out. Ohio endured little open conflict and virtually no bloodshed, but because of events elsewhere the year 1877 has become synonymous with violence and domestic turmoil in the United States.

Seven years after the Great Railroad Strike, Ohio would again suffer an emergency that required the governor to deploy the National Guard. In March of 1884 rioters in Cincinnati, incensed by a court decision in which an alleged murder was convicted of the lesser crime of manslaughter, attacked and destroyed the Courthouse. With assistance from other nearby settlements.

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1 Adjutant General’s Department, Annual Report of the Adjutant-General, to the Governor of Ohio, for the year 1877 (Columbus: Nevins & Meyers, State Printer, 1878), 108-10.
regiments, the First Regiment quelled the riot, but at the expense of fifty-six civilian and two National Guard lives. Later that year the Guard spent a month patrolling the Hocking Valley where the presence of Guardsmen prevented a mining strike from turning violent. Ten years after these events, the state again called out the Ohio National Guard to protect its citizens. At its peak in 1894, 3,647 Ohio Guardsmen were in service of the state, patrolling vast areas affected by discontent laborers. It was the greatest deployment of Ohio soldiers in terms of number of men and area occupied since the end of the War of Rebellion nearly thirty years before.

The Ohio National Guard’s major deployments in 1877, 1884, and 1894 were separated by numerous minor deployments, all of which served to protect Ohioans during emergencies. No war threatened Ohio during this era, no rebellion nor invasion, but Ohioans felt uneasy at the frequent unrest and discontent within the working class. Amidst the turmoil, the Ohio National Guard embraced its role as defenders of peace, though in time the organization earned a reputation as enemies of the working class. The role of the Ohio National Guard, which protected the state during the Great Rebellion in 1864 and 1865, shifted from soldiers to strikebreakers. While the Guard performed this task and well, its primary object remained fighting for the country in war.

The very nature of the Ohio National Guard changed drastically after demobilization in 1865. What had been a large military force that augmented federal forces in times of war became a disconnected state police force. Serving the state in times of emergency, caused by rioters or strikers or something else, had long been an accepted role of the Guard, but following the turbulence of 1877 this became its primary purpose. This was true of all state military forces, and

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2 History of the First Regiment of Infantry, Ohio National Guard (Cincinnati: Roessler Bros., printers, 1905).
many Guardsmen feared that the only duty given to them by the federal government would be police work.⁴ In the years before 1898, the country’s entire National Guard struggled to enact much needed reform and modernization, believing that this would guarantee that in the event of war Guard regiments would be called into service by the United States War Department.

The thirty years after the capitulation of the Confederate States of America in 1865 witnessed the near demise of the Ohio militia then its shaky reemergence. The militia shrank to a near insignificant size as Ohio’s politicians showed little interest in military matters. A state that could call nearly 40,000 men to arms in 1864 and 1865 could muster little more than 600 personnel by decade’s end.⁵ Ohio’s adjutant generals struggled to keep the militia alive and find a useful function for state troops after war. After a decade of little activity, the Ohio National Guard again grew in size during what amounted to a national military revival.

A question arises as to whether the Ohio National Guard of 1864-65 and the Ohio National Guard of 1876 were in fact the same organization. The Ohio Adjutant General mustered out the Guard in 1866, and its replacement, again called the Ohio Volunteer Militia, never received the same level of state support. The Adjutant General remained in charge of a small and seldom used militia. When Ohioans became interested in financially supporting the militia, the legislature passed a new militia law in 1876 that created a new Ohio National Guard. The state did do away with the ONG once, but the second organization emerged stronger with closer ties to the first ONG than the interim OVM.

⁴ Cooper, Rise of the National Guard, 88-89, 96.
⁵ Adjutant General’s Department, Annual Report of the Adjutant General, to the Governor of Ohio, for the year 1869 (Columbus: Columbus Printing Company, State Printer, 1870), 11.
The new National Guard began to take shape in the early 1870s. War weariness began to wear off by the end of the 1860s. With no immediate threat to Ohio, militia organizations formed purely out of martial interest, not military necessity like during the late war. Independent companies sprang up across the state; they consisted often of battle-tested veterans who led scores of young, enthusiastic men who had grown up hearing war stories. The new militia organizations emulated the most celebrated regiments of the recent war. They called themselves Zouaves and Chasseurs, donning the gaudy uniforms inspired by foreign armies. This practice proved too expensive and these companies either disbanded or opted for more practical uniforms. The successful companies entered Ohio’s military rolls and became part of the National Guard.

Though the postwar Ohio National Guard lacked the size of the wartime organization, it sought to retain and improve on the professionalization that the militia achieved during 1864 and 1865. Antebellum militia, derisively dubbed the “corn stalk militia,” characterized by poor muster attendance, inadequate weaponry, and a general lack of enthusiasm, was superseded by a smaller, more focused National Guard.6 The Ohio National Guard drilled frequently, camped as companies or regiments, and practiced marksmanship, all in anticipation of serving in the United States army during war. Most importantly, the state endeavored to reform its own militia laws.

Regardless of its legal reform, the Guard’s existence depended on volunteers and thus its strength underwent a constant ebb and flow. Motivated men in small towns and communities created companies, gained state recognition, and then sometimes disappeared quickly from the Adjutant General’s lists.7 By the end of the nineteenth-century, the Ohio National Guard was a

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7 This characterization is based on the militia history of Athens, Ohio, which had as many as four separate National Guard outfits between 1866 and 1898: Athenian Guards 1872-1875; Athenian Light-Guard Company F then C, 18th Regiment 1878-1882; a company that likely did not enter the ONG in 1884; Sloane Guards, Co. B, 17th Regiment 1892-1898.
professional armed force. Their function had been that of police, however; not soldiers. They practiced in martial training, but lacked experience in battle or on prolonged campaign. Yet Guardsmen yearned for an opportunity to prove themselves and their organization in battle.

Historians have a difficult time measuring the growth and evolution of the National Guard between the end of War of the Rebellion in 1865 and the War with Spain in 1898. Cooper places a great emphasis on this era, arguing that these years were the rise of the National Guard. But the trajectory was neither smooth nor consistent. As Cooper shows using many examples and period writings, the Guard fought against the Regular Army for funding and support. He also speaks to the importance of the police duty in the National Guard’s continued existence.

Mahon puts the events of 1877 at the center of National Guard development. He makes the argument that labor unrest gave the National Guard a raison d’être, something it had not enjoyed since the War of the Rebellion. Mahon chapter on this era is brief, however. He notes the development of Guard organizations as well as race and class concerns and competition with the Regular Army, but does so rapidly and without delving deeply into any topic. His chapter reflects the problems in trying to connect the many differing aspects of the National Guard between the wars on a national scale. Luckily, here the focus is on Ohio, which presents enough challenges.

This chapter’s narrative relies heavily on three articles from the Ohio History Journal. In order of appearance in this chapter, first is Mark V. Kwasny’s "A Test for the Ohio National Guard: The Cincinnati Riot of 1884.” This article argues that the ONG successfully met the challenges posed by the riot. Next is "Governor George Hoadly's Use of the Ohio National Guard in the Hocking Valley Coal Strike of 1884” by Andrew Birtle, which examines not only the Guard but the governor as well. Last is Charles A. Peckham’s “The Ohio National Guard and
Its Police Duties, 1894,” an analysis of the Guard on police duty that offers insight into the state of the Guard in the middle of the nineteenth century’s last decade.

Stephen Skowronek’s Building a new American State: The Expansion of National Administrative Capacities, 1877–1920 and Martha Derthick’s The National Guard in Politics are used to analyze the relationship between the states, in this case Ohio, and the federal government. Government power over states in the inter-war era is easier to understand because of groups like the National Guard Association that represented Guard concerns in Washington. The attitude of the Guard remained temperamental though; Guardsmen wanted to fight for the government and receive federal funding, but strongly resisted government oversight.

The Guard recognized its own need for reform on the federal level but wanted to engineer such laws on its own. Both Cooper and Mahon address National Guard reform in this era, but only Cooper shows how important it was to Guardsmen. A strong desire for reform lead to the creation of the National Guard Associations and numerous state laws, but the Guard could never gain enough support to pass its laws on at the federal level. A stalemate ensued over the issue of Guard reform in Congress, however it was not born of conflict but rather apathy towards militia in peacetime. Skowronek portrays militia reform in this era as attempts at fixing outdated laws, but emphasizes the contest for control between the National Guard and Regular Army.

The Guard’s relationship with the working class in this era has become the most popular aspect to study. The National Guard gained infamy for its supposed mid and upper class sentiments because of its police actions involving workers in the 1870s. Prior to the 1870s, Independent Companies could be considered upper-class outfits, but not the state militia, which at times contained only men who could not pay the fee that would exempt them from militia duty. Though pitted against strikers in 1877, common Cincinnatians in 1884, and depressed
workers in 1894, historians have argued that the Ohio National Guard did not exhibit excessive hostility towards workers. Still, on a national scale, the stigma clung to the re-emergent National Guard.

Many historians have looked at the class consciousness surrounding the Guard at this time, but usually on a national level. When speaking of the Guard as a whole, both Cooper and Mahon show that workers did hold animosity to the state soldiers. Mahon cites examples of this in Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Wisconsin specifically. Cooper elaborates on this, using statistics to show the sheer number of Guard deployments in labor disputes, but argues that these confrontations were brief, seldom violent, and took place in states other than Ohio.

Historians who focus on Ohio’s National Guard do not support the notion that Ohio’s workers exhibited hostility towards the Guard and vice versa. Birtle argues vehemently against the elitist portrayal of the Ohio Guard, stating that the ONG was not a tool of big business and performed its duty calmly amidst striking miners in 1884. Though he does not declare it so boldly, Peckham’s account of 1894 corroborates this impression. Its labor relations show that the Ohio National Guard in the era between the War of the Rebellion and the Spanish-American War reflects larger National Guard trends but still stands apart.

**Reemergence**

In the years after the Civil War, the Ohio militia’s total strength sunk as low as 400 men. Adjutant Generals complained of the lack of interest but conceded that after a long and bloody

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9 Cooper, *Rise of the National Guard*, 51.
In 1866, the state of Ohio passed a law authorizing a new militia. The Ohio National Guard of 1864 mustered out, its replacement per the 1866 law was the Ohio Volunteer Militia. Adjutant General Cowen acknowledged the low level on enthusiasm for this militia. The 1866 law was, however, an attempt at reform. It took into consideration the new, lesser demands for Ohio’s militia. The Adjutant General’s Department shifted focus to other projects, mainly in order to memorialize and preserve the memory of Ohio’s involvement in the war.

With no threat of conflict the militia shrank. In 1869 Adjutant General William A. Knapp reported that the Ohio National Guard consisted of two infantry companies and two artillery batteries, none of which had submitted returns for the year. This illustrated the problem inherent in the belief that the militia should be the country’s primary defense force. Ohio and other states needed larger militias that were both properly trained and well equipped. This was not possible in peacetime. Not only were people tired of war, they were unwilling to pay to maintain an army and believed that standing armies, even militias, were a threat to the republic.

The militia’s adversary in this era was not only apathy; the Regular Army presented a challenge to the legitimacy of the National Guard as an independent organization. America’s fear of large standing armies was changing but it was far from dead. During the war the Regular Army contained around 60,000 men at its peak. Even this small number was too high for many,

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11 Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1869, 11.
and the army returned to under 30,000 men in the 1870s. Though smaller, this army was professionalized and implemented many changes meant to correct flaws exposed during the rebellion. One major flaw was the lack of readily available trained soldiers at the war’s outset, and Regular Army generals, many like William T. Sherman distinguished by their exploits during Civil War, argued for a larger army.¹²

Other officers clamored for greater change in the entire U.S. military system. Emory Upton, a federal general during the war, advocated an expansible standing army. Following a tour of Europe that permitted him to observe European military systems, Upton recommended that the United States adopt a Prussian model for its own military. The Regular Army would be able to recruit additional battalions in wartime, making it able to quickly expand without needing to raise entirely new regiments.¹³

Upton also believed that the militia system in the United States should be radically changed. Like other Regular officers, Upton held the militia military effectiveness in low regard. He envisioned a federal reserve force called the National Volunteers that would replace the militia.¹⁴ Upton’s opinion carried a lot of weight in military circles, as did that of other experienced generals, but low enthusiasm for military matters in Congress and a long-held reluctance to change military structure meant that little to no actual change took place.

Even before the Regular Army stalled in its efforts to reform, state militias began to recover. Towards the end of the 1860s militia companies began to gradually reemerge. By the early 1870s the militia company was again a ubiquitous social organization across the state of

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¹⁴ Fitzpatrick, “Emory Upton and the Citizen Soldier,” 379.
Ohio as well as the country. These outfits were radically different from the antebellum militia musters; rather than mandated by the state they emerged organically from an enthusiastic populous and veterans instilled military structure and discipline on eager youth. The militia generally benefitted from the experience of the last war but were held back by inadequate laws.

The War of the Rebellion had radically altered the country’s militia laws. The war not only exposed the problems of the militia but provided impetus for reform. Adjutant General Knapp wrote that:

the theory which has heretofore prevailed [before the war] may be somewhat at fault. The main idea seems to have been that of diffusing a general knowledge of the art and practice of was among the entire population, rather than to provide a comparatively small, but well armed and disciplined body of troops, whose services would be immediately available in case they were needed.\(^\text{15}\) Knapp and most others worked towards refining that small, “well armed and disciplined body of troops.” Though the states retained some antiquated features, the Civil War rewrote outdated militia laws which were reaffirmed after the war. No longer were citizens required to maintain arms and attend militia muster. Male citizens were considered part of the general militia pool, but modern warfare had made it so that annual training and weapons kept at home were not sufficient.\(^\text{16}\) On a practical level, however, the laws did not provide encourage militia interests and the state was unwilling to provide funds necessary to support militia companies.

