THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE 1821-1861

A STUDY IN ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

DISSERTATION

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By

J. Patrick Hughes, A.B. (Honors), M.A.

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Reading Committee:
Professor Harry L. Coles
Professor Marvin Zahniser
Professor Merton Dillon

Approved By

Harry L. Coles
Adviser
Department of History
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VITA

December 8, 1943. . . . . Born - Detroit, Michigan

1966. . . . . . . . . . . . A.B. (Honors), University of Detroit, Detroit, Michigan

1968. . . . . . . . . . . . Military History Instructor, Military Science Department, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1968. . . . . . . . . . . . M.A., University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana

1968-1969 . . . . . . Teaching Assistant, Department of Philosophy, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1969. . . . . . . . . . . . Instructor, History Department, University of Detroit, Detroit, Michigan

1969-1970 . . . . . . Teaching Assistant, Department of History The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

1970. . . . . . . . . . . . Instructor, History Department, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan

1971-1973 . . . . . . Military History Instructor, Adjutant General School, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana


1972-1973 . . . . . . Adjutant Professor, History Department, University of Detroit, Detroit, Michigan

1973. . . . . . . . . . . . Division Historian, Division Museum Curator, Second Infantry Division, Korea

1975-1977 . . . . . . Assistant Professor of Military Science, Department of Military Science, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma
1975-1977 . . . . . . Adjunct Professor, Department of History, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma

PUBLICATIONS


FIELDS OF STUDY

American Military History. Professor Harry L. Coles

Modern Europe. Professor Peter Larmour

British History. Professor Philip Poirier

Philosophy of History. Professor Virgil G. Henshaw
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INTRODUCTION

The United States has appeared among the nations of the world as the exponent of the oft reiterated doctrine of civilian control over the military. In the history of the American military establishment, there has in fact been a constant record of this doctrine being achieved. However we should examine the nature of any doctrine of this sort, for much more is involved than its simple statement and constant reiteration. It should be noted that such a doctrine is simply a platitude or rhetorical device if it states a natural and normal pattern of government that, without effort or vigilance, tends to characterize our relationships. It is worth retaining in our active vocabulary only if it refers to a reality, and a really sought for ideal.

In fact, if such a doctrine does characterize the American system, one should be able to examine the military establishment throughout its history and see the institutionalization of civilian control. Any ideal is only imperfectly achieved, but the very bureaucratic forms used to embody the ideal can reveal much about it and the people who implement it. In the nineteenth century, the Office of the Adjutant General formed such an institutionalization of civilian control. Perhaps most clearly and consistently the Adjutant General's Office acted as the means whereby the Secretaries of War exerted their influence over the Army. So much so
that the Secretaries may be judged as to their effectiveness by the control over and the use they made of the Adjutant General's Office.

This study deals with three distinct periods in the history of the Adjutant General's Office. The first is the period under Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, 1821-1825, when the office was created in name, by a separation from the earlier Adjutant and Inspector General's Office but not filled because of political reasons. The second period, by far the longest, is the period when Roger Jones served as Adjutant General, from 1825 to 1832. In this critical second period the office developed its procedures and its position. The third period covers the time that Samuel Cooper served as Adjutant General, 1852-1861. It was during this last period that much of the potential of the office to act in the capacity of control agent for the Secretaries of War was realized.

The Adjutant General's Office functioned in the context of the War Department bureau system. To explain this it is necessary to go back to the Act of March 3, 1815, which abolished the office of the Adjutant General of the Army. The President chose however to retain an officer with the title of Adjutant and Inspector General. ¹ This decision was enacted into law by the Act of April 24, 1816. ² Secretary of War John C. Calhoun gave a more complete and systematic form to the staff in his Act of April


14, 1818. After Calhoun separated the Adjutant General's Office from the inspecting function in 1821, the AGO took on the form that it would retain until its dissolution in the Elihu Root reforms of the early twentieth century.

The regulations of 1821 made the Chiefs of Bureaus directly responsible to the Secretary of War. This provision was necessary because in that same year the position of Commanding General had been created with that functionary's office in Washington, DC. In order to make the fact clear that the Commanding General did not in fact command the predating War Department Staff, Calhoun had issued the regulations.

The affairs of the War Office were reduced to bureaucratic routine so effectively that the Secretary could devote his time to the concerns of his political career. His dictums on the staff and the need for its maintenance even during peace would be repeated by successive Secretaries of War. His establishment of the bureau's position as directly responsible to the Secretary was to endure a long and heavy assault from the Commanding Generals. Constantly, even long after his time in the

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7 "Military Affairs of the Nation" (anon.), North American Review, CXXIX (October, 1845), p. 321. The author recommends that the bureaus be subordinate to the Commanding General.
War Office, it was Calhoun’s name that people evoked to explain the efficiency of administration.  

Yet even in Calhoun’s own mind the edifice was not complete—the keystone was missing. The central office, the Adjutant General’s Office, was vacant under his administration. It was not Calhoun but Roger Jones who was to shape the role of that office. While other bureaus dealt with supply or ordnance or other such matters, it was the Adjutant General’s Office that was to supply the essential administration and coordination for the War Department, an achievement not of the Calhoun period but the Jones period.

The Adjutant General’s Office had been created by John C. Calhoun for both short and long range political reasons. The short range involved the displacement of Daniel Parker and the appointment of Andrew Jackson’s aide, James Gadsden. The long range purpose will concern us more, for it was one of the means whereby Calhoun (in many ways continuing the work of predecessors back as far as the presidency of Thomas Jefferson) meant to establish his control as civilian Secretary of War over the Army. The Adjutant General’s Office was not Calhoun’s only instrument of control. In addition to the other bureaus (Quartermaster General’s, Commissary General’s, Chief of Engineers, etc.), the main intended instrument of Calhoun’s was created by naming the Army’s only remaining Major General as Commanding General of the Army. Calhoun moved him to Washington, DC, to act under the direct control of the Secretary,

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and to lend his military authority to the Secretary's decisions.

Samuel Huntington has termed the system that Secretary Calhoun set up a balanced pattern of executive civil-military relations, and has praised this over other alternative arrangements. Yet the story of Calhoun's system, after he left office, is one of the Commanding General's seeking and gaining a great independence from the Secretaries of War. Going even so far as to repeatedly defy the Secretaries and contend that it was the prerogative of the Commanding Generals to be the spokesman for the Army, they sought to become independent of civilian executive control completely. The Commanding General was appointed usually on the basis of seniority rather than political compatability or even reliability; though as we are to see, John Quincy Adams successfully defied this tendency in the early days of the Commanding General's Office. The Commanding General served for life until the provisions of the Act of August 3, 1861, allowed him to retire. The Commanding Generals were ultimately politically irresponsible in the sense that they were in no way bound to obey the political wishes of their supposed superiors. They not only could but frequently did openly pursue political objectives in direct opposition to the Secretary of War and the President. Winfield Scott and Nelson A. Miles went so far as to deliberately embarrass the

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11 12 Statutes at Large 286; Weigley, History, p. 230.
administrations they were supposed to be serving in the hopes of securing the nomination and election to the Presidency from the opposition party.¹²

In the failure of the Commanding General's position to satisfy the Secretary of War's original purpose for it, later Secretaries turned to the Office of the Adjutant General. The Adjutant General's Office became the primary means whereby the Secretaries of War controlled the Army, despite the claims and pretensions of the Commanding Generals. If this dynamic is kept in mind, then the progress of the Adjutant Generals from the simple shufflers and stokers of the Army's paperwork in the 1820s to the chief military adviser and agent for control of the Secretary of War in the 1850s will be far more understandable.

Roger Jones was not faced with strong Secretaries of War in the mold of John C. Calhoun. Rather, after Calhoun, the long string of Secretaries seemed constantly to be losing their grasp of the War Department to routine functioning. While Calhoun used system to control and direct, his successors seemed more intimidated and controlled by system and routine. Effective control passed more to the military subordinates and clerks who remained in office administration after administration. Foremost among these were, of course, the Commanding Generals. Particularly Alexander Macomb would enhance the strength and prestige of the ranking military men. Scott would bring greater noise and fury to the office, but even with this he was less effective than Macomb. During the period

of the two Commanding Generals, Macomb and Scott, there were some twelve Secretaries.\(^{13}\)

Countering the increasing power of the Commanding Generals, and acting always in the name of the Secretaries (who one must think often did not fully understand the battles carried on in their name) were the bureau chiefs. Yet the day-to-day concerns of the bureau chiefs (to include the Adjutant General's) were not the position of their office, but the handling of the routine of business. This was rapidly increasing in volume and in complexity. The response of the War Department often remained the traditional one of relying on precedent. As new problems were encountered, attempts were made to interpret old formulas to cover them. The example of brevets in the personnel area is an illustration of this. Increasingly the Secretaries found themselves in an awkward role. They were on the whole politicians untrained in military matters which meant they were equally ignorant of the conduct of field operations of bureaucratic routine. The mass of precedent used by the Commanding Generals and the bureau chiefs would only be vaguely grasped by the Secretaries during the few months or years they held office.\(^{14}\)

So the politicians gave their attention to what they knew and had been trained for—politics. There was more than enough to keep the Secretaries busy in dealing with Congress and congressmen. The country seemed more to accept the concept that all Americans had an innate right to achieve through political pull a federal appointment or at least, a

\(^{13}\) White, Jacksonians, p. 191.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., p. 349.
federal contract. Therefore, the Secretaries were constantly harassed by the press of "official business" consisting mainly of patronage concerns.