Interest in the militia slowly manifested not long after the end of the war in 1865. *The History of the First Regiment Infantry Ohio National Guard* chronicles militia’s shaky reemergence. Cincinnati veterans of the late war gathered in 1866 to discuss “the feasibility of forming a military company for the better protection of our citizens.” The veterans found the

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\(^\text{15}\) *Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1869*, 11.

\(^\text{16}\) *Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1869*, 11.
state militia laws wanting, but opted to join the state organization rather than become an independent company. Ohio, however, “failed to provide proper laws and encouragement” to the new National Guard organization. Without sanctioned state support the Cincinnati Battalion died. In its wake remained Company B, the Lytle Greys, and a German Battalion organized from the remnants.17

During General Knapp’s tenure as Adjutant General, the state of Ohio did pass militia legislation. The Militia Law of 1870 created a new organization, the Ohio Independent Militia, but once more provided inadequate financial support.18 General Knapp pessimistically wrote in his 1870 annual report:

> The militia laws now in force are worse than useless. They simply tolerate militia organizations, and offer no encouragement beyond supplying arms of obsolete patterns, long since condemned for actual service. Instead of fostering a military spirit, they convey the impression that the State regards military exercises only as an amusement in which citizens are free to indulge if they choose, so long as they do not call upon the State to pay any of the expenses incident thereto.19

Knapp’s point of contention with the state was financial support. Unfortunately, in peacetime the Ohio legislature was simply not willing to fund a militia organization. General Knapp stepped down as Adjutant General after 1873.

The Adjutant General’s Report for 1874 reflects the need for a strong militia and the continued problems with Militia Law of 1870. In that year a strike involving mine workers near Nelsonville turned violent. The Athens County sheriff resisted pleas to call for militia, but the threat attracted much wider attention. Three companies, Sill Guards from Chillicothe, the Lytle

17 History of the First Regiment, 3. The book mistakenly gives 1876 as the year, but later mentions that the Lytle Greys formed in the 1860s.
18 Interestingly, not all Ohio Volunteer Militia companies formed under the 1866 law had disbanded by 1872, resulting the short-lived existence of two militia organizations, the OVM of 1866 and the Ohio Independent Militia of 1870.
Guards from Cincinnati, and Athens County’s own Athenian Guards were called into service and ordered to make ready for deployment on June 11. The next day all were relieved except for the Athenian Guards, which stayed under arms until June 13. Adjutant General James. O. Amos spoke highly of the militia involved, praising their alacrity and willingness to serve their state.\textsuperscript{20}

To quell disturbances and aid civil authorities, the Ohio militia had forty-one enrolled companies in 1874. However, some companies had failed to send returns to the state, and General Amos doubted that they were still active. He also lamented the expenses heaped on to the volunteer soldiers, who received no compensation for even the required three days of encampment per year, let alone drill. Companies also had to pay for their own uniforms and armories before they could enter the state roster and receive state arms, which dissuaded potential companies from forming.\textsuperscript{21} General Amos would not see the state address these problems, however his successor did enjoy significant militia reform.

In the mid-1870s interest in the militia again spurred the creation of new companies that proved more durable and the state again tried to enact effective militia reform. Under Governor Rutherford B. Hayes and his successor Thomas Young, Charles W. Karr became first Assistant Adjutant General then Adjutant General. With Karr as Adjutant General, the state legislature passed a new militia law that greatly improved upon the 1870 law.\textsuperscript{22} In his 1876 report, Karr wrote that “[t]he present law, while deficient in many important things, is still a great improvement on for former law.”\textsuperscript{23} The law enjoyed bipartisan support when presented to the Ohio General Assembly.

\textsuperscript{20} Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1874, 334.
\textsuperscript{21} Annual Report of the Adjutant-General, 1874, 334.
\textsuperscript{22} First Regiment, 4.
\textsuperscript{23} Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1876, 8.
Shortly after becoming governor, Thomas Young, a Democrat who served in the 118th OVI during the War of the Rebellion, presented the 1876 proposed militia act written by Adjutant General Karr to the assembly. His appeal for preparedness during peace is reminiscent of militia commanders:

In Time of profound peace, legislation on military affairs may appear unnecessary, but with the experience of last summer before us, when riot, with its sequences of bloodshed and destruction of property, was impending in some of the mining districts, nothing but the presence of the State militia averted the outbreak. To meet such exigencies we need a well organized and disciplined militia.24

The concern over private property and riots turned out to be an astute observation, as that would soon become the militia’s raison d’etre. Joseph C. Ullery, a Republican representing Miami County, introduced the act, which passed the legislature on April 11, 1877.25 This act incorporated the OIM into a new Ohio National Guard and entitled militia companies to money from the state.

The new militia law came only after Ohio and especially Cincinnati underwent a noticeable increase in military activity. “The Spirit of ‘76” during the country’s centennial compelled men to create new companies across the state.26 Adjutant General Karr’s report confirms that fifty-three infantry companies, two cavalry companies, and three two-gun batteries were formed in 1876, while only nine infantry companies and two artillery batteries disbanded.27

Spontaneous renewed interested in the militia is a defining aspect of Guard history in this era. Stephen Skowronek writes that “demand for a military revival at this time was rooted in

24 Ohio General Assembly, *Journal of the House of Representatives, of the State of Ohio, for the Adjourned Session of the Sixty-Second General Assembly commencing Tuesday, January 2, 1877, Volume LXXIII* (Springfield, OH; Elifrítz & Winters, State Printers), 470.
25 *Journal of the House of Representatives, 1877*, 476.
26 *First Regiment*, 73.
27 Adjutant General’s Department, *Annual Report of the Adjutant-General, to the Governor of Ohio, for the year 1876* (Columbus: Nevins & Meyers, State Printer, 1877), 5.
increasing class conflict and international capital expansion.”

Martha Derthick thinks of the revival in military terms, speculating that the presence of veterans and the fading memory of the Rebellion’s violence renewed martial interest that had always been present in society. With class violence at the minimum in Ohio’s industrial regions, the latter analysis better describes Ohio’s experience. Cooper takes a much different approach, stating that the National Guard can be viewed as a fraternal organization, which were popular after the rebellion. Though many Ohio Guardsmen were undoubtedly members of the Masons, such a claim is hard to substantiate in Ohio.

The presence of large number of veterans in Ohio helped encourage the creation of new militia companies. Their reasons for joining were as varied as they themselves. Just as veterans had done in the National Guard of 1864, in the 1870s they added military experience and professionalism to the militia. In 1874, eighty-nine citizens of Nelsonville formed the Home Guards, sworn to “defend [Ohio’s] borders and repel or prevent invasion, to prevent and suppress riots and insurrections…” The Nelsonville Home Guard’s officers were all veterans of the late war and had served together in Company G, 18th Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Charles Cable, Captain of the Home Guards had been Captain of Co. G, while Home Guard Lieutenants Launcelot Scott and James Verity had both been sergeants in the same Company. As officers of the Home Guards these veterans could instill their military experience and spirit into a younger generation.

28 Skowronek, Building a new American State, 87.
29 Derthick, The National Guard in Politics, 17-18.
30 Cooper, Rise of the National Guard, 69.
In 1878 Ohio dropped the word white from its militia law.\textsuperscript{32} Prior to 1878, Ohio’s militia roster included African-American units, like the Second Battalion, Ohio Independent Militia, comprised of four companies from Cincinnati, the Muskingum Blue Jackets out of Zanesville, and the Portsmouth Light Guard.\textsuperscript{33} Adjutant Generals questioned the legality of these organization, and the 1878 law put the issue to rest.\textsuperscript{34} Shortly after the 1878 law, black militia organizations formed and became part of the National Guard. From the segregated companies the state formed the Ninth Battalion on July 18, 1881.\textsuperscript{35} Racism was still very much present in Ohio though. Black ONG formations were commanded by white officers, and not called to serve the state in emergencies like white outfits. The Ninth Battalion did, however, volunteer with the rest of the ONG for federal service in 1898.

Marksmanship became a priority within the new National Guard. In 1871 Colonel George Wingate and Guard officers in New York organized the National Rifle Association to stress marksmanship and help organize competitive shooting matches. The NRA spread to other states including Ohio.\textsuperscript{36} Frequent training and competitions would work to bring the Guardsmen closer to the skill of U.S. regulars. The NRA not only helped to professionalize the Guard, it also became a means for communication between state Guards.

Not long after forming the NRA, George Wingate and members of the New York National Guard created the National Guard Association in 1879. In addition to providing a means for Guard leaders from different states to interact, the NGA pushed for reform and standardization. It promoted efficiency amongst the country’s militiamen and sought to create a

\textsuperscript{32} Mahon, \textit{History of the Militia}, 110.
\textsuperscript{33} Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1874, 350, 352.
\textsuperscript{34} Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1866, 32.
\textsuperscript{36} Mahon, \textit{History of the Militia}, 119.
new Militia Act to supersede that of 1792. The Association would in time become a vocal lobbying group, though Cooper points out that the NGA met only six times between 1879 and 1896. Wingate and the NGA pushed Congress for more funding and federal recognition of the National Guard as the organized militia. Government unwillingness to spend money, however, kept the state militia appropriation at the 1808 level until 1887, and reform would not come after the turn of the century.

In addition to the national organization, many states had their own National Guard Associations. They held their own meetings and discussed state Guard concerns which were aligned with those of the national organization. The Ohio National Guard Association formed in 1884. During the second annual meeting, held in the Fourteenth Infantry’s armory in Columbus, Adjutant General Ebenezer gave an address in which he asserted that “[m]any of the laws regulating the militia need amendment or repeal: much additional legislation is needed, and especially increased appropriations.” Cooper relates the words of Army Lieutenant A.C. Sharpe, who lauded Ohio’s NGA as “a most potent agency for your own professional improvement.” The Ohio NGA met into the 1890s but speeches given during the meetings stopped appearing in the Adjutant General’s reports.

The Guard continued to grow after its reemergence in the 1870s but it was not consistent. Towns and cities would see organizations formed, these companies would enter the Adjutant General’s rolls, then after a few years of decline would dissolve, only to have a new company

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37 Cooper, *Rise of the National Guard*, 88. Derthick, *The National Guard in Politics*, 16. Mahon alleges that Brigadier General John Denver of Ohio was instrumental in the formation of the NGA. Other than Denver, whose role in the ONG has not been properly researched here, Ohio appears to have had little involvement in the formation of the NGA.

38 Cooper, *Rise of the National Guard*, 93-94.


41 Cooper, *Rise of the National Guard*, 85.
form in a few years. Companies did manage to last, especially in cities, but this pattern continued until the mobilization in 1898. The Ohio National Guard did, however, begin assuming the role of an armed military force and not just a social organization.

**Turmoil in the Gilded Age – 1877 and 1884**

The year 1877 saw an epidemic of worker strikes across the United States. With sufficient National Guard troops at first unavailable or unwilling to humble the workers, U.S. Marshals as well as county sheriffs called on the Regular Army. Rapidly and professionally the regulars were able to quell the strikes. Their reputation soared immediately among fearful citizens. Rather than support expanding the Regular Army as many army leaders hoped, a Democratic Congress lashed back. In the 1878 Army Appropriations Bill they inserted a *Posse Comitatus* Clause that strictly limited deployment of federal troops by marshals and sheriffs.\(^42\) This huge blow to the Regular Army provided a new impetus for Guard growth and professionalism.

While deployment against strikers gave the Guard a new purpose it severely hurt its credibility as protectors of average citizens. Mahon estimates that at the height of 1877 strike eleven states called 45,000 Guardsmen into service, compared to the federal government which deployed 2,100 Regulars. Mahon contends that “[i]n general, the Guardsmen on duty in 1877 carried out their orders even when their sympathies lay with the strikers.” Occasionally these orders were to fire on threatening crowds.\(^43\) The Guard quickly gained a reputation in the late

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nineteenth century for being the tool of big business. A few well-publicized incidents during deployment against rioting workers earned the National Guard across the country a reputation that endured for years. The Ohio National served as riot control across the state.

The Great Railroad Strike of 1877 hit Newark first. Ohio’s First and Third Regiment, as well as Company B of the Fourteenth Regiment deployed in Newark. The strike expanded into Columbus next, where the state sent the Fourth Regiment, Company B of the Seventh Regiment, and Company A, Thirteenth Regiment. The Guard faced resistance at Newark but overcame the workers. Strikers interfered with trains in Bellair and Mt. Vernon but Guardsmen prevented any serious destruction of even delays. Threats in Zanesville were dissuaded when the mayor called out a local National Guard company.

Cleveland became the next serious target of strikers. Here the strikers held railyards and shops; the First Battery kept close watch until relieved by the Fifteenth Regiment. Toledo suffered rail stoppages until independent companies and volunteers commanded by Colonel Henry G. Neubert marched to the railroads and started the trains again. Cincinnati, left vulnerable when the First Regiment deployed to Newark, suffered serious disturbances. Civil authorities gathered the few remaining Guard companies along with police and citizen volunteers successfully saved the Ohio and Mississippi Railroad Bridge from strikers’ torches.

Steubenville, Bellair, Waverly, Ironton, and Middleport also affected by the strike, each of which required troop deployments, save for Middleport. Disturbances unrelated to the strike occurred shortly after in Wapakoneta, Auglaize County, and Piketon, Pike County, and were only pacified by state soldiers. During the first week of August the state gradually recalled Guard units, sending fresh replacements in their stead. In Newark the Sixth Battalion relieved Third
Regiment on August 9, but were themselves ordered home on August 15. With the strike over the National Guardsmen returned to their homes.\textsuperscript{44}

Guardsmen were proud of their involvement in putting down the Great Railroad Strike of 1877. The First Regiment, which remained in Columbus for seventeen days, fondly remembered their part in the strike. “So efficient was the command and conduct of the men that lawlessness at both Columbus and Newark was suppressed, good order preserved and property protected” boasted \textit{The History of the First Regiment}. Likewise service during the chaos enhanced the reputation of the First Regiment and the Ohio National Guard as a whole.\textsuperscript{45}

So as to avoid conflicts of interest, the state generally tried to send Guard companies and regiments away from their home towns, but often this was not practical and during the railroad strike local companies were frequently called in by mayors. Guardsmen who lived and worked in the areas were allowed to decline participation in strike breaking. Fogelson writes that in Ohio many Guardsmen refused orders to fire on crowds that may have contained friends, family, and coworkers of the state soldiers.\textsuperscript{46} Cooper corroborates this account in \textit{The Army and Civil Disorder}, mentioning that the Guard fraternized with workers in the crowds.\textsuperscript{47} This gives the impression that some members of the Guard from areas affected by strikes were working class. However, this was not typical.

National Guard leaders and the civil authorities who called them in were not sympathetic to the unhappy workers. They looked down on the strikers as disruptive. When describing the

\textsuperscript{44} This short description of the Ohio National Guard in the Railroad Strike of 1877 derives from the \textit{Annual Report of the Adjutant-General, 1877}, 108-17.
\textsuperscript{45} \textit{History of the First Regiment}, 4.
strike in Toledo the Adjutant General’s report refers to “The better class of people” who opposed the strike. These sentiments did not translate into excessive violence, however. In Ohio the strike never came close to warfare, and Ohio’s part in the Great Railroad strike was not marked by intense animosity or bloodshed.

During their service in the railroad strike the Guard never forgot that its real purpose were to serve as state soldiers, not armed strikebreakers. Commanders treated their deployments as military campaigns, even referring to them as such in official documents. During downtime the Guard kept its troops “busy in drills, parades, guard-mounting, and other military routine and duties” during the strike. Even though the Guard never passed up on an opportunity to prepare for war, their role as police defined the existence of the state troops for years afterwards.

The events of 1877 provided impetus for the expansion and professionalization of the National Guard in Ohio and other states. Clearly states needed stronger, better organized National Guards of they were to serve as state police forces. Ohio met with need with increased funding and training. Mark Kwasny notes that the ONG held its first summer encampment in 1879. Annual camps were useful in that that imitated soldierly life on campaign and provided officers with experience in commanding large groups of men. In 1884 the Guard put to use its recently improved training.

The year’s first incident occurred in late March in Cincinnati. Angry that a guilty man might escape punishment, rioters attacked the courthouse. At Hamilton County Sheriff Morton Hawkins’ request, the First Regiment, Ohio National Guard under Colonel C.B. Hunt mobilized

\[48\] Annual Report of the Adjutant-General, 1877, 114.  
\[49\] Annual Report of the Adjutant-General, 1877, 117.  
\[50\] Mark Kwasny, “A Test for the Ohio National Guard: The Cincinnati Riot of 1884,” Ohio History Journal, Volume 98 (Winter-Spring 1989), 23. Whether or not this encampment contained all of the ONG is unclear. A report to the War Department states that 1888 was the first year of general encampment of the ONG.
and joined the sheriff in defending the jail. That Friday night the Guard repelled the mob, but the fight was far from over.\textsuperscript{51} For three nights riotous Cincinnatians battled the Guard and local police. On Saturday Governor George Hoadly called in additional National Guard units from across the state. The mob regrouped for two more nights despite the rising number of Guardsmen, who totaled around 2,000 men. By Monday the mob had tired, but only after forty-five Cincinnatians, along with one Guard Lieutenant, had died.\textsuperscript{52}

Photos taken in the aftermath show the area as a warzone. Guardsmen stand armed in front of the burned out courthouse, which Cincinnatians had set fire to and prevented firemen from extinguishing the blaze. Other pictures show National Guard barricades in the streets, occupied by patrolling soldiers. There is another image of the artillery formed up in front of what appears to be the Music Building.\textsuperscript{53}

For the ONG, the Cincinnati riot was the most violent episode in the period between the War of the Rebellion and the Spanish-American War. Kwasny writes that the riot was the first test of the Guard’s effectiveness as a military force. He praises the Guard’s reaction and especially the command structure of the state. He concludes that, “events in Cincinnati proved that the ONG was an efficient military force capable of dealing with unexpected state emergencies. The modernization of the ONG since 1877 proved sufficient.”\textsuperscript{54}

Criticism directed towards the Guard fell on its commanders. C.B. Hunt of the First Regiment resigned after the riot, as did other commanders. Colonel Mott of the Fourth Regiment, facing a Court Martial for disobeying orders, stepped down that July. As for the rank and file of

\textsuperscript{51} Kwasny, “A Test for the Ohio National Guard,” 28-29.
\textsuperscript{52} For a complete account of the Cincinnati Courthouse Riot of 1884, read Mark Kwasny’s full article. The History of the First Regiment puts the death toll slightly higher.
\textsuperscript{53} Photos at the Ohio History Connection.
\textsuperscript{54} Kwasny, “A Test for the Ohio National Guard,” 51.
the Guard, their major shortcoming was their low turnout, as Kwasny shows. Initially only 117 members of the First Regiment responded to the call to arms, out of over 500 in the regiment.\footnote{Kwasny, "A Test for the Ohio National Guard," 30.}

Joseph Schweninger even writes that some soldiers of the First participated in the riots.\footnote{Joseph Schweninger, A Frightful and Shameful Story: The Cincinnati Riot of 1884 and the Search for Order (Master of Arts thesis), Ohio State University, OCLC 655171977.}

The next disturbance took place in the mining region of Southeastern Ohio. The Hocking Valley Coal Strike of 1884 through 1885 saw a longer and less violent deployment of the Guard. In late August, striking miners conducted a series of attacks on company property and strikebreakers. The worst of which occurred at Snake Hollow, near Nelsonville in Athens County, where miners killed one hired guard and wounded others. Hocking County sheriff T. F. McCarthy requested governor Hoadly send in Guardsmen.\footnote{Birtle, “Governor George Hoadly's Use of the Ohio National Guard in the Hocking Valley Coal Strike of 1884,” \textit{Ohio History Journal}, Volume 91 (Annual 1982), 42.}

Not wanting to act hastily, Hoadly travelled to Nelsonville to assess the situation. He then ordered three companies of Guardsmen from nearby regiments into the Hocking Valley. They effectively kept the peace in the area, protecting miners and strikebreakers alike. On September 12, Hoadly sent three companies in to replace the three originals companies, whose men had grown tired of constant patrol. The rotation worked well and the new companies successfully continued the task.\footnote{Birtle, “Ohio National Guard in the Hocking Valley Coal Strike of 1884,” 44-49.} After another rotation, the Guard permanently left the area on September 27. Birtle argues that “The Guard's intervention resulted in the immediate restoration of peace and order and succeeded in keeping violence and property damage to a minimum.”\footnote{Birtle, “Ohio National Guard in the Hocking Valley Coal Strike of 1884,” 51, 57.}

Perhaps the most surprising aspect of the Hocking Valley deployment was the harmonious relationship between the Guardsmen and the striking workers. Newspaper accounts

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\footnote{Kwasny, "A Test for the Ohio National Guard," 30.}
\footnote{Joseph Schweninger, A Frightful and Shameful Story: The Cincinnati Riot of 1884 and the Search for Order (Master of Arts thesis), Ohio State University, OCLC 655171977.}
\footnote{Birtle, “Governor George Hoadly's Use of the Ohio National Guard in the Hocking Valley Coal Strike of 1884,” \textit{Ohio History Journal}, Volume 91 (Annual 1982), 42.}
\footnote{Birtle, “Ohio National Guard in the Hocking Valley Coal Strike of 1884,” 44-49.}
\footnote{Birtle, “Ohio National Guard in the Hocking Valley Coal Strike of 1884,” 51, 57.}
from the time, even those who stood firmly in the camp of the miners, remarked on the honorable composure of the Guardsmen. Some observers attribute this to the composition of the Guard, saying that members of a company of the Seventh Regiment were themselves miners and therefore sympathetic. Birtle disproves the characterization of the Seventh Regiment as comprised of miners, noting that only the captain and a handful of enlisted men worked in the mines.  

Birtle’s assessment of the peaceful relationship between the Ohio National Guard and the working class in 1884 resonates elsewhere. Even in the violence of the Cincinnati Courthouse Riot there was nothing that could be considered class conflict, especially if some Guardsmen participated as rioters. In 1877 Guard commanders used very class conscious language, but this appears to have dissipated for the most part by 1884. If this sentiment did endure, it certainly did not result in excessive violence on the part of the Guard towards working class Ohioans. At every instance the Ohio Guardsmen were hesitant to use force, even amidst the intensity of the Courthouse Riot.

Regardless of Ohio’s exceptionality, on a national scale workers and the lower class came to distrust the National Guard, which through its existence became increasingly middleclass. This was partially due to the fact that only the middleclass could afford the leisure time necessary for drill and practice. Also, Guardsmen were required to buy their own uniforms, which some in the lower class could not afford. The level of animosity between workers and

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Guardsmen in Ohio never reached the same fervor as in states like Pennsylvania, where the state deployed thousands of Guardsmen at a time to disperse riotous workers.\textsuperscript{61}

Guard companies across the state were sponsored by the wealthy elite, which contributed to their upper class reputation. Athens, for example, was home to the Sloane Guards, which were partially funded by wealthy business owner O.B. Sloane. The Sloane Guards entered the state roster as Company B, Eighteenth Infantry Regiment, Ohio National Guard. Regardless of their high-class sponsorship, these companies were not the Independent Companies of the antebellum era; they trained like the rest of the Guard, which placed an emphasis on marksmanship.

During the 1870s marksmanship improved greatly in the Ohio National Guard. Guardsmen participated in shooting matches ranging from local companies to the national level. In 1877 the Adjutant General wrote that “Reports show that the drills have been regularly held and well attended, and that discipline has improved. A considerable interested is being manifested in target practice, and excellent scores made after a few trials.”\textsuperscript{62} The Guard practiced at the state campgrounds in Newark during annual drill as well as smaller ranges in the interim.

Regular Army interest in the Guard increased noticeably after 1877. That very year, the Adjutant General of the United States Army argued that the militia was unqualified and too inexperienced to suppress internal turmoil. In his annual report he wrote that “Our father who the Constitution, and who were not without experience upon this point, doubted the wisdom of relying upon the militia, and so provided for the employment of the Federal troops.”\textsuperscript{63} But the War Department was not of a single mind when it came to militia affairs. In the 1878 Annual

\textsuperscript{61} Cooper, \textit{The Army and Civil Disorder}, 14. Cooper writes specifically of the Homestead Strike, during which 8,000 Pennsylvania deployed National Guardsmen.
\textsuperscript{62} Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1877, 18
\textsuperscript{63} War Department, \textit{Report of the Secretary of War for the year 1878} (Washington, DC; Government Printing Office, 1877), V-VI.
Report, the Chief of Ordnance asserted that “the present annual appropriation of two hundred thousand dollars for arming and equipping the militia is insufficient to provide to arms and equipments necessary to encourage new organizations and keep the organized forces in proper. He therefore recommends an increase of the annual appropriation.”\textsuperscript{64} Clearly the Army had interest in helping the militia address and fix its inadequacies.

Before remedying the militia’s shortcomings the Army had to identify what those problems were. As early as 1885 the army sent observers to the states to report on the condition of the militia; Lieutenant-Colonel R.H. Offley, 17\textsuperscript{th} Regiment, U.S. Infantry, reported that “with few exceptions the officers and privates [of the ONG] showed great anxiety to improve themselves.”\textsuperscript{65} The Guard was clearly eager for military service in this era, but serving during strikes and acting as state police meant continued financial support. Guard leaders worried that their men might lose military competency, and worked to ensure that this did not happen. Regular Army leaders felt different. On behalf of the Regular Army, General Emory Upton toured Europe and observed the Prussian military system in the 1870. When he wrote his recommendations for improving the U.S. military system he advocated doing away with the National Guard entirely.\textsuperscript{66}

Ohio and other National Guards were simply unable to keep up with the professional armies, and their role became increasingly that of state police. Skowronek paints a bleak picture of the Guard’s fortune at the time. However, political anglings after 1877 would ensure a place for the Guard. \textit{Posse Comitatus} gave the Guard a guaranteed role as state police, a function that

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{64} War Department, \textit{Report of the Secretary of War for the year 1878} (Washington, DC; Government Printing Office, 1878), XVII
\item \textsuperscript{65} War Department, \textit{Report of the Secretary of War for the year 1885} (Washington, DC; Government Printing Office, 1885), 286.
\item \textsuperscript{66} Skowronek, \textit{Building a new American State}, 91-93.
\end{itemize}
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the Guard used to further its military professionalism. Successful deployments in the 1880s further solidified this system.