Secretary after Secretary commented on the volume of non-military business. Secretary Peter B. Porter commented that so much of his time was spent on patronage "as to put wholly out his power to attend the daily orders and complicated routine of duties which appertain to the command and discipline of an army."15 Later, Secretary Joel R. Poinsett commented that from nine until two he was hardly left five minutes without official visitors.16 Still later, Secretary John C. Spencer noted how such burdens had, since his predecessors, "been augmented and multiplied." He further went on to note "the functions of a secretary are of a civil and not of a military character, and are administrative rather than executive. His business is more to superintend the general arrangements of the service, regulate its expenditures, and enforce responsibility than to exercise command. It can rarely happen that he possesses the acquaintance with the details of service or experience in the art of war."17

Yet it would not be accurate to maintain the Secretaries retained control over finances when they surrendered the command and administration to military subordinates. One example is the case of Secretary of War William L. Marcy who was faced with opposition from the supply

15 As quoted in Fry, Brevets, p. 130.
16 White, Jacksonians, p. 145.
17 As quoted in Fry, Brevets, p. 130.
bureaus. Denying any personal responsibility, he attempted to throw all censure on the bureau chiefs who he claimed were beyond his control because he could neither remove them nor avoid appointing the next senior man in the event of a vacancy. Speaking of the bureau chiefs, he went on to state: "These could not be changed by me nor could I make them over." 18

In fact most of the Secretaries were inexperienced in military matters, and, in terms of asserting their constitutional control over the War Department establishment, simply weak. Into the power vacuum moved the Commanding Generals and the bureau chiefs. The stage was set for a battle when, after Alexander Macomb and Roger Jones had left the scene a Secretary was appointed who was both experienced and desirous of controlling his department. Because before that time, bureau chiefs like Roger Jones had defended their position from the Commanding Generals by claiming to be servants of the Secretaries directly, much of the later battle lines were drawn during the Jones' period.

It is interesting to note Roger Jones' own opinion of the history and function of his office as Adjutant General. He felt that he presided over "the oldest subdivision of the War Office and a moiety of the incumbent duties are nearly the same, which at various epochs of Legislation, since the year 1797, have been conducted by a Staff Officer, attached to the War Department who at one period was denominat ed 'in Inspector' at another 'the Adjutant and Inspector' at another 'The Adjutant and Inspector General,' and finally, since the reduction of the Army of

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18 As quoted in White, Jacksonians, p. 145.
1821 'The Adjutant General'.

He would later continue the story of the office after 1821, which "by Executive arrangement has ever since his appointment in 1825, been required to discharge the duties of Adjutant General for the whole Army besides being charged with the execution of those appropriate staff duties in the central office of orders and Military Correspondence under the Major General, other important services are rendered by the Adjutant General as a functionary of the War Office, under the Secretary of War." This was written to a Secretary of War some six years after Jones had been courtmartialed for asserting this dual status argument. Roger Jones was nothing if not persistent.

But Secretary of War Lewis Cass, for one, was reluctant to accept Jones' version of the Adjutant General's Office's history and status. Cass was more inclined to accept the contention of his predecessor, John C. Calhoun, that the Adjutant General of the 1821 settlement was a new office. "So far as analogy goes, the office of Adjutant and Inspector General under the acts of 1813 and 1816 resemble in its duties the present office of Adjutant General. But they are not identical, nor are the legal provisions applicable to the one, necessarily applicable to the other. I take it that the creation of a new office, although it may be designated by the same name, does not revive or continue provisions where the nature and duties of the Office are different from the former

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19 Roger Jones, February 9, 1863, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Record Group 94, National Archives, Vol. 11, p. 78.

20 Roger Jones, January 28, 1837, letter to Secretary of War, "Jones Papers," Record Group 94, National Archives.
Roger Jones' other contention, dual status for the Adjutant General's Office, was substantiated by the way in which the office's duties differed after 1821. The only difference was that after 1821 the Adjutant General added responsibilities to the Commanding General. He still remained responsible to the Secretary for all of the administration and personnel functions of Adjutant and Inspector General Daniel Parker.22

The period from 1825 to 1852 was marked by Jones' successfully establishing the ultimately permanent position of the Adjutant General's Office. Other bureaus were in fact headed by officers who ranked Jones and had been in their offices longer (such as Thomas S. Jessup in the Quartermaster General's Office.) But the AGO was to emerge preeminent of the bureaus. Already in 1832 when a biography of Macomb was written by George H. Richards who was more of a glorifier of the Commanding General than objective author, Jones was described as "the immediate representative of his General-in-Chief--the Head of the General Staff... He is now in Peace, assiduously employing all of his powers of mind and body in the comprehensive duties of his Bureau, which embrace, at the same time, the minutest detail and the entire economy of the Army--honouring as he is honoured by, the Profession he serves."23

In fact Macomb was to experiment with an early form of true General

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23 George H. Richards, Memoir of Alexander Macomb the Major General Commanding the Army of the United States (New York, 1832), p. 46.
Staff in what he called the Military Board. This body consisted of the bureau chiefs assembled under the chairmanship of the Commanding General, Macomb himself, Jones was not at first included as a member by the Commanding General, but by August 26, 1833 he was listed as a member along with the supply bureau chiefs. The Military Board was to disappear from the army, but the need for coordination was to remain.

The role of the Adjutant General involved Roger Jones in giving briefings and orders to generals commanding in the field. This was to be often the case in the second Seminole War, always on the authority of the Secretary of War and Commanding General.

When Alexander Macomb died in 1842, the question was raised again, as it had been on Jacob Brown's death in 1828, as to the need for an officer of the rank and position of Major General Commanding the Army. The alternative by this time was the control of the army by the Adjutant General acting solely in the name of the Secretary. Secretary of War John C. Spencer for one did not want the position of Commanding General abolished but clearly saw the Adjutant General's Office as the only alternative even if an unacceptable one.

During this period of disruption upon Macomb's death, the flow of reports and communications from the field that the Adjutant General normally received in the name of the Commanding General was directed by


\[25\] Elliott, Scott, pp. 291, 295.

\[26\] As quoted in Fry, Brevets, p. 131.
orders to be sent still to the Adjutant General but to his office at the
War Department. 27

By the time of the Mexican War, Roger Jones was in the habit of
bringing war news direct to the president. 28 A combination of a weak
Secretary of War and a hostile or absent Commanding General resulted in
the Adjutant General's dealing directly with the center of power—the
Commander-in-Chief. These circumstances would reoccur with far more ef-
fect at the end of the century between Adjutant General Henry C. Corbin
and President William McKinley.

After Roger Jones left office he was succeeded by Samuel Cooper.
The new Adjutant General had the good fortune to serve under Secretaries
of War who wished to exert their authority fully as chiefs of the War De-
partment. Secretary of War Jefferson Davis combined a distinct ability
in the area he was placed with a strong desire to be, in fact, the di-
rector of the United States Army. Secretary of War John B. Floyd, though
not as talented, continued the efforts of Davis to reshape the entire
Army to reflect civilian control and displace the Commanding General, Win-
field Scott. Both of these Secretaries found an excellent tool in their
endeavors in Samuel Cooper. The Adjutant General became the prime in-
strument whereby the civilians succeeded in curbing the Commanding General
and asserting their authority. The history of the Adjutant General's Of-
lice from 1821 to 1861 is the story of how the office of administration
and personnel became the instrument of control for the Army.

27 General Orders, June 30, 1841, "Jones Papers," Record Group 94,
National Archives.

28 Elliott, Scott, p. 419.
CHAPTER I

THE CALHOUN REFORMS, 1817-1825

The Adjutant General's Office was not only begun in the midst of storm and conflict, but indeed bore, all the days of its existence, the marks of being born at the very center of that period of strife known as "the Era of Good Feelings." It even came into the world with open question as to its ancestry. As we shall see, the charges of irregularities abounded, and even the newness of the office was challenged.

Yet often the accounts of its formation make the story of the birth of the ACO sound deceptively tranquil. Frequently we are told of how President Monroe called the talented and able John C. Calhoun to his cabinet in order to straighten out the War Department. This statesman, seeing exactly what the Army would need for the next hundred years, immediately organized the Bureaus as the administrative divisions of the War Department. Chief among these Bureaus was the Adjutant General's Office, designated to act as the Secretary of War's Chief of Staff. While this version may appeal, particularly with those who would sing the AG's praises, it neither corresponds with the actual circumstances nor even gives due credit to Calhoun for inventiveness in the face of adversity.