Unable to effect reform on a federal level, Ohio made advancements in militia legislation. These laws were suggestions of the Adjutant Generals and greatly benefitted the Ohio National Guard. Adjutant General Karr lauded legislation passed on May 7, 1877, that gave additional support to the Guard, exclaiming that “[e]ncouraged by this [law], and the well sustained and increasing interest of the people in their citizen soldiery, the National Guard as rapidly advanced in drill, discipline, knowledge of military duties, and the other essentials.”  

In 1886 the legislature approved an amendment that grouped companies into three battalions per regiment, increased pay for Guardsmen, and made enlistments three years. Adjutant General Henry Axline wrote that these changes “will, no doubt, in a short time, produce valuable results in increasing the efficiency and morale of the National Guard.”

The 1890s

As the century drew to a close, the Ohio National Guard increasingly became involved in policing duties. Mob disturbances were common in this decade, but the largest deployment of Guardsmen came in 1894 to keep the peace during mine strikes. Economic downturn in the 1890s compelled mining companies to reduce wages, resulting in major strikes. Between riotous mobs of irate citizens and striking workers, police duties kept the Guard preoccupied.

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68 Adjutant General’s Department, Annual Report of the Adjutant-General, to the Governor of the State of Ohio, for the Year 1886 (Columbus: The Westbote Company, State Printer, 1887), 9.
On April 21, 1894, mine workers across the country went on strike, including Ohio’s coal producing region. A few weeks into the strike, the governor sent in the National Guard to prevent any violence. The state sent Guardsmen first to Glouster, in Athens County, then Guernsey County, and finally Stark and Tuscarawas counties in turn before the summer ended. At apogee, nearly 4,000 patrolled the affected areas, protecting company property and generally keeping the peace.69

Mine strikes were not the only cause for the Ohio National Guard’s deployment in 1894. That year also saw riotous mobs in Rushsylvania and Washington Court House, as well as disturbances such as a hotel fire in Toledo.70 In each of these deployments the Guard functioned well in their task. They effectively prevented disaster and did what was asked of them without bias. Charles Peckham concludes that:

[T]he Ohio National Guard in 1894 fulfilled its obligations effectively (though not flawlessly) and with relative impartiality. On a local level, it had responded promptly to the requests of local authorities to control crowds during fires, to protect prisoners, or to suppress riots. On a statewide basis, it had responded with little confusion to an unprecedented call-up and had been able to halt the spread of violence arising from a major strike without bloodshed or serious clashes.71

Although more than capable of serving as a state police force, the Ohio National Guard still saw itself as a military force first and foremost.

Guard units practiced military arts often. Companies and batteries drilled weekly, while battalions and regiments gathered annually in the summer to drill and practice marksmanship.72 Summer camps where large portions of the ONG camped together were often held in on state

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69 Peckham, “The Ohio National Guard and Its Police Duties, 1894,” 60-63. This article contains a detailed yet not overindulgent account of the mine strikes in 1894.
70 Peckham, “The Ohio National Guard and Its Police Duties, 1894,” 55-57.
72 Peckham, “The Ohio National Guard and Its Police Duties, 1894,” 53.
grounds in Newark. Here the Guards also practiced marksmanship, and the Guard organized competitions that pitted each regiment’s best shots against one another.

Support from the army and War department increased as the Guard grew. Ohio began the decade with the third largest Guard in the country, trailing behind only the more populous states of New York and Pennsylvania. Army observers filed reports to the War Department on the state of the ONG. In 1888, three Regular Army officers toured the first general encampment of the Ohio Guard. Discipline was acceptable, except for a few Guard officers, but the regulars found camp organization wanting. Overall the impression was highly positive: Major W. L. Kellogg of the 19th Infantry Regiment wrote of the Ohio cavalry select infantry companies that “judging from their behavior in camp, should occasion ever call for it, they would prove of great service in the field.”

War was foremost in the minds of military men, even though no immediate threat lurked on the horizon. General of the Army of the United States William T. Sherman and his successor Philip Sheridan both supported a closer relationship between the Regular Army and the National Guard. They believed that the National Guard would play a significant role in any upcoming war. Though highly influential because of their long and successful careers, Sherman and Sheridan offered one of multiple opinions held by the Regular Army towards the Guard.

There were members of the Regular Army that did not believe the Guard capable of serving as a reliable reserve force. Guard detractors supported Emory Upton’s recommendation to create an entirely new force, doing away with the Guard as a military force in the process. Others within the army recognized the strong militia tradition, and believed that the National

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73 War Department Report 1888, 261.
74 Cooper, Rise of the National Guard, 89.
Guard should be incorporated into the War Department via a National Guard Bureau.75 Guard leaders themselves were hesitant to cede any control of state forces to the government in peacetime.

Despite significant opposition to the Guard from the Regular Army, the latter did put forth effort to help professionalize the former. As state National Guards grew, the Regular Army dedicated more officers to observing and aiding the National Guard. By the 1890s the army sent officers on three to four year tours with state Guards. Cooper writes that generally the regulars were impressed with the Guardsmen.76 In 1887, Lieutenant Alfred C. Sharpe of the 22nd U.S. Infantry wrote that “I am prepared to pronounce the National Guard of Ohio a splendid body of men, deserving the respect, support, and cordial co-operation of all good citizens of the state.”77

While the exact nature of the relationship between the National Guard and the United States military dangled in uncertainty, the Guard did benefit from appropriations that were doubled in 1888. However, that increase was not always enough to include weapons and other seemingly necessary items. Ohio maintained an effective Guard despite outdated weapons and equipment, problems that faced every National Guard. Peckham describes the equipment of the Ohio Guard as “worn but serviceable.”78 Total subsidy for the Ohio National Guard in 1893 was almost $120,000 from the state and another $20,000 from the federal government. This averaged about $19 per Guardsmen.79 Ohio’s Guard was not destitute by any means, and few state Guards enjoyed larger state appropriations or federal subsidies.

75 Cooper, Rise of the National Guard, 90-91.
76 Cooper, Rise of the National Guard, 90.
78 Peckham, “The Ohio National Guard and Its Police Duties, 1894,” 53.
79 Peckham, “The Ohio National Guard and Its Police Duties, 1894,” 52.
The slight but very symbolic increase in appropriations was the tangible result of the National Guard Association lobbying. However, unable to find support for its reform efforts, the NGA itself languished after 1887. Martha Derthick states there was no interest in Guard reform from Congress, and the NGA could barely qualify as a lobbying group at this time. Believing that the NGA was dominated by easterners, Guard officers from the Midwest formed a rival organization, the Interstate National Guard Association. After forming in 1897, the INGA became much more aggressive and absorbed the NGA. By 1900 the groups only held a single annual meeting, but they used the original name, National Guard Association.

On the local level the Guard worked towards professionalization. Across the state, the ONG built designated armories to serve regiments and companies. In 1889 Ohio completed the First Regiment’s armory in Cincinnati. The Central Armory in Cleveland opened four years later. The enormous structure housed several of the city’s regiments. Companies, dispersed across the state also built armories, but this process took much longer than that of cities.

**Conclusion - On the Eve of Mobilization**

The two decades between the Ohio National Guard’s reemergence in the 1870s and the Spanish-American War in 1898 witnessed a great improvement in the state military force. The legislature passed legislation that helped to modernize and professionalize the ONG. Even as it served as a police force, the Guard never lost sight of its desire to fight for the federal government in war. Deployments like the Cincinnati Court House Riot had tested the Guard, but

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it had not seen combat against a formidable armed opponent, only angry, unorganized mobs. But Guard commanders did not miss opportunities for professionalization. While deployed during strikes Guardsmen had drilled, marched, camped, and practiced marksmanship. In peace they had taken every opportunity to prepare for war.

The Great Railroad Strike of 1877 had motivated state leaders to invest more money and attention to the National Guard. Proponents of the Guard seized on this opportunity in Ohio and elsewhere. Its expanded role as a state police force also allowed the Guard to exist independent of the United States Army. Posse Comitatus ensured a future for the National Guard. Opponents had to accept its continued existence, but the law also meant that the role of the National Guard became increasingly more of an internal police force than a military organization.

Militia ideology changed in this era, though it did not lose its Whiggish republican roots. The militia still existed on a county and state level to protect the community, but the threats to the community changed. With no Native American raiders or foreign invaders, the militia found itself intervening in riots and strikes initiated by members of a disgruntled working class. Ohio was not wracked by the worst labor disputes or ethnic tensions, although authorities called out the militia on many occasions to suppress and prevent violence. This had been a feature of the militia before the War of the Rebellion, albeit on a smaller scale. What changed most in the post-war era was the relationship between the militia and the Regular Army.

The biggest adversary the National Guard faced was the Regular Army. During the War of the Rebellion, the army swelled in size to unprecedented proportions. Massive armies were tolerated by most civilians because they brought assured victory and preservation of the Union,

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83 Cooper, The Army and Civil Disorder, 12.
and they were viewed as temporary. However, as Balogh shows, the wartime federal government centralized authority and made future expansion possible. The wartime army had a very lasting effect on Regular Army officers, who became convinced of the need for a larger, more reliable army under federal control. Many, like General Upton, viewed local militias as ineffective and mismanaged by the states.

This relationship between the National Guard and Regular Army was unusual, however. The Army did not want to eradicate the militia but rather to integrate state forces as reserves and exert control over state military matters. The better organized National Guard fervently resisted any challenge to its autonomy and state identity. The Army did supply officers to review and advise Guard officers, an arrangement that also benefitted the Army by allowing it to assess the capabilities of the Guard. The Army was not alone in its split thinking towards the National Guard. Guard ideas of its own role seemed to differ regionally. When Southern and Midwestern Guardsmen revived the NGA in 1897, calling it the Interstate National Guard Association, they did so to support the idea that the Guard was the foremost military force in the country, above even the Regular Army. Eastern Guardsmen, especially in New York, felt that the Guard should have a limited role in war, stopping emergencies and allowing the government to recruit volunteers for wartime. Ohio was more inclined to support the INGA, believing that its men should serve in wartime, but it was not a vicious support of states’ rights, as Derthick characterizes the INGA.

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85 Fitzpatrick, “Emory Upton and the Citizen Soldier,” 387.
The Spanish-American War proved that the National Guard had accomplished one vital task since the War of the Rebellion. It had become a military force, to be used by the federal government in the event of war. This had been achieved through the work of organizations like the National Guard Association as well as a deeply entrenched republican respect for the militia. The NGA and the NRA helped modernize the militia, keeping it relevant in an era of professional armies. Though often at odds, the Guard’s relationship with the Regular Army also helped it remain viable as warfare evolved. When Ohio and the National Guards of other states marched off to war in 1898, they did so because they never lost sight of that goal during the turmoil of the interwar years.
Chapter IV From Mobilization to Disillusionment

The Ohio National Guard in Spanish-American War

Over the summer of 1898, 15,000 Ohioans served in the federal Army.¹ Many of these volunteers were former members of the Ohio National Guard. Although the country was embroiled in a war with the aging Spanish Empire, Ohio’s soldiers fought boredom, disease, and other such hardships in dismal training camps while awaiting their chance for battlefield glory. Two Ohio regiments served outside the country before war’s end, but they too spent the majority of their time in camp. Regardless of the inopportune circumstances, Guardsmen relished the chance to serve their country as federal volunteers. With Spain capitulated, the Ohioans went on furlough at the end of the year; soon they would muster out. Their greatest contribution to the war was not in fighting but rather in what their service represented. The Ohio National Guard, alongside the Guards of other states, proved that the militia could provide a ready military force in war and that the country still supported its citizen-soldiers.

The Spanish-American War was the first time since the Mexican-American War of 1845 that the federal government deployed state troops outside of United States borders. Just as the government managed the militia more efficiently, the organization itself evolved, becoming smaller and more dedicated to the role of part-time soldiers. Militia in the late-nineteenth century drew inspiration from the volunteers and the militia of the 1860s. Since the 1870s the National

¹ Ohio Adjutant General’s Department, Annual Report of the Adjutant General to the Governor of the State of Ohio, for the Fiscal Year ending November 15, 1898 (Columbus, OH: Westbote Co., 1899), 17-19.
Guard had strived to become a capable and reliable military establishment. War with Spain proved the test of years of development.

For the Ohio National Guard, the war with Spain was the culmination of years of preparation. Since the end of the War of the Rebellion in 1865 the Guard had not seen service as federal volunteers. In the meantime, as the Guard kept the peace during strikes and riots, political and military National Guard advocates struggled to ensure that the federal government would call up militia to serve as soldiers in the event of war and general mobilization. As relations with Spain over Cuban independence deteriorated to the point of open conflict in the spring of 1898, many Ohio Guardsmen welcomed the prospect of fighting on campaign.

The task of casting National Guardsmen into federal volunteer soldiers first fell on the state of Ohio. The Ohio Adjutant General’s Department used the War with Spain as an opportunity to prove how capable it and its soldiers were. Following a rapid and relatively smooth transition into the United States Army, Ohio’s soldiers experienced more disappointment than glory. Ohio Adjutant General Herbert B. Kingsley praised Ohio’s conduct during the war but conceded that changes were necessary. In his 1899 report he made numerous recommendations for improvement based on problems that arose during the war. Only around 2,000 Ohio volunteers made it out of the country; Ohio’s causalities were few but misspent, victims of disease and accident. Like most soldiers of the war who returned home with little to show for their service, they were disillusioned by the war. After the war, Ohio veterans were instrumental in enacting reform for the National Guard.

Commentators on the war have observed the influence of individual Ohioans, from President William McKinley to Adjutant General Henry C. Corbin, but the experience of Ohio’s volunteer soldiery has been largely been overlooked. This might be because Ohio’s contribution
to the Spanish-American War did not produce battlefield glory and no Ohio regiment fought in
the Philippine Insurrection. Even regimental histories are sparse, though *Banners in the Air* does
provide a detailed narrative of the 8\(^{th}\) Ohio’s experience in the war. Recent scholarly examination
of Ohio in the war is virtually nonexistent. A major exception to this, however, is Bradley
Keefer’s *Conflicting Memories on the River of Death* which in part looks at the time Ohio
volunteers spent in Camp Thomas in 1898 and how they remembered that experience.

A significant amount of literature exists on the United States military in the Spanish-
American War. As a whole the National Guard receives considerable attention, but historians
remain divided on the effectiveness of the National Guard during the War with Spain.
Traditionally the narrative goes that the Guard as a whole did not perform well, could not
effectively organize and train before the war ended, and that reform after the war came to fix the
Guard’s obvious failings.\(^2\) More recent scholarship had taken a different approach.

Historians of the militia have argued that the Guard performed decently in the
mobilization of 1898 considering the government had not mobilized state volunteers since the
War of the Rebellion some thirty years prior. Most of the blame for disorganization during
mobilization, which plagued the Regular Army as well as the Guard, lay with the highly
fractured War Department. By this account restructuring within the War Department during the
War with Spain and renewed enthusiasm for the Guard led to post-war reform. Ohio’s war record
demonstrates why post-war reform was crucial.

First, the performance of the Ohio National Guard as well as the National Guards of other
states must be reconsidered. In *The Rise of the National Guard* Cooper asserts that the

\(^2\) Cosmas, *An Army for Empire*, 320, 324.
mobilization of 1898 should be compared to those of 1845 and 1861. During both previous instances the state militias were slow to organize. In 1898 the Guard not only organized quickly it also had an overabundance of eligible troops willing to volunteer. The National Guard should be given credit for its short preparation time, even if it faced other problems after volunteering.\(^3\)

Mahon credits the National Guard with providing the soldiers the country needed upon mobilization in 1898. He writes that, though many Guardsmen who volunteered were not active members at the time, the Guard had previously trained them, thus preparing them for military service. While admitting that the Spanish war’s duration did not allow them to attain the professionalism of state volunteers in the War of the Rebellion, Mahon’s major critique of the Guard is their resistance to military discipline, not their ineffectiveness as soldiers.\(^4\) Both Mahon and Cooper discuss the serious problems the Guard volunteers faced after they entered federal service.

Historians have argued that an ineffective War Department led to serious organizational failings during the war. Stephen Skowronek argues that the War Department of 1898 was unprepared to mobilize an army. Faced with a sudden influx of over one-hundred-thousand volunteers, the logistical ineptitude of the U.S. Army and the War Department became evident. Lacking sufficient supply stores and unprepared to coordinate transportation, state volunteers and regulars alike languished in camps without necessary equipment or supplies.\(^5\) As Graham Cosmas argues, this shock did however have a positive effect; by the end of the war the War Department had overcome its own deficiencies and functioned thanks to capable leadership.

\(^3\) Cooper, *The Rise of the National Guard*, 105.
Even though its performance in the war garnered a bad reputation, the Guard maintained popularity in the states and influence in Congress. In *The National Guard in Politics*, Martha Derthick argues that the Spanish-American War abruptly changed Congressional attitudes towards the National Guard. Whereas many lawmakers considered the Guard separate from United States military, the war had proved the army needed a reserve force. Though, according to Derthick, the Guard volunteers were “pathetically ill-prepared” upon entering training camps, the war spurred military enthusiasm and nationalism. This allowed for National Guard reform to pass through Congress following the end of the war.6

In *An Army for Empire: The United States Army in the Spanish-American War*, Cosmas asserts that during the Spanish-American War forged the War Department into an effective structure capable of managing the United States army.7 Elihu Root, after becoming Secretary of War in 1899, was able to use the new cohesive War Department to effect change. The “Root Reforms” started with the Regular Army but culminated in the Militia Act of 1903.8 For both Cooper and Mahon the 1903 act is a watershed in the history of the Guard and begins a new epoch in militia history.

This chapter tells the story of Ohio in the Spanish-American War. It will show how Ohio and other National Guards used their influence to secure a role for their soldiers in the war. Ohio entered the war optimistic, encouraged by its efficient mobilization, but became bogged down by the War Department’s poor preparation. Wartime logistical and structural problems, which the War Department could not rectify, plagued both the Guard and the Regular Army and provided impetus for reform after the war. This chapter will also expand on the ideas that motivated the

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7 Cosmas, *An Army for Empire*, xviii.
8 Cosmas, *An Army for Empire*, 320.
National Guard. The United States in 1898 still adhered to republican ideas of what the military should look like and what it should be used for. The belief that soldiers should be citizens who voluntarily defend their republic, not professional regulars who fight only for money. Therefore, this paper will examine control over the citizen militia by a growing central government and the efforts by the states to retain control over their militias. Ohio and its National Guard are unique, but their experience in the War with Spain demonstrates the evolving role of the militia in the era of an expanding federal government.

Creating and Imperial Army

The Spanish-American War pitted the United States against a European empire in decline. Though regarded as isolationist, the growing power of the U.S. brought it into the affairs of neighboring countries. This was especially true of Cuba. The island located less than a hundred miles south of Florida had seen decades of guerilla warfare between the Spanish government and Cuba revolutionaries. President William McKinley, an Ohioan himself, sympathized with Cuban independence efforts but was hesitant to commit to war. Hoping to find a peaceful resolution, McKinley remained hesitant following the explosion of the *USS Maine* in February 1898 and a naval inquiry into the incident that ruled the explosion the result of a Spanish mine. McKinley changed his attitude and in April promised to send U.S. soldiers to aid Cuban resistance fighters. U.S. Navy warships blockaded the island and the Spanish quickly responded with a declaration of war.

Ohioans waited anxiously for news about the crisis with Spain. With war becoming a growing possibility in the spring of 1898 Ohio’s civilian population showed strong support for
the Ohio National Guard. Ohio’s newspapers resonated with interest in and support for their
citizen-soldiers. As early as February the press buzzed with mentions of mobilization and war
preparations. On March 7 the East Liverpool Evening News Review asserted that the “yellow kid
journals” were working themselves into a frenzy over the USS Maine. The paper was less certain
that the Spanish were to blame, but they declared that the National Guard was ready for a fight if
needed.9 Warren G. Harding’s Marion Daily Star discussed the issue of Guard service in a
possible war with Spain on March 30. It declared that “if Spain could put up a stronger fight than
the regular army could take care of, one would not need to be surprised to see G company called
out, as the Ohio National Guard in one of the best in the union.”10

The question of whether or not the National Guard would serve was as uncertain as it was
important at the time. The United States had spent millions of dollars improving its naval forces
in the 1890s. Despite its modest size, the U.S. navy was very modern. It was ready and even
eager for war. By comparison, the U.S. Army was severely lacking. Also small, its role since the
end of Reconstruction had been limited to fighting Native Americans on the frontier. To win a
ground war against Spain, the U.S. Army would need to expand quickly, incorporating the
National Guard would be a quick way of accomplishing this.

At the beginning of the year 1897, the United States Regular Army numbered, in total,
25,000 officers and men.11 This limited size was due to budgetary restraints as well as lingering
fears of standing armies. In classic Jeffersonian tradition, Congress had restricted the army to this
small size which left the country essentially unprepared for war in 1898, as it had in 1812, 1845,
and 1861. To create a new wartime army the War Department had to mobilize regulars and militia in 1898.

While the tensions with Spain grew and war became imminent, Congress and the War Department prepared for the task of organizing an army. For the Regular Army, war provided an opportunity to implement the expansible regiment system first articulated by General Upton. After serving in the infantry, artillery, and cavalry during the War of the Rebellion, Upton toured Europe and Asia, observing armies along the way. He became convinced of the effectiveness of the Prussian reserve model which gave control of reserve forces to the army, not civilians. Upton advised the U.S. to adopt a similar system which many in the army supported.\(^\text{12}\) In March of 1898, Chairman of the House Military Affairs Committee John Hull put forth legislation, known as the Hull Bill, which would permit regular strength to rapidly grow to 104,000 by increasing battalions in existing regiments. Hull’s bill would also limit the autonomy of the National Guard.\(^\text{13}\)

The terms of the Hull Bill were unacceptable to the National Guard. Under the bill’s provisions the National Guard would be allowed to join as federal volunteers not on a unit but on an individual basis, without their own regimental identities or officers. The result would be entirely new volunteer regiments commanded by regular officers. These new forces would also be strictly under the control of the army and therefore free of control or interference by state politicians. Eager to avoid problems stemming from meddling politicians in the Civil War, the bill would have set strict troop limits on the states preventing governors from raising new regiments and handing officers’ commissions to friends and allies.

\(^{12}\) Fitzpatrick, “Emory Upton and the Citizen Soldier,” 369.

\(^{13}\) Skowronek, Building a New American State, 113.
and from state politicians ensured the bill’s defeat in Congress twelve days before the U.S. declared war on Spain.\textsuperscript{14}

Defeat of the Hull bill allowed the National Guard to join the federal army with greater control over their regiments and officers, but it also forced the War Department to organize the wartime army on an ad hoc basis. President McKinley called for 125,000 state volunteers on April 25. This force augmented 61,000 men of the Regular Army as allowed by Congress. Later, on May 25, McKinley called for 75,000 more state volunteers.\textsuperscript{15}

The new army raised for the War with Spain bore great resemblance to earlier American armies. As had been the case during the War of the Rebellion, state volunteers comprised the bulk of the wartime army in 1898. As U.S. President McKinley had the option of deploying the National Guard for nine months, during such time Guardsmen had to serve. However, just as Lincoln had done in 1861, McKinley called for volunteers to enter federal service. Volunteers signed enlistments that lasted two years or until the end of hostilities. Existing National Guard organizations were the first to volunteer. They often did so \textit{en masse} so regiments could retain their prewar integrity and traditions. In total 200,000 state volunteers joined the federal army, supporting 75,000 Regular soldiers.

In all, Ohio sent 15,354 officers and enlisted men to war in 1898. They comprised ten infantry regiments, one cavalry, and one light artillery regiment. Jerry Cooper writes that only a quarter of the state troops had pre-war training in the National Guard.\textsuperscript{16} Though the exact numbers are not available, Adjutant General Kingsley wrote confidently that most of Ohio’s

\textsuperscript{14} Skowronek, \textit{Building a New American State}, 113-14.
\textsuperscript{15} Skowronek, \textit{Building a New American State}, 115.
\textsuperscript{16} Cooper, \textit{Rise of the National Guard}, 104.
volunteers came either directly from the Guard or were former Guardsmen. Considering the strength of the Ohio National on March 31, 1898, stood at 501 officers and 6,361 enlisted men, with thousands more former Guardsmen willing to volunteer, it is unlikely that Cooper’s approximation applies to Ohio.\(^\text{17}\)

Before the war began, Ohio and other states conducted medical examinations on Guardsmen who were potential volunteers. Cooper writes that many Guardsmen were rejected by medical examiners as unfit for service, but Ohio made up for the loss by enlistments from former Guardsmen.\(^\text{18}\) The Ohio Adjutant General reported on the medical board itself, asserting that the board performed its examinations quickly and the soldiers were cleared well before the call for volunteers. Though “a large number of men had been discharged by reason of physical disability” Ohio still counted more able-bodied Guardsmen than the government volunteer quota.\(^\text{19}\)

The War Department sent the state of Ohio a quota for troops as part of McKinley’s larger call. Though medical examinations had hurt its numbers, the likelihood of war inspired many young men to join. From March 31 to April 25 the strength of the Ohio National Guard increased by nearly two-thousand citizen-soldiers. Ohio issued these men weapons and equipment from the state arsenal until supplies ran out. They received rudimentary training to prepare them for their service ahead. When the ONG volunteered for federal service it met the required quota with men to spare.\(^\text{20}\)

\(^\text{17}\) Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1898, 17-19.
\(^\text{18}\) Cooper, Rise of the National Guard, 101-02.
\(^\text{19}\) Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1898, 17.
Ohio’s Guardsmen were well prepared for army service. In the 1897 *Statement of the Condition and Efficiency for Service of the Organized Militia*, Regular Army observers found the ONG an capable organization overall with well-disciplined personnel. They recommended that the infantry be better drilled in open-order and guard duty and that the artillery should train with dummy horses to increase their proficiency.\(^{21}\) Strangely though, Section 13 of the report, which outlined plans for mobilization, appeared blank. When the time came, Ohio managed its mobilization effectively.