The other standard version given is that somehow the bureaus were created, and in a fit of absentmindedness not properly subordinated to the line commanders. Then a succession of luxury-loving staff officers,
in connivance with a corrupt bunch of congressional politicians, built these bureaus into independent empires. These seemed to have no function except the production of red tape, and the pigeon hoiling of valid needs of the line commanders. Although this version was most popular with disgruntled Commanding Generals, it has found its way into most of the standard histories of the nineteenth-century army. 1 It is particularly distorting when used as the basic interpretation of the Spanish-American War and the subsequent General Staff reforms. Such an interpretation libels a great number of talented and dedicated staff officers and further completely ignores the question of civilian control of the military. The bureaus were always the instruments of the civilian Secretaries, often used against the wishes of the politically hostile Commanding Generals. Since the Commanding Generals could not be removed or even taken to task under normal circumstances, the Secretaries consistently denied them power over the bureaus.

Yet as this story unfolds it will become clear that indeed the standard versions had at least enough truth in them to account for their creation. Calhoun did, indeed, erect a structure that would last till 1904 and deserves the title statesman for his achievement. Also the Bureau Chiefs were bureaucratic empire builders, though modern organization might be considered one of the achievements of civilization as well as one of its curses.

To properly understand the position of the Adjutant General's Office in the Army of its early days, it will be necessary to trace the events

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leading up to its birth. The setting before the arrival of Calhoun gives some insight into the constraints under which he developed the Bureau concept in his early tenure as Secretary of War. An increasing tempo of political controversy marks the attack on the army that led to the creation of both the Commanding General's position and the Adjutant General's Office. But it is only with the attempt to place Calhoun's choice in the position of Adjutant General that the political battle rages at its fullest force. The Senate chose to block the nomination, and the AGO remained vacant for the first four years of its existence. How the AGO became so entangled in what were the political battles attendant on the Presidential aspirations of the leading figures of the period and the impact on the office itself are issues that must be addressed. The story of the office's early days also gives clues to the later problems of the interrelationship between the Secretaries of War, the Commanding Generals, and the Adjutants General.

The period of Calhoun's administration of the War Department was a period of standoff after a war. The economy was suffering a depression and it became politically expedient to reduce expenses. As with any army, the biggest and most assailable expense involved personnel. Cutting expenses meant cutting manpower. This provided a cause in which different factions felt they could make political gains at the expense of the Administration. The good of the individual soldier, the army, and even the national economy were subordinated to the political ambitions of the Congressional critics.

The political scene was complicated by the existence of only one party. Anyone with political ambitions (and there seemed to be no lack
of these) needed to build up a faction. A premium was placed on finding
issues that would allow for an attack on one’s political rivals. The
Presidency seemed a prize sought for by many, and the changing patterns
of personal alliances and feuds reflected the growing or waning chances
of each aspirant. All this produced, in words of John Quincy Adams, a
situation "with many of the worst features of elective monarchies." 2

Before the actual administration of Calhoun is discussed, some at-
tention to the situation that existed before he came to office is re-
quired. He was not the first to be offered the position by President
Monroe, nor even the second. In selecting his Cabinet, Monroe attempted
to combine the talents of all the leading personalities and sectional
representatives. Adams received the State Department. Crawford, who
had been Secretary of War, became the Secretary of the Treasury, and the
War Department itself was offered to Clay. Clay refused. The War De-
partment had not before this time provided the power base that either
State or Treasury had. It must be presumed Clay felt his presidential
aspirations were more likely to be achieved from his seat in the House
of Representatives. Governor Isaac Shelby of Kentucky was offered the
position at the War Department, and he also refused. This left the de-
partment run by an acting Secretary of War, its Chief Clerk. 3

The Chief Clerk and Acting Secretary of War was George Graham. He
presided over a War Department that at this period was clearly distinct

2Allen Nevins, ed., The Diary of John Quincy Adams (New York, Fred-

3Ibid., p. 195, (April 4, 1818); Edwin W. Hemphill, "Introduction,"
Papers of John C. Calhoun (Columbia, SC: The University of South Caro-
from the Army it administered. The War Department essentially consisted of both military and civilian personnel (though the civilian segment predominated) which had been gathered to perform those functions that were associated with the War Department staff. Essentially these functions were tied to financial accountability and were of the sort that the later supply bureaus would perform. The Adjutant and Inspector General's office, on the other hand, provided the civilian Secretaries with essential recordkeeping functions and the personnel management functions that depended on the keeping of records and statistics. 4

All this was clearly distinct from the line of the army which was characterized at this period by a number of very independent general officers. These had won fame and a national reputation for military prowess without any real proportionate training in discipline, respect for institutional superiors, or even acceptance of their constitutionally designated civilian bosses. This was a bad side effect of the emergence of the younger heroes of the 1812 war such as Jackson and Scott.

Graham is rather typical of a class of civil servants that characterize the entire establishment in Washington, DC at this time. The government had a great deal of stability as the result of clerks who, once selected as having the proper gentlemanly qualities, were named to their jobs by the Republican politicians and then served year after year and administration after administration. Quite frequently these civil servants came from the same or related families. Graham, for instance, had

one cousin succeed another as Chief Clerk of the State Department. The permanence of the two clerks in the Adjutant and Inspector General’s Office at this time will be noted further in this study.

Mr. Graham realized the legal and practical limitations of a Chief Clerk in attempting to fill in as Acting Secretary of War. He noted to the President that the six-month limitation on substitutes acting for heads of departments was up in his case and pressured the Administration into settling on a new Secretary of War. Well might he seek relief, because it was becoming more and more difficult for the Chief Clerk to keep in check the pretentions of General Andrew Jackson.

In 1816 an order had been sent to an engineer in Jackson’s command directing him to other duty. Though this order originated from the then Secretary of War, Crawford, it had not passed through Jackson’s headquarters. When the hero of New Orleans found out about the order, he was infuriated at what he considered an insult to himself personally. The controversy over this became heated to the point that Jackson issued a general order to his command that unless his headquarters passed on an order from the War Department it was not to be obeyed. This was indeed a direct challenge to the authority of the central government and the civilian superiors of the army and was so considered by President Monroe. Graham could not resolve the problem he had inherited. It was high time Monroe named a Secretary who could restore authority to the troubled

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War Department.  

His choice this time was John C. Calhoun of South Carolina. Calhoun had been a War Hawk in the 1812 period and had established an area of expertise in the Congress on military matters. He was young but ambitious, and needed an administrative post to prove his abilities in this area if he was to advance to the higher offices.

John C. Calhoun provided the organization which the War Department needed. The leadership and inspiration that Jefferson had provided to the State Department and Hamilton had provided to the Treasury, Calhoun was to provide to the War Department. For years after he had left, the clerks who provided the office's continuity would intone: "Mr. Calhoun would have wanted it that way."

The War Department itself was an historical oddity when Calhoun came to office. Our heritage was mainly English. Most of the forms and many of the titles had been retained in the American army. But the reality was far different. There was no ownership of commissions, no privately vested interest in the regiments. This was a national army the Americans had created, at times nationally recruited and always nationally paid and supplied. Particularly altered were the role and obligations of the Secretary. He had supply, recruiting, and administrative functions for which he was politically responsible. The conduct of the army was placed under the President and Secretary of War who were clearly politicians, not figures above politics such as the Royalty and Commanding Generals of England. In order to fulfill his responsibilities

7 White, Jeffersonians, p. 241.
the Secretary of War needed a staff. This staff had been growing bit by bit from the first days of the republic. Gradually the need for a War Department staff above the commands of the generals in the field capable of implementing the Secretary's will became more and more accepted.

Yet this idea of a central War Department staff was a new one, still resisted by such independent generals as Jackson and Scott. It was embodied in a collection of emerging agencies that had developed, not according to plan, but in response to need. Even the titles Adjutant General, Quartermaster General, etc., reflected the inspiration of the field staff in the formation of the central offices. Yet this War Department staff was indeed different and by Calhoun's time desperately needed standardization and some unifying organizational principle. This the genius of Calhoun provided.

Though Calhoun was to provide the Army with a single military head in a position comparable to England's Commanding General, neither he nor his successors could completely subordinate the War Department staff to this office. The War Department staff existed for political reasons and, as long as the Secretaries felt themselves politically responsible in a way that the Commanding Generals were not, there was a need to keep the staff agencies free of the General's complete control. This could not be resolved until the position of Commanding General was abolished in the General Staff Reforms in favor of a Chief of Staff who was, in fact, responsible politically to his constitutional superiors.

The system and organization that Calhoun introduced is termed the Bureau System. The essential idea was that a number of the agencies which
had financial or administrative requirements be formed into Bureaus. These Bureaus would center in offices in the nation's capital and be headed by a staff officer who was directly responsible and accessible to the Secretary of War. As obvious as the need for this seemed to later generations, it was not the universal practice until Calhoun's time. Further the Bureau system marked a separation and specialization of function which contrasted sharply with the usual situation in the field, where the very existence of staff, much less its organization, would depend on the personality of the command (a condition that would last through the Civil War at least). This conscious definition and separation of functions was to mark a major advancement in the conduct of the nation's business and be a prerequisite to the further advancement involved in the twentieth-century General Staff Reforms.

Calhoun established the structure of the Bureaus, fixing their heads in Washington, and made them responsible to himself. It is to be noted that he did so some three years prior to the creation of the Commanding General's position or the splitting of the Bureau of the Adjutant and Inspector General into two separate entities. The Bureaus therefore predate the Commanding Generals, and had already operated in a relationship of direct access to the Secretary of War prior to the Commanding General's existence.

To formulate, refine, and implement his concept of a Bureau System, Calhoun obviously needed help. That the central ideas of the Bureau System had at least been discussed prior to Calhoun's arrival is certain, as is his reliance on the advice and assistance of his Chief Clerk, Major
Christopher Vandeventer, and on General Jacob Brown. Finally there was the need to get the ideas embodied in law, for which Calhoun needed the assistance of Congress.

Consistently the most important circumstance for Calhoun during his administration was his contacts and relationships with Congress. It was at the request of the House Committee on Military Affairs that Calhoun drafted his 1818 General Staff Bill. Judge Joseph Story noted that the House at this period was the commanding influence in the government and had "absorbed all the popular feeling and all the effective power of the country." Yet it was with the assistance of John Williams in the powerful Senate Military Affairs Committee that the Bureau plan was worked out and the legislation secured. However, Senator Williams would not always provide such helpful assistance to Calhoun.

In his early administration, Calhoun saw his main problem as getting himself, as Secretary of War, accepted as controlling the military establishment. In particular, he was concerned about asserting the power and authority of the War Department over the generals of the army. These generals all had commands outside Washington, DC, and there was no military figure in the capital from whom they felt a need to take directions. Clerks and lower ranking agency heads were all that Calhoun had on his staff. As for the generals' looking to their political superiors for

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9 White, Jeffersonians, p. 51.

10 Ibid., p. 39.
direction, it was often the case that the Generals could claim greater national prominence and popular support for their position than could the Secretary. This was particularly true of the Victor of New Orleans, Andrew Jackson.

The first crisis with General Jackson was an inherited problem; the question of the War Department's right to send orders to members of Jackson's command. Calhoun realized that unless he insist on this prerogative and had Jackson's general order to his own command prohibiting acceptance of direct orders from Washington struck down, the powers of the central administration would be greatly impaired. The solution required polite soothing words to the general, an insistence on War Department authority, and the concession of promised copies sent to the intermediate headquarters of any future orders to individuals. The solution also required President Monroe's continued attention and intervention.11

Yet another problem presented itself before the main one was solved. General Scott took it upon himself to send Jackson a letter that lectured Jackson on the theme of proper subordination. Jackson took offense and an exchange of letters took place that enlivened the press of the day, as they were open letters. To end this and to establish the principle that the army was not to air in public its internal quarrels, Calhoun had Adjutant and Inspector General Parker issue a general order to

prohibit publication of differences between army officers. 12 This solution was not completely accepted, and Scott for one would have occasion to publish letters in a feud with a later Secretary of War.

All this left Calhoun with a sensitivity over the question of Jackson's subordination to his office; therefore, when the crisis came in July, 1818, involving Jackson's actions in the Floridas in seeming contradiction to his stated orders, Calhoun impressed Adams as being personally offended and having his judgment clouded by personal reactions. 13

When the Cabinet met to discuss the situation, a general rule of secrecy held. These cabinet meetings would muddy the political waters for years afterward.

In the course of the meetings, Calhoun expressed himself as personally involved, and all others, except Adams, expressed strong disapproval of the General's actions. Then a letter from Nashville published in the Aurora gave from an anonymous source an account of how Secretary of the Treasury Crawford, in particular, had been in favor of censoring the General, while Jackson was defended by Adams and Calhoun. There were two immediate effects of this letter. Crawford, who in fact considered Jackson a serious rival of his in the Presidential race, from that point on openly attacked the General. 14 Jackson, on the other hand, became quite friendly in his correspondence with Calhoun on the

13 Nevins, Diary, p. 199 (July 15, 1818).
14 Ibid., p. 207 (January 7, 1819).
misconception that Calhoun had defended him in the Cabinet. Calhoun strengthened the misconceptions by his comments to Captain James Gadsden, Jackson's aide, that it was deplorable how others in the administration were willing to abandon "their best friend" to "screen themselves." Crawford was later to break the rule of secrecy and reveal Calhoun's actual role with the excuse that the former Secretary of the Treasury believed Calhoun the real author of the *Aurora* letter.\(^\text{15}\) But the most important point is that at the crucial period of the great reduction in force and the creation of the Adjutant General's Office, Jackson and Crawford were open and avowed enemies, while Jackson and Calhoun were building an alliance between themselves.

The time had come to consolidate the gains made in the ordering of the staff structure, and to clarify the chain of command and the relation between staff and command. Though Scott volunteered and was given the main job of rewriting the regulations in 1819-1820, as late as the spring of 1821 Calhoun set up a board for staff regulations. The board included names that would mean things to the future of the AGO such as Adjutant and Inspector General Parker and Lieutenant Samuel Cooper.\(^\text{16}\)

At this point before the Congressional assault on his position, Calhoun received letters in his office which introduced to him the names of several individuals who would have a crucial impact on both his career and the development of the AGO. In January, 1818, in anticipation of the resignation of the Adjutant General of the Northern Division, Major

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\(^{16}\) Nevins, *Diary*, p. 209 (February 3, 1819).
Charles Nourse asked to be considered for the position. He was a very well-connected individual. The Madisons, particularly Dolly, had been friends of the Nourses, and Charles' father held the position of Recorder in the Treasury Department. Influence had been used to place many members of this numerous family on the federal payroll. Further, Winfield Scott's name was used as a recommendation in the letter to Calhoun. Despite all this, Nourse did not get the position. It went, rather, to a line officer favored by General Brown when Nourse's letter had acknowledged as both interested and qualified: Roger Jones. 17

Roger Jones came with not only General Brown's recommendation but was also an army officer who had distinguished himself in the War of 1812. He had been breveted for gallantry several times. He was also a member of the politically powerful Jones family of Virginia. He was, in fact, appointed Adjutant General of the Northern Division, and, as such, had only Adjutant and Inspector General Parker and Butler, the Adjutant General of the Southern Division, as his seniors in the Bureau.

In August of 1820, Jackson suggested someone to Calhoun for the position of Inspector General of the Southern Division: James Gadsden. 18 The fact that Gadsden was Jackson's former aide and was recommended by the general was enough. By October Gadsden was Inspector General of the Southern Division. 19 Special consideration was even given to Gadsden on

19 Gadsden to Parker, October 17, 1820, Ibid., Vol. V, p. 400.
the general's request that he be allowed to retain his grade in the Corps of Engineers while accepting the staff position. Calhoun seemed agreeable to satisfying General Jackson in this.

The Secretary of War had need of friends because the Congressional Session of 1820-21 had seen his position and office under attack. As early as December, 1818, the House had asked Calhoun what reductions could be made in the army. By the end of 1820 this request had been spurred on by economic and political considerations to become a full attack on the Secretary of War's Department.

Neither 1819 nor 1820 was a good year for the American economy. Attempts at fiscal reform had resulted in bank panics which had, in turn, caused widespread recession. In Calhoun's analysis, there was

...within these two years an immense revolution of fortunes in every part of the Union; enormous numbers of persons utterly ruined; multitudes in deep distress; and a general mass of disaffection to the Government, not concentrated in any particular direction, but ready to seize upon any event and looking out anywhere for a leader.... It was a vague but widespread discontent, caused by the disordered circumstances of individuals, but resulting in a general impression that there was something radically wrong in the administration of the Government. 20

Calhoun could see the direct impact of this economic distress on government revenue and as it "ought to have been foreseen, and also that, on the failure of revenue, the War Department would naturally be the first upon which the scythe of retrenchment would fall." 21 Yet, the national distress and the cry for retrenchment simply provided fuel for

20 As quoted in Nevins, Diary, p. 241 (May 22, 1820).
the machines of the political factions. Such was the situation that
most factions had to find a cause to attack the administration in order
to give their nomination for the presidency an issue. Though this was
indeed true of the adherents of Clay and Clinton, the party of Crawford
was to provide both the Administration and Calhoun, in particular, with
its most dangerous opposition. This was true because

Crawford has been a worm preying upon the vitals of the Ad-
ministration within its own body. He was the instigator
and animating spirit of the whole movement, both in Congress
and at Richmond, against Jackson and the Administration... and all the attacks against the War Department during this
Congress have been stimulated by him and promoted by his
partisans. An essential impulse to this course on his part
is the knowledge he has obtained that Calhoun is not pre-
pared to support him for the next Presidency.22

The words are Adams', who had his own reasons for dislike of Crawford,
but the sentiments would be the same as held by both Calhoun and Jack-
son.

The impact of the one party system of this period can be noted in
two ways. First was the need of individuals to build factions around
themselves. These factions found in personal alliances and antagonisms
their main driving power, and the control of the Presidency as their
main goal. The second effect was President Monroe's unwillingness to
oust Crawford as Secretary of the Treasury despite Crawford's attacks on
his colleagues in the administration. Monroe was committed to the idea
that there was only one party and that his cabinet should represent the
different sections of that party.