On April 27, 1898, the Ohio Adjutant General’s Department issued statewide orders to the Ohio National Guard. With war looming imminent, infantry, cavalry, and artillery outfits received their marching orders and assembled at what became Camp Bushnell, named after Ohio governor Asa Bushnell. Located in the Bexley area of Columbus, Ohio, Camp Bushnell occupied an ideal central location with sufficient rail access. Like other states, Ohio hastily organized Camp Bushnell to serve as the rendezvous destination for the assembling Guard regiments. Despite the volatile spring weather, conditions in the camp were decent and the activity actually fostered growth in the adjacent city. Ohio’s Guardsmen were lucky compared to the tribulations of Missouri and Louisiana Guardsmen who suffered in their state’s deplorable unorganized mobilization camps.\(^{22}\)

The question remained as to how the Ohio volunteer regiments would be organized when they mustered into the army. The National Guard supported volunteering as whole regiments, but governors had traditionally created volunteer regiments to reward political allies and friends. The


\(^{22}\) Cooper, *Rise of the National Guard*, 103.
practice was commonplace during the War of the Rebellion. Governor Bushnell’s original intentions reflected his desire to create new Ohio regiments. After conferring with ONG Major General Henry Axline, Governor Bushnell reconsidered his original plan and permitted the Ohio National Guard to retain its own organization and officers.23

Once organized into a division complete with brigades and headquarters, Captain Charles M. Rockefeller of the 9th U.S. Infantry mustered the Ohio Guardsmen into federal volunteer service. In a span of only eight days, May 7 through May 14, Ohio’s quota of 428 officers and 8,052 enlisted men entered United States service.24 In late May the President augmented this quota with a second call for troops. Ohio responded by mustering in an additional 73 officers and 6,801 enlisted men.25 Given that Ohio had a surplus of Guardsmen ready to volunteer after the first call, many volunteers from the second call were either Guardsmen or members of the Naval Militia, who had already declined an offer from the Department of the Navy for a limited number of men to serve.26

Most of Ohio’s National Guard infantry regiments mustered into federal volunteer service as full regiments at the President’s first call for troops. The First, Second, Third, Fifth, and Eighth Regiments, Ohio National Guard, became the First, Second, Third, Fifth, and Eighth Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry. The Ninth Battalion, Ohio National Guard, became the Ninth Battalion, Ohio Volunteer Infantry, while the Fourteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Regiments, Ohio National Guard became the Fourth, Sixth, and Seventh Regiment, Ohio

26 The Naval Brigade of the Ohio National Guard consisted of four battalion-sized Divisions. The Navy Department contacted the Ohio Naval Brigade requesting two-hundred reserves to accompany Sampson’s fleet. Seeing that this would destroy the integrity of the Ohio Naval Brigade’s formations, the Guardsmen declined the navy’s offer. Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1898, 20.
Volunteer Infantry.\textsuperscript{27} Keeping their prewar National Guard identities provided a moral boost to Ohio’s volunteer regiments.

When McKinley issued the second call, Ohio’s independent companies not associated with the ONG joined the established regiments. Ohio also raised an entirely new regiment, the Tenth, commanded by Henry Axline, who stepped down from Ohio Major General to take field command as Colonel.\textsuperscript{28} The Tenth OVI consisted of the state’s leftovers. Large parts of the Ohio National Guard Naval Brigade, Engineer Battalion, and First Light Artillery Regiment became companies constituting the regiment. In addition to the infantry, Ohio supplied one cavalry and one artillery regiment. Ohio’s regiments adjusted to army life in Camp Bushnell while awaiting their government assignments.\textsuperscript{29}

Lessons from the mobilization of 1861 were not forgotten in 1898. Ohio managed to successfully equip its National Guard volunteers and avoid losing complete control over its state soldiers. Unlike during the Rebellion, Ohio’s Guardsmen did not terminate their enlistment in the ONG. During their time as volunteers they were on leave from the Guard and would return once mustered out of volunteer service.\textsuperscript{30} Such a system prevented the Guard from abruptly losing the majority of its strength. While the state troops were in federal service and with the possibility of a third call for volunteers, Ohio set about organizing additional troops. Nine “State Volunteer” outfits were organized by the state in late summer. Their numbers were not huge and their training scant but the State Volunteers did give Ohio a reserve of ready soldiers.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{27} Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1898, 24-28.
\textsuperscript{28} Henry A. Axline had resigned as Ohio Adjutant General to take command of the 10\textsuperscript{th} OVI. After the regiment mustered out, Axline again served as Adjutant General.
\textsuperscript{29} Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1898, 28.
\textsuperscript{30} Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1898, 10.
\textsuperscript{31} Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1898, 38.
The Course of the War

Doubtless most of the Ohio volunteers of 1898 envisioned their time as federal soldiers being something akin to that of the volunteers of 1861. Their experience would prove to be something entirely different, however. The U.S. Army rapidly defeated the Spanish in Cuba with few state volunteer regiments. Though more volunteer regiments were present for the campaign on Puerto Rico and later in the Philippines, Regulars for the most part won the brief land war. For Ohioans the war was not what they had in mind when they signed on for two years of service.

The War Department sent Ohio’s volunteers to three different U.S. Army training camps. Army logisticians designed these camps to acclimate the volunteers to army life and prepare them for prolonged campaign. Ohio’s 2nd, 4th, and 6th Infantry Regiments as well as 1st Cavalry and Light Artillery Regiments were sent to Camp George H. Thomas, located on the Chickamauga National Park in Georgia. Ohio’s 1st Regiment initially camped here before moving to Tampa, Florida, where he 3rd and 5th Regiments also ended up. The 7th and 8th Regiments, and the 9th Battalion were sent to Camp Alger in Falls Church, Virginia. The 10th Ohio spent most of the summer in Camp Bushnell before moving to Meade, Pennsylvania in August.32

Camp Bushnell had been unpleasant for the Ohio volunteers not due to location but time of year. The April nights had been bitter cold for the soldiers who were accustomed to summer time camps and lacked overcoats. The 1st OVI mustered into federal service in a “driving rain”

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before relocating to Tampa where the soldiers had to deal with swarms of mosquitoes, driven
into camp by strong winds of a recent storm. Incessant rain flooded the camp. On July 8 the men
relocated to higher ground about a mile east of the original camp. Along with these naturally
occurring problems the 1st OVI also witnessed the effects of an incompetent War Department.

Here were thousands of soldiers, anxious and willing to have been in the fray, unable to
participate on account of the lack of vessels to transport them. Carloads of rations,
hospital supplies, ammunition and a splendid train of siege guns, lay idle upon the long
wharf, an example of the lack of foresight. Mosquitoes, rain, and the hot sandy beaches of Tampa marked the war experience of the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Ohio Regiments. However unpleasant Tampa was for them, they were fortunate to escape
the epidemic that hit Camp Thomas.

Camp George H. Thomas, where the majority of Ohio’s soldiers spent their summer, was
the worst U.S. training camp in terms of disease. The location seemed ideal for an army to
assemble: railroads made the site easily accessible while a creek running through the park
ensured a supply of water. The government already owned the site, which made the War
Department’s decision to use the park an easy one. Regulars were the first to utilize the
battlefield as a rendezvous location and training camp. Thousands passed through on their way to
Cuba; their time at Camp Thomas was uneventful. The park’s problems only became evident
after the arrival of thousands of state volunteers.

Ohio’s regiments arrived at Camp Thomas alongside those of other states, totaling sixty
infantry and cavalry regiments as well as eight artillery batteries. At its height there were 58,000
men and between 10,000 and 15,000 horses in camp. The volunteers presented a greater

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33 History of the First Regiment of Infantry, 46.
34 Chapman, “Army Life at Camp Thomas, Georgia, During the Spanish-American War,” The Georgia Historical
challenge to the logistical capabilities of the War Department. Like the Regulars, the volunteers required constant fresh food and provisions, but unlike the Regulars the state soldiers needed tents, blankets, and other items essential to life on campaign.\textsuperscript{35} Some of the Volunteers also needed uniforms and weapons, their own states being unable to supply these items prior to their departure.\textsuperscript{36}

The large number of men and animals put a strain on the camp’s infrastructure, making clean water scarce. Typhoid fever wracked the crowded camp. As Keefer relates, almost half of the total death among U.S. servicemen from typhoid fever occurred in Camp Thomas: 761 out of 1,590.\textsuperscript{37} Ohio itself suffered 230 deaths during the war. Forty of these deaths occurred in Tampa, fourteen in Falls Church, and the 8\textsuperscript{th} Ohio suffered seventy-two fatalities. Most of these fatalities occurred in Falls Church and Cuba, but the regiment gained infamy when a fever wracked its men while on transit back from Cuba.\textsuperscript{38} The 10\textsuperscript{th} Ohio lost 23 men, though it spent its service life in Camp Bushnell and Meade, Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{39} Typhoid was the cause of most of these deaths, though the precise number is uncertain. Especially telling is that 83 men, about a third, died in Camp Thomas.

Compared to some of the less fortunate soldiers in Camp Thomas the men of the Ohio National Guard fared quite well. They suffered fewer deaths and were generally better equipped. The state provided uniforms for its men and there were 6,000 M1884 rifles available to issue.

\textsuperscript{35} In Ohio soldiers owned their own uniforms but the state kept all tents. Apparently these tents stayed at Camp Bushnell or in the state arsenal when the soldiers left for US army camps.
\textsuperscript{36} Chapman, “Army Life at Camp Thomas, Georgia, During the Spanish-American War:” 642.
\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1898}, 30. The 4\textsuperscript{th} Ohio lost 26 men, possibly a few of these deaths occurred in Puerto Rico but the exact number is uncertain. Those soldiers sick when the regiment left for Puerto Rico would have remained in Camp Thomas.
Within the 1st Ohio only about twenty-five men per company lacked rifles. When they first arrived at Camp Thomas some men of the 1st OVI had only partial uniforms, but received the rest before leaving Chickamauga for Florida on May 31. For a few of the older Guardsmen who had fought against the rebellion, camping at Chickamauga meant returning to a battlefield of their youth. Bradley Keefer writes of members of the 4th Ohio who pointed out their locations during the battle to the younger soldiers.

While the majority languished in camp during the war, two of Ohio’s volunteer regiments did see service outside of the country. The 4th Ohio Volunteer Infantry, comprised mostly from Columbus area volunteers, landed at Arroyo, Puerto Rico, on August 3, 1898. On August 5 the regiment moved to Guayama and participated in the capture of that town. The 4th participated in the “general advance against the enemy” until recalled on August 13. After landing in New York the regiment returned to Ohio and went on furlough before mustering out.

The 8th Ohio saw less action than the 4th but spent time in Cuba. Raised in northeastern Ohio and officered by many influential Ohio Guardsmen, the 8th arrived in Cuba on July 11. After moving around the island the regiment embarked on the S.S. Mohawk on August 17, bound for the United States. While on board the ship, nearly three-hundred of the regiment’s soldiers suffered from a devastating fever. Multiple soldiers died en route, while others starved from insufficient provisions. Newspapers in Ohio and elsewhere blamed the War Department. Secretary Alger personally greeted the men as they disembarked from the Mohawk near Montauk Point, New York. He assured them that after a brief quarantine, the regiment would go on

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40 Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1898, 16.
41 History of the First Regiment, 44.
42 Keefer, Conflicting Memories on the River of Death, 166.
43 Roster of Ohio Soldiers in the War with Spain (Columbus, OH: The Edward T. Miller Co., 1916), 226.
furlough for sixty days. The army did not recall the 8th and the Ohioans mustered out after their furlough.44

The Ohio National Guard volunteers performed well what the army asked of them during their service, but the conflict ended before they could be utilized fully. They had signed two year enlistments for a war that lasted just over three months. While other state’s volunteer regiments would see service in the Philippines, Ohio’s mustered out after brief furloughs. They returned home eagerly, disillusioned, often with bitter memories of their time spent in the U.S. Army.45

Cooper writes that the performance of the National Guard in 1898 has been compared to the hypothetical Regular Army that might have been created had the Hull Bill passed through Congress in March. Instead, Cooper argues, state volunteers in 1898 should be compared to state volunteers in 1861. In 1898 the states were far more effective, placing over one hundred thousand troops in federal service in less than a month, with thousands more standing ready to volunteer.46

Ohio was able to send as many volunteers as it did, thousands more than in 1861, because of a well-organized National Guard and an efficient Adjutant General’s Department. Ohio had risen to the occasion in the mobilization of 1861, but even the quickly fielded troops of the Organized Militia, who supposedly trained in peacetime, were largely untrained fresh recruits. In 1898 the state was able to quickly field thousands of men with military experience, even if this experience was not on par with that of U.S. Regulars. Ohio’s Adjutant General ensured that the men would be adequately clothed, fed, and organized until they entered the U.S. Army.

45 Keefer, Conflicting Memories on the River of Death, 214.
46 Cooper, Rise of the National Guard, 105.
Cooper has little to say about the National Guard in federal service; his concern lies with the states. However, he describes the National Guard’s time in army training camps. Mahon states bluntly that the army did not have enough capable men to organize and run these camps. As a result, the volunteers suffered. “Almost every sort of equipment was in short supply; the men wore their civilian clothes for a while,” Mahon relates. Mahon continues, emphasizing the importance of state volunteers in the Philippine Insurrection. He concludes that the War with Spain was the last time a wartime American army relied heavily on state volunteer soldiers. The U.S. needed reserves who were better prepared, but first the War Department needed to address its own problems.

Graham Cosmas argues that the War Department was at first overwhelmed and unable to manage the war. Out of sheer necessity and the capability of Adjutant General Henry C. Corbin, the War Department overcame its shortcomings. The summer of 1898 had been a learning experience for the department; by the time the United States brokered a peace with Spain, the War Department was a functional and effective organization. This change came too late to make any impact on the war experience of Ohio’s soldiers.