22 Ibid.
The first effect, that of the building of factions, can clearly be seen in the relations between Calhoun and Crawford. The relations became bad when Crawford perceived Calhoun would not support him for the presidency. They worsened as Calhoun himself became a candidate. Further, the effects of personal alliances and personal animosities can be seen in that as Calhoun became friendly with Jackson, he, in turn, was attacked by Jackson's enemies in the Congress. Not the least of these was Senator John Williams of Tennessee, who was chairman of the powerful Senate Military Affairs Committee.

The second effect, that of Presidential hesitancy in the face of factional attacks on the administration, had the result that Monroe remained aloof and withdrawn while the Secretary of War bore the brunt of the attack. Monroe would only become personally involved when he felt he and his constitutional prerogatives were challenged over the question of filling the Adjutant General's Office.²³

The attacks in Congress took many forms. There were requirements for reductions of standard practices, and often repeated requests for information in a sort of fishing expedition to find issues to embarrass the War Department.

For example, the Secretaries of War had never been given adequate clerical staff to administer the Department. This was a period of expanding administrative load because the Department was moving from a haphazard structure to an organization with systematic bureaucratic checks and controls exerted by the central administration. It had been

²³White, Jeffersonians, pp. 40, 122.
the practice of the Secretaries (to include former Secretary of War Crawford) to detail army officers to Washington for "clerical," i.e., administrative, functions. The Congress now descended on this as though it was some form of fraud rather than a logical development of a national military force. Particularly, the Congress seemed to object to compensation beyond their normal military pay for those who were called to the capital for this sort of duty.  

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Far more serious a form of attack was the requirement for a reduction of the Army's strength and then the systematic critical Congressional surveillance of any actions Calhoun took to accomplish this. It is indeed amazing that given the personal animosities and individual injustices that must accompany any reduction in force level that Calhoun did not have greater struggles on his hands.

It is the mark of statesmen that they make a creative response to government crisis. Calhoun gave the American military tradition the concept of an expandable army which has so appealed to such commentators as Emory Upton.  

25 Calhoun's method was to ask the advice of such of his generals as Brown, the senior on active duty, and Scott. They confirmed his belief that his organization of the Army staff was sound and that it should be preserved even at the expense of strength of the line which, in turn, could be more easily trained in war time. The need for the retention of as many experienced and talented officers in the higher

24 Ibid., pp. 97, 409.

25 Weigley, History, pp. 140-143; Upton, Military Policy, p. 150.
command was also obvious to both the generals and the Secretary. The concept, then, was to retain in peace the essential skeleton of the Army, its command and staff. Thus, with a base of experienced and capable men, ranks could in war be expanded by the introduction of men who could follow their leaders with some confidence. However clear this might have seemed to the Secretary and the generals, the Congress was only interested in reduction and had no inclination to listen to such schemes as long as they could not identify against which foreign threat the army was to be so structured to protect the country. The resulting Reduction in Force is our concern rather than the rejection of the Expandable Army Concept.

Calhoun's vehicle for handling the delicate task of deciding both how the force should be structured and who should be retained and who released from service was an Army board headed by Winfield Scott. That the board should have become highly political in its implications came as a surprise to no one. That it was an instrument of the Secretary to cloak his actions emerges as the actions surrounding the AGO are examined. But the history of the AGO is completely tied to another institution given birth at the juncture of the Reduction in Force (RIF)—that of the Commanding General.

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The Army was to be reduced from five to three generals. General Jackson was willing to leave the army to become the civil governor of the Floridas (an area in which he had already demonstrated some interest). Alexander Macomb, though he ranked both Scott and Gaines, was willing to accept a reduction in rank to Colonel in order to head the Engineers and the Military Academy at West Point. This left Major General Jacob Brown and Brigadiers Scott and Gaines. This also left a legacy of uncertainty as to the seniority of Macomb, Scott, and Gaines that would remain submerged only as long as Brown was still on the rolls of the army.

Calhoun felt that he needed the center of military authority transferred to the capital. This he accomplished by so simple a means as ordering General Brown to duty with the War Department under the title Commanding General. The Secretary achieved several things by this move. First, the highest ranking general (and therefore the potentially most independent) was put under the Secretary's direct supervision. Second, Calhoun gained the advice and assistance of the ranking military officer. Finally, with the Secretary's orders going out in the name of the Commanding General, there could be no show of opposition by the field commanders that would not be obviously insubordination.

But this very last point contained almost a hundred years' worth of problems for the Secretaries and the Army. The crucial question of the triangular relationship of the Secretaries, the Commanding Generals, and the Bureau Chiefs was not resolved. The very title, Commanding General, was to cause problems. What did the Commanding General command? The entire army to include the pre-established Bureaus? If so, there was little
left for the Secretary except liaison with Congress. Few Secretaries or Bureau Chiefs would accept this version of the Commanding General's scope of command. Was he the commander of the line of the army, but was unable to control any of those functions necessary to the implementation of his will because the Bureau Chiefs were responsible for these areas? Particularly crucial here was that without the Adjutant General he could not even issue an order.

When General Brown was ordered to Washington he was informed that the newly created Adjutant General of the Army would act as his Adjutant General as well as perform War Department responsibilities inherited from the old Adjutant and Inspector General's Office. Did then the Adjutant General have two masters, the Secretary of War and the Commanding General? Did either of these two masters have a higher claim on the Adjutant General's loyalty and responsiveness? Because Calhoun was such a dominant personality, because Brown showed restraint, and because the AGO remained vacant for the entire remainder of Calhoun's secretaryship, this issue never surfaced and was never resolved. In fact, the full problems of the relationship would not be exposed until Samuel Cooper as Adjutant General found himself between Secretary of War Davis and Commanding General Scott. One reason for this was that it was only with Scott that the basic flaw of the office of Commanding General came to light. The Commanding General was not made politically responsible for his actions to the Secretary of War or even to the President. The Commanding General was a product of the seniority system, not any selection process by the civilian executive. He was next to impossible to remove as Polk and Davis were to learn. If he wished to oppose or even embarrass the
administration, he could do so with impunity. It was to the Adjutant's General that the Secretaries learned to turn by the end of the nineteenth century for the responsiveness that the Commanding Generals became unwilling to give. But finally, Secretary of War Root was to consider the system of Calhoun unacceptable enough in the person of Nelson Miles to attempt to reform out of existence the Commanding General's position. 30

But the AGO that was to become the powerful tool of the Secretaries was created for entirely different reasons and had the most inauspicious of early careers. The basic motivation for the replacement of the Adjutant and Inspector General with an Adjutant General was Calhoun's dissatisfaction with the incumbent of the A & IGO, General Parker. Parker had made the fatal error of sending to Calhoun for forwarding to a hostile Congress a report that contained misstatements. This gave John Floyd of Virginia a chance to attack Calhoun from the House. As Calhoun put it, "The truth is, I did not examine his statement, being very much engaged with [and] by the frequent calls of Congress, and taking it for granted that a report on so plain a subject must be correct." 31

General Jackson was quick with advice for the Secretary and the terms of endearment used deserve quoting: "Permit me to make to you a friendly sug[g]estion. I say friendly for no man wishes you better than I do, or


can have your future welfare [sic] more at heart than I have ['as I believe your political welfare to be'] interlined] intimately connected with the welfare of our country. I would therefore suggest for your safety a change of [the] Adjutant [and Inspector] Gen[eral]l [Daniel] Parker." Jackson was willing to be helpful to Calhoun because he had a nomination for Parker's replacement. 32

It has been an old principle in bureaucratic structures and in the U. S. Army in particular that if you have problems with persons occupying offices one way to resolve them is to reorganize the office out of existence. Since he was in the process of reorganizing the entire army, Calhoun felt that he could eliminate the inconvenience of Parker's holding a key position by simply replacing that position with another. A small change of name and minimal functional changes would leave the Secretary of War with a "new" office that he could fill with whomever he chose. But was it, in fact, to be a new office as Calhoun was to assert to Monroe and Congress? The true question was one of filling a "newly" created vacancy. Calhoun undercut his case by admitting to Congress on other occasions that the only authorization for the clerks serving in the AGO was the old Congressional authorization for the Adjutant and Inspector General's Office. 33

Later Adjutant General Roger Jones would lament the effects on army administration of the reduction. The old establishment consisted of the Adjutant and Inspector General with General officer rank, two Colonels


33 Calhoun to Monroe, March 1, 1822, ibid., Vol. VI, p. 720; Calhoun to McLane, February 6, 1823, ibid., Vol. VII, p. 460.
as the Division AG's, and four assistant officers. The reduced establishment was reduced only in manpower. Its duties actually increased in the next decade. To perform them one colonel was authorized as Adjutant General and the field only received two officers to serve as Inspector General personnel. That such a drastic reduction would greatly disrupt and even curtail essential administrative services cannot be doubted. However, in practice for the next four years the Colonel position authorized for the AGO was never successfully filled. This was not for want of persons willing to fill it, or for want of desire by the Secretary to fill it, but because the office had become a center of political contention. 34

Roger Jones at this juncture repeatedly wrote to Calhoun assuring the Secretary that Jones had every confidence that the War Department would do him justice. Justice for Jones meant filling the AGO with one of the former Adjutant Generals of the Divisions. One of these Division AG's (and he urged his own merits) should be retained with the department. Jones would consistently contend there was nothing new created but simply a reduction of the old. 35

34 Roger Jones, "Report of the Secretary of War," 1836, p. 50. Scott was particularly concerned that he receive one of the IG's on his staff, and in a series of letters asserted the concept that these were "general staff" officers in that they were inseparable from the requirements of the Brigadiers commanding the Divisions. What he feared was that they would act as agents of the central administration supervising his activities. Scott to Calhoun, April 13, 1821, Hemphill, Papers, Vol. VI, p. 48; Scott to Calhoun, May 9, 1821, Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 103.

However, Jones' old patron, General Brown, had someone else in mind for the position, and Calhoun had his reasons for going along. Brown was suggesting the merits of General Henry Atkinson for the position. However, General Atkinson had a preference to remain with the line of the army in command of the Sixth Infantry regiment, where he could retain his brevet rank. Calhoun was to tell Jackson that Atkinson had not been expected by the Secretary to accept, but that Calhoun had approved the offer both to please General Brown and to secure the displacement of Parker. Parker had been transferred to the position of Paymaster General where Calhoun thought he would be safely out of the way. The Paymaster General's position was available because Colonel Towson, the previous incumbent, was offered command of the newly organized Second Regiment of Artillery. 36

The offer of the office to General Atkinson gave the appearance of a subterfuge by the Secretary rather than a sincere tender of the position. The Congress felt the affair warranted another investigation forcing Calhoun to defend himself. The Secretary was even reduced to explaining that the offer and rejection had passed one another in the mails. The problem was compounded when the War Department published General Atkinson's name as the AG in the Army Register at the date after his refusal of the office. Calhoun claimed the Army Register had gone to press after the rejection but before the War Department had received

36 Hemphill, "Introduction," Papers, Vol. VI, p. X; Calhoun to Jackson, October 28, 1821, Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 476. However, in a reply to a letter from Scott dated April 27, 1822 (Ibid., Vol. VII, p. 83), Calhoun states that though he doubted Adkinson would accept, the recommendation of General Brown itself raised doubts in the Secretary's mind.
word of it officially. Members of Congress believed all this was a device of the Secretary to conceal the offering of the position to the real person Calhoun desired in it. 37

Meanwhile Parker had been forced out. In the absence of an Adjutant General, Parker was ordered to turn over the records of the War Department to General Brown. He did so by simply moving them and the old A & AGO clerks out of his office and hanging out the new sign of Paymaster General. 38 Though the AGO was to quickly find new office space, it was a while before it had a new chief confirmed.

There were those in the army who saw in Atkinson's refusal an opportunity to press their desires and claims to the office. Lieutenant Colonel Leavenworth asked for the position, and Colonel Butler, the AG of the Southern Division, also asked to be considered. Roger Jones again requested consideration and even obtained endorsements by friends that he thought might sway the Secretary. 39 But another was befriended by one Calhoun was more anxious to please.

The Secretary of War had already defended himself against charges of favoring General Jackson's former aide. The special consideration which Calhoun had shown in allowing Gadsden to retain his rank in the


line of the Corps of Engineers despite Calhoun's acceptance of a staff position as Inspector General of the Southern Division had raised resentments in others in the army not so privileged. As Calhoun explained to one of the disgruntled officers and to General Jackson, this was done simply to protect Gadsden from the effects of the reduction. But now the General proposed a higher disposition for Gadsden, and the Secretary concurred. Calhoun recommended that the President place Gadsden's name before the Senate in nomination as Adjutant General.

Immediately Calhoun was challenged in both the House and the Senate. Explicitly, he had to defend himself against the charge that he was advancing Gadsden's name while two AG's of the proper rank already existed and that one of them should properly be retained. This was the same argument advanced privately by Jones. Again it was refuted by Calhoun with the assertion that the Adjutant General of the Army was a new position and not simply a reduction from the old A & IGO.

Jones was astounded by the naming of Gadsden, who had had no previous AG experience, to the position. He felt the injustice so strongly that he was led to the rather rash act of threatening to use his political connections to embarrass the administration and even secure the elimination of the authorization for a Major General in the army

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42 Calhoun to Eustis, January 29, 1822, Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 647.
establishment. This threat was made to Major General Brown and hurt the general deeply, but the worst effect was to harden Calhoun in opposition to Jones. This dislike went so far as Calhoun's blocking Jones being appointed to the Inspector General position vacated by Gadsden, and forcing him back to his original position as a Captain in the line of Artillery. 43

Jones was later to tell his son that he then used his contacts to block the Gadsden nomination and to embarrass the Monroe/Calhoun administration as much as possible. 44 While clearly the aspiring future AG might have contributed to the strength of the Calhoun opposition, the nominations were actually the climax of the attacks on Calhoun by the Congress. It is ironical that when Calhoun sought to please General Jackson he had to send the name of the general's former aide and favorite to the Senate committee chaired by one of Jackson's worst political enemies, Senator John Williams of Tennessee. The fact that the entire nomination seemed surrounded by irregularities only strengthened the conviction on the part of Calhoun's opponents. Here was an ideal opportunity to strike down the pretensions of the young Secretary of War. Many men in the Senate, for many different reasons, were ready to reject the nomination of Gadsden as AG.

43 Jones to Calhoun, July 11, 1821, Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 254; Calhoun to Monroe, August 18, 1821, Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 349.

44 Roger Jones, Jr. to James B. Fry, January 6, 1877, copy in manuscript attached in autographed copy of Fry's History of the Adjutant General's Office.
It was August 14, 1821, that Gadsden was appointed on orders as Adjutant General. Before the President had even sent the nomination to the Senate, the House attacked. On December 23, 1821, the House initiated an investigation of the measures taken by the government for the reduction of the army. By next April, the committee in a split decision noted that the Adjutant General's Office performed the functions of the old A & ICO and both Divisional AG's, but primarily General Parker's old duties. Further, they accepted Calhoun's argument that at the time of Gadsden's appointment, both Butler and Jones had legally been disposed of elsewhere, and the President was simply filling a vacant office. However, they noted it was for the Senate to determine the wisdom of the way it was filled. Indeed, the center of attack had shifted to the Senate.

On January 22, 1822, President Monroe sent the names of several officers to the Senate for confirmation, among them the critical ones of Gadsden and Towson. On March 13, 1822, Senator Williams reported back from his committee the rejection of the appointment of the Adjutant General. He stated that with two AG's in service the Secretary and President had no right to propose someone else entirely. On March 21, the Senate confirmed Senator Williams' interpretation and the nomination was rejected. The next day, Gadsden's commission expired, and on

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March 26, Monroe withdrew all pending nominations until he was able to explain the reasons he felt his actions legally justified.  

Since presidential prerogatives were being challenged, President Monroe felt impelled to become personally involved. He called his cabinet together and proposed a letter addressed to the Congress. This proposal, in turn, brought into the open the role Crawford had been playing. While Secretary of State Adams and Secretary of the Navy Thompson raised questions of expediency in directly challenging the Congress, only Crawford was willing to flatly oppose any attempt to defend the appointments. What happened at the next cabinet meeting is best put in the words of one of the participants:

The President had concluded to send his message, concerning the execution of the law of the last session for reducing the army, only to the Senate. He had modified it accordingly, and read the alterations he had made. It was agreed that this message would be proper if the President had determined to nominate again Colonel Towson and Colonel Gadsden after they had been rejected by the Senate. Mr. Crawford expressed doubts of the expediency of the measure, as tending to excite irritation in the Senate, and thought it probable they would reject the nominations again. He had intimated to the President similar impressions after the last Cabinet meeting, but he had made up his mind to send the message. He told me that the opposition in the Senate was headed by John Williams, a Senator from Tennessee, brother of Lewis Williams, a member of the House from North Carolina, and that he knew its motive. He did not further explain himself; but the motive which he conjectured was that of censuring and embarrassing the administration of the War Department, with a view to promote Mr. Crawford's election to the Presidency. Both the brothers Williams are devoted partisans of Mr. Crawford—the Senator from Tennessee a very active one of long standing. Crawford has heretofore been somewhat cautious in the management of his opposition,

47 Monroe to Senate, March 26, 1822, Hemphill, Papers, Vol. VI, p. 761.

but in these affairs he has been decisive and explicit; at the same time repeating, with iteration more anxious than prudent, that he had no communication with any member of the Senate upon the subject, and did not know on what grounds they had rejected the nominations of Towson and Cadsden. 49

The most important fact concerning the President's message is that it was sent. In so doing, Monroe committed himself to upholding the nominations, and did so against the open opposition of cabinet members and a leading faction of the party. The message took on the tones of a lecture on Constitutional principles—not the ideal method of securing cooperation and agreement. It is interesting to note that while Monroe asserted the essential newness of the Adjutant General's Office and that it was distinct from the old A & IGO, he nonetheless noted it was most similar in function to the earlier office rather than admit that it bore resemblance to the offices of Adjutants General of Divisions. 50 The message arrived with renominations. Senator Williams' committee took two weeks to report unfavorably; and on April 29, the Senate handed the President a second defeat on this question.