Stephen Skowronek places much of the blame for disorderly mobilization of Secretary of War Alger and General Miles. According to Skowronek, “a disgusted McKinley increasingly… [directed] the war effort himself so far as it was practicable.” Skowronek also contends that responsibility for mobilization fell largely on the competent Adjutant General Corbin. The

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49 Henry Clark Corbin was born in Monroe County, Ohio and served in the 79th Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War. Apparently he gave no special treatment to Ohio in the 1898 mobilization.
50 Cosmas, *An Army for Empire*, 300.
mobilization proved that not only was the National Guard unprepared for war, the War Department suffered from crippling ineptitude.\textsuperscript{51}

The war took the enthusiasm out of Ohio’s Guardsmen, many of whom did not return to the ONG after leaving federal service. \textit{The History of the First Regiment} records that “[t]his general muster-out had a very demoralizing effect on all the Ohio troops, very few companies being left in service.”\textsuperscript{52} Veterans of the Guard and new recruits alike trickled back into state service and by 1901 the strength returned to nearly that of its pre-war level.\textsuperscript{53}

\textbf{Republican Ideals and Government Power}

Faced with opposition from the Regular Army, the National Guard’s inclusion in the Spanish-American War mobilization was a triumph that the Guard owed to strong popular support and political sway. From the practical military point of view, it is a wonder that the Uptonian War Department allowed the National Guard to volunteer. There are two major reasons for this. First, many in government and especially the Guard believed that the citizen-soldier militia should constitute a federal wartime army as it had in the past. Second, the National Guard held enough power to resist change coming from the federal government.

Like the Ohio National Guard of 1864, the Ohio National Guard in 1898 was eager to serve in a federal army in government service. Since the end of the Civil War the militia in Ohio and elsewhere had been relegated to police work within their state, settling riots and patrolling

\textsuperscript{51} Skowronek, \textit{Building a New American State}, 115.
\textsuperscript{52} \textit{History of the First Regiment}, 9.
\textsuperscript{53} Ohio Adjutant General’s Department, \textit{Annual Report of the Adjutant General to the Governor of the State of Ohio, for the Fiscal Year ending November 15, 1901} (Springfield, OH: Springfield Publishing Co., 1903), 5.
strikes. At first this gave the militia a new *raison d’être*, but by the 1890s proponents of the Regular Army believed this was the only role for which militia were fit. The Guard had to fight to preserve its role as defenders of the republic and they were eager to demonstrate their capabilities as soldiers, not policemen.

The National Guard firmly believed they were the embodiment of the citizen-soldier, the one whom the government called on to serve in times of emergency. They were the volunteer militiamen, they fought for love of country and freedom, unlike the Regulars, a group they depicted as professional soldiers who sold their service and their loyalty. The National Guard of 1898 held that they were the direct descendants of the Continental Army that fought for independence and the Federal Army that preserved the Union.54

Statements echoing these republican sentiments appear abundantly in the writings of Ohio Guardsmen and the reports of Ohio Adjutant Generals. Cooper recounts the evocative words of Ohio Colonel Edmond C. Brush: “The young men in the Guard today are of the same stuff as those who crossed the Delaware with Washington and trounced the British under Jackson.”55 Guardsmen also firmly believed that their citizenship made them better soldiers. In the 1898 report Adjutant General Kingsley declared that “There is no question but what the American volunteer possesses a greater degree of intelligent and fully as much fighting quality as the soldiers of any other Nation.”56 Such exultations were not given without ulterior motives.

The National Guard remained on the defensive in light of the military recommendations of Emory Upton, who advocated doing away with separate state reserves and creating a single

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54 Cooper, *Rise of the National Guard*, 95.
reserve component of the Regular Army. The Ohio National Guard fiercely defended its role in the military and its honorable tradition. *The Newark Daily Advocate* reported on the 1898 annual meeting of National Guard Association of Ohio in Columbus. The speeches given, entitled “The National Guard Unrecognized, Unrewarded and Supported,” “The National Guard—Its Place in the National and State Policy,” and “The Federal Control of the Guard” among others, reflected the proud but worried attitude of Guard officers.

In a speech given at the beginning of 1898, Ohio Governor Asa Bushnell proclaimed that “Every citizen should be proud of the Ohio National Guard. It is a necessary branch of the State service, and deserves the heartiest support of all.”\(^57\) Ohio’s press supported the Ohio National Guard. Local papers reported attentively on the actions of the state and federal governments, hoping that their local Guard company would get a chance to serve.

The Guard was not free from criticism though. There was a distinctly middle- to upper-class aura surrounding the Guard, including that of Ohio. In March 1898 *The Norwalk Daily Reflector* wrote that “The tendency to extravagance among national guardsmen ought to be set upon and crushed, so that poor young men could join the regiments and feel themselves as good as anybody.”\(^58\) This mentality did not blend well with army life.

In many states the Guard officer corps consisted of prominent members of society. The men they commanded were themselves well-off, able to pay for their own uniforms and equipment while enjoying the luxury of free time. Mahon writes that many Guardsmen refused to see their officers as anything more than friends or acquaintances from civilian life. Guardsmen thought of themselves as citizens first and soldiers second. The lack of military discipline,

\(^{57}\) *Newark Daily Advocate*, “ONG Ground,” January 4, 1898.

\(^{58}\) *The Norwalk Daily Reflector*, March 18, 1898.
perfectly in line with republican volunteer sentiments, aggravated U.S. Army disciplinarians and sometimes even their own commanders. Colonel Hard of the 8th OVI blamed an outbreak of fever on pickets who had shirked duty and visited the city of Santiago. This lack of military deference, and a sense of equality among members, was actually a matter of pride among the state volunteers.

Resistance to military authority within the Guard reflected the perceived role of the Guard. While prominent Guard officers in the Midwest lobbied for inclusion in war, Eastern officers believed that their Guard organizations should not volunteer as a whole. Derthick writes that this was especially true of New York. Officers and men in Eastern National Guards generally believed that the Guard should be temporary soldiers to fill the void in manpower until volunteers could be raised. Individual Guardsmen could volunteer, but the Guard itself would then return to its peacetime establishment. Though their interpretation differed from that of Midwestern Guardsmen, New York held great power and influence. This support benefitted the entire National Guard system in the country, despite divergent opinions.

The Ohio National Guard was itself politically very well connected. This was especially evident in the 8th OVI, occasionally known as “the President’s Own,” which hailed from William McKinley’s home turf. Charles W. F. Dick served as a Major then Lieutenant Colonel of the 8th. Before the war Dick had been secretary of the Republican National Committee; after the war his connections in the Republican Party elevated him to senator. As senator Dick became a champion of the National Guard.

60 Hard, *Banners in the Air*, 83.
The National Guard enjoyed a great deal of support in Congress before and after the war. This was partially because of the organization's appeal to republican ideology as mentioned above. It was also because the Guard had political connections—friends, members, and other close allies who served in Washington DC. The support, however, did not always equate to real power and influence. The Guard's allies protected it from federal interference and War Department control, but they were not motivated enough to secure for the Guard the reform it wanted or the funding it needed. During peacetime the National Guard was left to its own devices except for an annual stipend to each state, which Congress raised from $200,000 to $400,000 in 1887.63 Congress only supported the military, state and federal, with truly adequate funds during war.

The War Department desired to bring the National Guard closer in terms of regulation and control both before and during the war. Derthick argues that enduring states’ rights sentiments kept the National Guard decentralized and firmly in state control.64 While valid in regards to federal funding and likely true to an extent in a Southern context, this interpretation ignores the complexity of the Guard’s relationship to the federal government. The National Guard was ever in competition with the Regular Army for the status of legitimate soldiers of the nation. The Guard’s supporters resisted federal control because that would make them essentially a component of the Regular Army. Yet in 1898 they successfully placed the Guard in the wartime army.

The most poignant evidence of this power to resist is the resounding defeat of the anti-Guard Hull Bill in March of 1898 as the government frantically prepared for war. Guardsmen

called on their plentiful Congressional allies to vote the bill down. Though they enjoyed strong support against being integrated into or supplanted entirely by the Regular Army, the National Guard was unable pass their own brand of reform. Up to mobilization in 1898 the National Guard fought for increased government funding but without increased federal oversight. Guardsmen wanted reform on a federal level only if it was on their terms.

The Ohio National Guard did resist federal influence up to a certain point. Ohio’s Guardsmen volunteered to support their government as citizen-soldiers. They wanted to serve the government and cooperate with the Regular Army while maintaining their identity as Ohioans. The Spanish-American War showed that this might no longer be possible. Ohio’s adjutant general praised the service of the Guardsmen and lauded their potential as soldiers, but stressed that the organization needed more federal funding. Kingsley’s recommendation was for $5,000,000 annually, more than ten times the prewar appropriation. He also recognized the glaring fact that uniformity among the various state National Guards was needed and would have to come from the federal government.

War with Spain sparked renewed interest in National Guard reform throughout the country. Ohio’s adjutant general and others were willing to make concessions to the War Department that would increase the annual appropriation. Derthick ascribes the change of heart to nationalism, but more likely the Guard willingly gave up its power to resist because it recognized that positive, meaningful change would have to come from the federal government. National Guards would have to cede some of their autonomy to the War Department; in return they were assured money and a place as a reserve force.

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65 Cooper, *Rise of the National Guard*, 98.
Conclusion – Edge of Reform

War with Spain in 1898 proved bittersweet for the National Guard. They had lobbied successfully for inclusion in the wartime army. They had used their power and influence to gain support in Congress. They entered the wartime U.S. Army with their own regimental systems and with their own officers. However, their experience was not what anyone had anticipated. The war was fraught with governmental incompetency. Logistical failings with the War Department plagued the entire United States military during the war. Instead of battlefield glory the state volunteers were subjected to dismal training camps rife with boredom and disease. Ohio’s National Guard soldiers, serving as state volunteers, left federal service bitter and disappointed.

Ohio had a plethora of reasons to be proud of its National Guard during and after the war. Ohio’s Adjutant General’s department successfully organized its National Guard into volunteer regiments. The state even exceeded its quota of volunteers. When the soldiers mustered into service they did so generally well equipped with no serious shortcomings. Their time in federal service was less successful. Most of the volunteer guardsmen suffered in training camps in Georgia and Florida and never left the continental United States.

The state did suffer its share of problems during mobilization, though they were minor compared to other states, which lacked the bureaucratic apparatus to organize state volunteers. The Ohio Adjutant General’s Department did not ignore problems that came to light during the mobilization. Just as it had done in the Mobilization of 1861, National Guard leadership took advantage of the lessons learned in the Mobilization of 1898. Ohio’s military leadership began making changes before Ohio’s Guardsmen mustered out of federal service. In his 1898 report
Adjutant General Kingsley called for reorganization of the Guard along “strictly practical military lines.”  

Mahon’s and Cooper’s evaluations of the 1898 mobilization portray the National Guard’s performance as more efficient than it was originally interpreted. However, perceived shortcomings of the National Guard by the government and the War Department immediately after the war provided impetus for reform. The National Guard would be profoundly affected by military reform in time but first the War Department and Regular Army would have to redress their own shortcomings.

The course of the war exposed the problems with the War Department but set the stage for rapid improvement. Cosmas makes the argument that the challenges overcome in the 1898 mobilization helped to form an efficient War Department by war’s end. In 1899, Elihu Root became secretary of war and used his position and the refined War Department to enact a series of reforms. The Root Reforms were a direct response to the mobilization of 1898 and Root’s reform agenda extended to the National Guard.

Though concessions would be made, the National Guard remained a force separate from complete army control, showing that republican ideal endured after the War with Spain. Citizens and lawmakers were still unwilling to invest complete responsibility for defense of the country in the professional standing army, nor were they willing to pay the expense.

How exactly the National Guard managed to become the country’s reserve force is remarkable given its poor reputation after the war. For Derthick the issue is constitutional. She contends that it was more practical to honor the National Guard, a constitutionally organized

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68 Cosmas, An Army for Empire, xviii.
institution, than create an entirely new reserve force, despite strong advocacy for this option from
the Regular Army, (and even possibly Root himself) which wanted to bypass the National
Guard. Derthick writes that when passing military reform legislation Congress returned to its
traditional distrust of the Regular Army. Congress’ refusal to support such measures showed that
“preference rested partly on the dogma that standing armies endanger liberty.” However, standing armies also make for rapid mobilization which leads to quicker victories.

In the wake of the War with Spain, the United States War Department under Elihu Root
sought to balance republican distrust of large standing armies with military necessity. For the
National Guard, reform would come at the expense of state power. In return for government
funding the states gradually ceded control over their National Guards to the federal government.
The result was monumental new militia legislation, followed by over a decade of forced
cooperation between the National Guard and Regular Army, all in the spirit of modernization.

69 Derthick, The National Guard in Politics, 25.
70 Derthick, The National Guard in Politics, 25.
Conclusion

The period between 1860 and 1900 witnessed a profound change in the nature of the militia in Ohio and the rest of the country. Role and also function of the militia evolved, and the ideology surrounding the institution adapted to these changes. Laws governing the militia changed on a state level only, where even marginal gains were accomplished with great difficulty. Stephen Skowronek characterizes reform in this era as “patching,” which reflects the piecemeal nature of militia legislation. This lethargy was due to the simple fact that in peace no one wants to prepare for war. Domestic turmoil and riots in the 1870s scared people enough to sustain the militia and initiate some state level modernization. The National Guard as it took shape in the 1870s is the embodiment of local efforts to patch the militia. Federal reform eclipsed state reform legislation after the Spanish-American War, when inefficient mobilizations spurred action from the federal government.¹

Ohio was on the forefront of militia reform from the 1860s until 1903. In size and activity, the Ohio National Guard was second only to the older and more populous states of New York and Pennsylvania. By the Spanish-American War in 1898, many states fell behind Ohio in terms of militia modernization, which presented serious logistical problems for the War Department. Ohio’s reform efforts in the decades before the War with Spain were substantial, as Ohio’s rapid mobilization demonstrated, but they were not quite enough to field a capable army without government training and assistance. Not just Ohio but all states had been severely limited by small appropriations set by the government and a general lack of interest in the militia

¹ Cooper, *Rise of the National Guard*, 108.
during peacetime. Luckily for Ohio, the state had possessed some of the most active and influential Guard officers. However, its modernization process beginning in the 1860s was neither smooth nor consistent.