Secretary Calhoun and President Monroe on one side and Crawford and the Senate on the other had no intention of backing down. But the executive made no further attempt to fill the AGO; with Jones they would not fill it and with anyone else they could not fill it. The AGO was to remain vacant for the rest of Monroe's administration. That all the proceedings on filling the AGO were political in motivation cannot be doubted. A further proof came when the Senate voted to make the debates


50 Monroe to Senate, April 13, 1822, Ibid., Vol. VII, p. 31.
on the matter public. 51

The political battles, often inspired by the coming presidential struggle, were far from over. At the same time that Senator Williams was preparing the second rejection of Gadsden, the House of Representatives struck again. Jones' earlier threat to secure the elimination of the Major General's position now looked as if it might achieve realization as the House spent April 15 and 16, 1822, debating it. Ultimately, the question of doing away with the office of Commanding General was dropped. 52

The leading figures all felt the political struggles were coming to a head. "A state of irritation prevails which greatly exceeds anything which has occurred in the history of this government," was Crawford's comment on the period of the Gadsden rejection. Adams felt that "it is a time to be prepared for any event, ... [the government] is at war with itself, both in the Executive, and between the Executive and the Legislature." Even Monroe was distressed enough to write Madison, "I have never known such a state of things as has existed here during the last Session, nor have I personally ever experienced so much embarrassment and mortification.... There being three avowed candidates in the administration is a circumstance which increases the embarrassment. The friends of each endeavor to annoy the others." 53

53 As quoted in White, Jeffersonians, p. 81; Young, Community, p. 235.
The candidates and the factions would go on to work out their respective destinies. The only ones who continued to play important roles in the course of the AGO's development were Adams and Jackson and, in each case, only because they succeeded in gaining the presidency. Before continuing the story of the AGO and of Roger Jones, it is appropriate to sketch the stories of a few of the other characters that have been introduced.

When Calhoun failed to secure a command in the line for Colonel Towson, he determined to restore him to the Paymaster General's position. This meant the displacement and retirement of former Adjutant and Inspector General Parker. The dismissal was occasioned by the Senate's rejection of Gadsden and Towson but there is reason to believe Calhoun had already determined upon this course. The primary accounts leading up to the dismissal are from conversations between Parker and John Quincy Adams, from whom he was seeking political protection and perhaps vindication. Therefore, some of Parker's more extreme statements must be viewed as one-sided at least. He claimed that he had been summoned to the Secretary of War's Office and accused of having "spoken in a spirit of ridicule or censure" upon the Secretary of War's reports. When Parker asked who so accused him and of saying exactly what, the Secretary refused to answer, becoming evasive. Parker refused to answer any charges unless they were made explicit. 54 Parker then accused Calhoun and Monroe of asking him to destroy evidence of some of Monroe's actions in the War of 1812. Finally, Parker stated that Calhoun had

blamed the Senate for not providing a position for him. Even Adams
knew this to be a false statement if made by Calhoun because both the
Secretary of War and the President had expressed to him their desire to
be ride of Parker. This all occasioned a comment by Adams on the By-
zanine nature of politics that surrounded the Calhoun-Crawford
split. 55 Crawford had indeed been after Parker, suspecting another
cause in which to embarrass Calhoun.

On May 13, 1822, in a very sarcastic exchange of notes, Parker
asked Calhoun to have the courtesy to at least dismiss him in writing,
and not by orders to others. Calhoun replied that he wished the re-
moval could have been earlier. 56 Parker did not seek an alliance with
Crawford but with Adams, who provided for him with a newspaper job.
After all one never knows when it might be profitable to bring a "By-
zanine intrigue" to light.

Since he legally held no office, Colonel Gadsden did not have to
resign. He departed to do some farming in Florida. There he wrote
Jackson reminding the General that he had promised Gadsden his military
files. The former aide had intentions of writing a book on his patron's
military exploits. Marquis James, Jackson's biographer, speculated that
this is the origin of the Civil and Military History of Andrew Jackson
that came out in 1825. 57

55 Ibid., Vol. VI, p. 2 (June 2, 1822).
Jackson was not finished trying to place Gadsden as AG. On June 28, 1822, he wrote Calhoun proposing a most elaborate maneuver. He suggested that no one could object to Colonel Butler, one of the two former Division AG's, being named AG of the Army. Therefore, he should be offered the position with the understanding that he would resign after a period. Thus, a way would be opened for the nomination of Gadsden that would satisfy the scruples of all but the most politically motivated. Roger Jones heard of this scheme and wrote to Butler asking him if he was to be so used. Butler replied to Jones that he would never accept if the acceptance was based on some sort of future resignation. Butler made a point of sending to the Secretary of War a copy of his reply to Jones. 58

The Secretary was at least able to offer Gadsden an appointment to treat with the Indians. 59 His later diplomatic career would finally place Gadsden's name permanently on American geography with the Gadsden Purchase.

Jackson felt there were still political scores to settle. When Jackson's enemies began to use the question of the AGO in their political speeches, he asked Calhoun about the possibility of publishing the entire correspondence between the two relating to Gadsden. This would show the General's personal support and approval of his former aide. 60

60 James, President, p. 60.
He also decided that the power of Senator Williams needed breaking if his own political interests were to be served. The General entered the race against Williams himself and secured in October, 1823, the Senate seat to replace his old foe.

The Adjutant General's Office, in the midst of all this intrigue, had to limp along. Calhoun chose, rather than attempt to fill it legally, simply to detail an officer to perform as Acting Adjutant General. His choice for this purpose was Charles Nourse.61

There was a great deal of irony in Nourse's appointment. Years before Nourse had been passed over by Calhoun when the Secretary had named Roger Jones to the position of AG of the Northern Division. Now Calhoun was to call Nourse to Washington rather than give Jones the position of AG of the Army. At least it allowed Nourse to be with his numerous office-holding family at the nation's capital.62

The A&JC, during all this, struggled on with the two clerks that had served the A&JCG for years merely continuing their routine. But no one could deny the disruptive effect of rapid changes of Bureau Chiefs, and then the weakness of a chief who was only acting Adjutant General. What was needed was a strong hand guiding the office and a period of stability. One officer was more than willing to hold that office: Roger Jones. Upon his finally gaining the office, he was to rule the AGO for twenty-five years, thus providing an exceptional period of continuity.

62White, Jeffersonians, pp. 358, 371.
CHAPTER II

ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION UNDER

ROGER JONES, 1825-1852

In 1825, Roger Jones took over the Office of the Adjutant General. He had fought long and hard to get it. The critical selection of its chief had caused several of the leading political figures to assault and embarrass the administration. The importance that the Secretary attached to it showed that John C. Calhoun clearly envisioned the Adjutant General's Office as the key to his bureau structure.

Yet what, in fact, was this office that they were so willing to fight over? It consisted of two clerks, Mr. Brook Williams and Mr. John M. Hepburn, who essentially maintained the Army's records and handled the issuing of correspondence and orders.¹ Still at the start of Roger Jones' term, the office was much greater on potential than it was powerful in fact.

The office affairs were in some disarray because there had been no firm guiding hand since Adjutant and Inspector General Daniel Parker had been forced out of office. The succession of Adjutants General, designate and acting, had not given the sort of clear and constant direction

¹Roger Jones, January 12, 1827, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. 1, p. 59, Record Group 94, National Archives.
that was needed. But with Jones' arrival, there was to be a period of
twenty-seven years under the same head in which much of the potential
of the office would be realized. The office of record would become the
office of personnel, coordination, and finally control for the Army.

Shortly after John Quincy Adams had secured the office of the
presidency, he was visited by Roger Jones. Jones had, by now, built up
a strong case for his selection. There was ample reason to believe
that there could be little political alternative to naming him to the
position. Reinforcing Jones' request was the recommendation of General
Jacob Brown, who supported Roger Jones for the office. The Commanding
General had personally felt the effects of the vacancy of the last few
years, because his own aides had had to serve in the vacant post. In
fact, President Adams had decided to end the fight between the Executive
and the Legislature. The name of Roger Jones was duly sent to the Senate
for confirmation as Adjutant General.

Roger Jones came from a prominent family in Virginia. In his gen-
eration, the Jones family was noted for its military connections. He
had joined the marines originally, but had switched over to the Army dur-
ing the War of 1812. Details of his being breveted for gallantry are

2 John Quincy Adams, Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, Comprising Por-
tions of his Diary from 1795 to 1848, ed. Charles Francis Adams (Phila-
delphia, 1875), VI, p. 516 (March 1, 1825).