A modern-looking Ohio National Guard emerged during the War of the Rebellion when rebel incursions into Ohio became a tangible and formidable threat. Prior incarnations of an organized militia in Ohio failed, as they had in most other states, because there was no immediate threat to galvanize financial support from lawmakers or enthusiasm for the citizens who would serve as part time soldiers. The war created an unusual environment for the first incarnation of the Ohio National Guard in 1864: it enjoyed strong financial support from both the state and federal governments. The presence of many experience Union Army veterans in the militia also helped to instill military discipline and skill and the volunteers.

Following the end of the Rebellion and the reemergence of the militia, the Ohio National Guard endeavored to build on the Guard of 1864. Ohio Adjutant Generals looked back on the wartime Guard nostalgically, and endeavored to carry on its tradition of military efficiency and strong government support. This task proved impossible given the war weariness and fiscal austerity of the post-war years. When the Ohio militia again became the Ohio National Guard in the 1870s and grew in size and support, it was through the efforts of dedicated supporters of the militia, many of them again veterans of the late war. But the impetus behind the new ONG was not mere enthusiasm; the Great Railway Strike of 1877 demonstrated that locally based soldiers were needed to protect to the state, not from external threats but internal unrest.

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2 Annual Report of the Adjutant General, 1869, 11.
The Guard found a reason for existence outside of war in serving as state police rather than federal soldiers. The Guard earned a reputation for being anti-labor in this period. Sources from the Ohio National Guard do reflect a strong class consciousness, and a desire to protect the wealthy elements of society from disruptive violent workers. This mentality did not manifest in violence or animosity during the Ohio National Guard’s deployments, though. As often as was practical, Guard units were deployed locally. Many Guardsmen were themselves workers, and the entire organization garnered praise for fairness and professionalism when keeping the peace during strikes. While frequent strikes and riots kept the Guard busy, Guard leaders struggled to reform their organization along military lines. As the function of the Guard became more and more local, Guard leaders attempted to create closer ties to the U.S. army and government.

The very nature of the Guard’s relationship to the federal government changed fundamentally after the Rebellion, however. The government did not need mass numbers of armed militia ready to defend the states or serve in the U.S. Army. Ohio and other National Guards wanted desperately an assured place in any future wartime U.S. Army, but Regular Army leaders were apprehensive about the Guard’s relevance in rapidly modernizing war. Starting in the 1880s, the War Department began sending officers to the states to aid militia and report of their martial progress. These efforts were again very gradual; attempts to work within the existing system rather than make changes. The test of reform efforts came in the mobilization for war against Spain in 1898. Though Ohio and a number of other states fared decently during the mobilization, the National Guard’s overall performance was poor and reflected poorly on the Guard in the eyes of most Americans.

The ideology surrounding the militia changed during this era. The republican belief that the militia should defend the country from foreign threats was not compatible with industrialized
warfare. Part time citizen soldiers could not compete with trained professionals. The ideology adapted to accommodate the reality acknowledged by the military theorists and the War Department. Militia proponents successfully argued that the reemerging National Guard should keep peace in the states and quell riots but still prepare for war. The War Department accepted this, but gradually expanded its influence over state military concerns. This sort of compromise survived during peace, ensuring the National Guard’s continued existence. Adherents of the old militia tradition died hard: even into 1898 Ohio newspapers boasted that their local National Guard soldiers could defeat any Spanish professional soldiers.³ In actuality their performance did not warrant much praise, although blame lay with the War Department as much as the state militias themselves. The disheartening experience of the militia in 1898 made it easier for the government to deepen its influence over state troops. Coming reform would radically professionalize the National Guard while greatly expanding federal funding, but all at the expense of state control.

Control over militia was tied strongly to the soldiers’ identity. Ohio National Guardsmen retained their identity both as Ohioans and citizen-soldiers, but the idea that they served their state first and their country second began to erode as the War Department and the Regular Army exercised greater influence. The Spanish-American War showed that states could not be solely responsible for their National Guards; if they were going to be able to fight alongside the Regular Army they would have to be trained like the Regular Army. War in 1898 proved that state loyalty did not compensate for military professionalism. Effective reform that could standardize militia in the U.S. would have to come on the government level. The war also proved that the

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U.S. Regular Army and the War Department had serious deficiencies. The result was rapid change, pushed through by Secretary of War Elihu Root.

Compromise and reform gave the National Guard in the United States a new lease on life. The French Garde Nationale, the inspiration for the name National Guard, did not fare so well. Just as the U.S. military suffered from neglect between wars, the Garde Nationale declined to a civilian mob at times. However, martial negligence was not its most severe problem. Almost immediately after it formed in 1792, the Garde Nationale became overly politicized. Its commanders and soldiers alike were directly involved in revolution and political maneuvering that damaged the credibility of the Garde as a military force. In 1848, the Paris Garde abandoned the monarch and even encouraged regular French soldiers to support revolution, or at least not fire their weapons on the agitators.

During the Franco-Prussian War, the Garde turned against the government. In Paris and other cities, the Garde supported radical revolutionaries. After fighting directly with the regular French army in the capital, the Garde imposed their own rule. Garde commanders elected a Central Committee and supported radicals who established the Commune. By their own design, the Garde Central Committee handled military affairs while the Commune held political power, though the Committee exerted substantial control over the Commune. To retake the city and suppress the revolutionaries, the French army had to fight and overcome the Garde, inflicting many casualties in the process. Shortly after, in 1872, the French government dissolved the Garde Nationale entirely, around the same time the National Guard began to reemerge as the premier militia in the United States. The politicization and climactic demise of the Garde

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4 Mansel, Paris between Empires, 217.
5 Mansel, Paris between Empires, 399-400.
Nationale was due to its ideological and practical separation from the French Army. To avoid a similar fate, the U.S. National Guard had to in time merge with the U.S. Army.

**Importance**

While seldom mentioned in historic studies outside of the state, the Ohio National Guard is relevant in the greater history of the country. The Ohio militia makes an exemplary case study in the history of the growth and centralization of the United States federal government before and during the Progressive Era. The ONG is also significant in the larger history of the United States militia system; traditional ideology behind the militia is reflected in the attitudes of Ohioans towards their citizen soldiers, and the role of the Guard, which alternated between soldiers and police, represents the function of the country’s entire militia system. This testament to the importance of the Ohio militia and later Ohio National Guard is often overlooked, even in histories of the state. Ohio, home to the third largest National Guard and many officers active and influential in Guard politics in the late nineteenth century, is not remembered for its militia. Rather, state soldiers play a secondary role in the history of labor relations. They turn up in military histories of the Civil and Spanish-American Wars but only briefly and usually in the narrative of creating large federal armies.

Military service is not what made the Ohio militia historically significant. Though the stories of soldiers and their regiments might appeal to military historians or someone looking for a mildly picaresque yet regional story, in truth the Ohio militia helped prevent more conflict than it actually participated in. The Guard is best viewed in the context of reform. Efforts to modernize and professionalize the militia through law is important in the history of expanding central government. The state laws that governed the militia changed frequently, going through
many repeals and reforms. As Skowronek argues, existing militia statutes were reworked and updated in piecemeal fashion. It finally took reform at the federal level to implement long desired improvements. The emergence and growth of the National Guard is indicative of the growth of the federal government.

War against the rebellious southern states provided the government with the first means of consolidating authority. The government had to manage an army of millions and thousands of administrators. Wartime conditions demanded more than just military coordination, it also needed to control markets to guarantee the supplies necessary to wage war. Dominated by the Republican Party, northern politicians succeeded in transforming their ideas of greater government control into laws. The new laws and bureaucratic apparatus formed by the Republican government during the war laid the foundation for the stronger government of the Progressive Era.\(^7\) The National Guard’s growth not only shadows this growth but was made possible by a similar impulse for reform. Militia reformers dreamed of a stronger, more professional militia with an assured role in the country’s military, a militia like that of Ohio and other northern states during the War of the Rebellion. To accomplish this the National Guard had to rely on the Regular Army.

The story of the Ohio National Guard becoming more closely tied to the Regular Army illustrates how militia ideology evolved to accommodate changing realities of warfare. Its significance can not be understated; first getting the militia to work with the Regular Army, then allowing the War Department to regulate the National Guard was a monumental achievement. Dating back to the seventeenth century, English Whigs distrusted standing armies and central government authority. Their ideological descendants adhered to a republican belief that the U.S.

Regular Army should be kept out of the states. These ideas guided militia policy until 1903. Root’s Reforms created a new National Guard that was compatible with the Regular army, but could not be repealed like the Militia Acts of 1792. The stage was set for the traumatic wars of the twentieth century to further alter republican militia ideology, a topic for another study.

**Epilogue: Reform**

National Guard reform came from an unlikely source, a New York corporate lawyer and associate of Theodore Roosevelt named Elihu Root. As Secretary of War under Roosevelt, Root initiated major legislation that reorganized first the U.S. Regular Army then the country’s militia laws. Military reform was one of the first significant legislative actions of the Progressive Era, and as Skowronek shows, it was the result of U.S. victory in the Spanish-American War and Republican political victories in the early 1900s.⁸

Lack of organization and coordination were to blame for the War Department’s poor performance in the war with Spain. As Secretary of War, Elihu Root recognized the department’s deficiencies; his Regular Army reform sought to rectify these problems by centralizing military authority. In part Root accomplished this by implementing many of the suggestions made by Emory Upton in the 1870s. By creating a permanent general staff, Root took power away from individual generals, placing it instead with the War Department. Education was also fundamental to Root’s reforms and he soon created the Army War College. Root’s goal was to prepare the army for war, so the War Department would not be dragged into war unprepared as it had in 1898.⁹ In regards to militia, Root’s reforms did not follow Upton’s recommendations.

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The Militia Act of 1903 provided the militia with much needed and long overdue reform. This act established the National Guard as the active militia organization in every U.S. state and territory. According to Skowronek, “Root offered [the National Guard] more federal support, gave it a limited role in the national military establishment, and asked it to upgrade its standards.” Root faced stiff resistance to federal control of the National Guard, but successfully inserted the Regular Army inexorably in Guard affairs.\(^\text{10}\) As Cooper shows, the Act was in many ways a victory for the Guard, which received much larger appropriates and new M1898 Krag-Jorgensen rifles. Importantly, the act codified the previously ad hoc relationship between state and federal military forces.\(^\text{11}\) Over the next decade, the National Guard and the army further refined this relationship, which culminated in the mobilization of 1917.

Ohio played an important role in the 1903 militia act. Though part of Root’s reforms, it became known as the Dick Act in honor of Ohio Senator and Ohio National Guard Major General Charles William Frederick Dick. Because Dick sponsored the act he is sometimes referred to the father of the National Guard.\(^\text{12}\) Ohio was also the first state to hold joint maneuvers with the Regular Army during its annual encampment, which General Dick commanded. Athens, Ohio, hosted these maneuvers in August of 1904. When regular artillerymen shot and killed an Ohio National Guard corporal during the Athens Maneuvers, latent republican distrust of the Regular Army again came to light.

After the Guardsman’s death, newspapers in Ohio lashed out against the Regular Army, dredging up old republican feelings. They called for the National Guard to protect civilians from

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the regulars, and lauded the military prowess of patriotic citizens. *The Piqua Leader-Dispatch* published an article that stated “there is a feeling of contempt on the part of the Regular for the militiaman that will not [go] down, and the citizen soldier looks upon the Regular soldier as his inferior socially and politically.”13 These republican outbursts, though intense, were short lived. The incident in Athens quickly died down and the regulars were discharged then sentenced to time in the Columbus workhouse.

In 1908 the National Guard become more closely tied to the Regular Army with little resistance. The Division of Militia Affairs (DMA), established by the secretary of war, provided the government with more control over state troops. Officers working for the DMA provided in depth reports on the state National Guards, an improvement over earlier reports, described by Cooper as “benign.” Also in 1908, new legislation amended the Militia Act of 1903. Guardsmen were now obligated to serve overseas if called.14 Successive laws and government oversight worked to further separate the National Guard from nineteenth-century militia.

The old republican citizen-soldier was arguably a casualty of the Spanish-American War. The brave young American protecting his home and family did not fit into the military of the industrialized colonial power that the U.S. was becoming. Following the war, a new militia tradition emerged in the United States with much stronger ties to the central government. After 1903, the National Guard represented the entire county’s organized militia establishment (the last Independent Company, the Cleveland Greys, became ONG Engineers before the war with Spain)15. They were to serve the states in keeping order during internal unrest, and serve the government as reinforcements for the Regular Army in war. Militia proponents accepted the

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13 *Piqua Leader-Dispatch*, August 23, 1904, 1.
14 Cooper, *Rise of the National Guard*, 110, 112.
secondary role of the National Guard in the country’s defense because this role was firmly established by law.

In Ohio the National Guard returned to its duty of suppressing riots while training methodically for military service. Undoubtedly encouraged by larger appropriations, citizens organized new ONG companies across the state while the state funded the building of armories reminiscent of castles. In addition to participating in civic functions, ONG companies held drill on a monthly basis. The annual encampments grew in scale. More elaborate encampments hosting the entire ONG were held on a biennial schedule, they included a week of military life and often mock battles. The ONG settled into this routine, which continued until 1917.
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