3 Ibid., VI, p. 519 (March 5, 1825).

4 Ibid., VII, p. 117 (February 16, 1826).

5 "Roger Jones," The National Cyclopaedia of American Biography
   (New York, 1904), XII, p. 130.
good illustrations of the general practice of brevets.6 His brother, Thomas ap Catesby Jones, became quite prominent in the Navy. Both received presentation swords by the unanimous vote of the Virginia legislature.7

Roger Jones continued to wield political influence. At times he entertained presidents at a family estate, "Sharon."8 After his death, his sons were to serve on both sides in the Civil War. Four fought with Virginia and the Confederacy and two stayed with the Union.9

The situation in which Jones found himself in his new position was peculiar. He was faced with a President in John Quincy Adams who had the knowledge and inclination to concern himself directly with the most detailed affairs that were assigned to the Adjutant General's Office. As Samuel Flagg Bemis states: "As President, Adams allowed the Government to rest too heavily upon his shoulders. He busied himself personally with all manner of administrative details that he could have left to other people: reform of army regulations, promotions and pay, review of the findings of courts martial, the rivalries of officers including the quarrelsome and unseemly pretensions of Major Generals Winfield Scott and Edmond P. Gaines to outrank each other; the question whether cadets


8Ibid., p. 73.

9Ibid., p. 193.
at West Point should have to strip nakes for physical examinations ...."  

As we shall see, every example here mentioned was or became a function of the Adjutant General's Office.

Other office appointments of President Adams besides that of the Adjutant General's Office are of concern to the history of that position. After the position of Secretary of War was indirectly offered and rejected by Andrew Jackson, Adams offered it to James Barbour of Virginia—a Crawford faction man. Senator John Williams, who had formed part of the opposition to Calhoun's nomination of James Gadsden, was named by Adams to a diplomatic post. Charles J. Nourse, who had been the caretaker acting Adjutant General, a member of the powerful Nourse clan, needed to be provided for under the new administration. He was named as chief clerk in the Indian Affairs Office.  

The period that Roger Jones served in the Office of the Adjutant General was both long and critical to its development. He was the office for many years. The different aspects of the office's development through this period deserve attention. First of all the office itself and its personnel, both military and clerical, will be treated. Here the personal hand of Jones is ever present. It is when we get into the functions of the Adjutant General's Office that a peculiar problem develops. The Army has never been too careful about attributing ideas to their originator or even strongest advocate. Often it was the practice to put the signature of a ranking figure (Secretary of War or


11. Ibid., p. 59.
Commanding General for example) on papers that were prepared by action officers of much lower rank. Evidence of this pattern can be seen during Jones' period in the great consistency of positions that characterized different Secretaries of War (even of different parties) on matters of interest or responsibility of the Adjutant General. Where it is clearly Roger Jones' acting, it will be easy to attribute the action. But often in matters of administration or personnel one has to note what the Commanding General or Secretary of War advocated in messages to Congress in order to find out what the Adjutant General's Office was doing. Here the functions of the Adjutant General's Office will be discussed in detail, but the preponderance of questions of personnel will require separate treatments for both officer and enlisted concerns. It is through an examination of functional areas that the role of the Adjutant General's Office in the constant controversy and turmoil of the War Department in this period can be properly understood. The last aspect of the Jones period will thus be a treatment of the part he and his office played in the greater Army affairs.

A peculiarity of bureaucracy is that the importance of an office is often (correctly or not), gauged in the number of men that are employed about its business. Here the Adjutant General's Office started slower than the other bureaus. During Calhoun's time there was not even one officer assigned. When Jones took over in 1825, he alone was assigned to the office. Though the business of the office increased, for a long while Jones had to struggle on with the aid of his clerks; he was not assisted by any permanently assigned Army officer. Yet as Senator William Allen of Ohio remarked of this period "...there are
two things that never go back: one the increase of officers, the other the increase of their salaries. We never decrease officer; we never decrease salaries." 12 He was wrong, of course, if one considers the reductions in force of 1821 and the post Civil War period or even the stationary salaries during the periods of inflation; but in the long range, exceptions duly noted, increase was the pattern.

Roger Jones was in charge of the personnel resources of the army, and he saw to it that his own office was taken care of. At first he simply resorted to the device of detailing officers from the line. As early as 1816 it became customary to detail an officer of the rank of First Lieutenant to the Adjutant General's Office. 13 A more detailed discussion of the personnel practice of details will be given later.

By 1836 in connection with an effort to restructure the staffing of the bureaus, Jones asked for one assistant adjutant general, but preferably two to be assigned to the Adjutant General's Office. These were to replace the two officers who had for several years been detailed from the line. 14 By 1838 Jones had succeeded. The law of July 5, 1838 provided for two assistant adjutants general, but as the result of Roger Jones' personnel views these were drawn from the line without vacating their line commissions. It is also interesting to note that they were to be


required to perform as assistant inspectors general as necessary. 15

We will have reason to follow both of the majors that were appointed to the Adjutant General's Office two days after the law was passed. The first, Samuel Cooper, was to play a critical role even during Roger Jones' tenure and finally to succeed him in the office. The second, Lorenzo Thomas, would in turn succeed Cooper, and serve as Adjutant General during the Civil War. 16 Some four captains were attached to the office but not formally assigned. Roger Jones had then a fairly sizeable staff, and one on a firmer basis. The duty for the captains was temporary (as opposed to Jones and the two majors who were permanently to remain with the office). 17 Among the officers so assigned at Roger Jones' request was Irvin McDowell of later Civil War fame. 18 The Adjutant General was to insist on his views as to who was acceptable as an Assistant Adjutant General. Less than a month after asking for McDowell, Jones informed the Secretary that he was "of the opinion that selection for the Adjutant General's Department should as far as possible be made from the class of regimental Adjutants and from officers trained in kindred duties." 19

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16 Roger Jones, July 7, 1838 (but with information of later service of officers involved), "Jones Papers," Record Group 94, National Archives.

17 Ibid.; Roger Jones, Annual Report, 1838, p. 120.


19 Roger Jones, December 12, 1846, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. III, p. 413.
By 1847 Jones secured legislation adding a lieutenant colonel and two captains to his staff. But later in the year, the pressures of the Mexican War resulted in a request that Major Lorenzo Thomas be sent to the field. Jones protested on the grounds that Thomas was the indispensable head of the General Recruiting Service, and with the Commanding General out of the Washington, D. C. area, the Commanding General's aides could not be used to assist the Adjutant General's Office as was still the custom. Jones further noted that in the field Thomas would be entitled by rank and seniority to assignment to the Commanding General's Headquarters. 20

In 1848, Roger Jones returned to the theme of the need for careful selection of Assistant Adjutant Generals. "Selections for Assistant Adjutant Generals should generally be made from the class of Adjutants and other officers, of highest talents, well trained in kindred staff duties, as aides de camp, or who may have acted as Assistant Adjutant Generals, as Chief of Staff officers of Brigades, etc., and who have given proofs of their ability, and aptitude for this description of service." 21

It had been the custom, for a long while, to detail a captain to the Adjutant General's Office to act as Judge Advocate and handle the area of courts martial. By 1849 Roger Jones felt that he needed this arrangement made "more permanent" by the assignment of a major rather

20 Roger Jones, October 5, 1847, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. III, p. 520.

21 Roger Jones, January 19, 1848, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. IV, p. 11. Italics are those of Roger Jones.
than simply the detailing of a captain. 22

That same year Jones summarized the status of his office as having in addition to himself one lieutenant colonel, four majors, and eight captains. The law of March 3, 1847, provided that after hostilities the incumbent in the grade of lieutenant colonel could continue in the position. Jones noted however that the law would abolish the position once it fell vacant. Of course Jones wanted the position to be established permanently. 23

There is the peculiar case of Samuel Cooper. The discussion on Major General Macomb's appointment and Adjutant General Jones' trial will show why Cooper was resented by several in the service at the time. However by March, 1837, Cooper had gained the confidence of Secretary of War Poinsett, and as a result had been put by the secretary in the position of Chief Clerk for the War Department (normally a civilian position). No orders were issued to this effect however, and technically Cooper retained his appointment as Captain in the 4th Regiment of Artillery. He had already served as General Macomb's aide, and finally on July 7, 1838, he was named to the Adjutant General's Office. This resulted in no change of duties, for he remained attached to Secretary Poinsett's office. 24


23 Roger Jones, February 8, 1849, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. IV, p. 165.

24 Roger Jones to McKay (Committee on Expenditure), March 9, 1842, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. III, p. 30; and "Jones Papers," paper dated July 7, 1838, but with information of later service of Samuel Cooper included.
The stage was set for an incident that was both typical and revealing of the personalities of Jones and Cooper, and of the Army's attitude on rank at this time. Roger Jones in his protest to Secretary Poinsett on July 31, 1838, states the issue: "I beg leave respectfully to request your attention to the enclosed semi-official list of the persons to be appointed Second Lieutenant in the Army, just brought down to me by the Messenger of the War Office, with a verbal instruction that the appointments were to be made out this day, which list is signed by Brevet Major Cooper, Assistant Adjutant General, being virtually an order of instructions to the Adjutant General of the Army. I cannot but suppose this inversion of rank and established usage of Military Service to have been purely accidental on the part of Major Cooper, and by no means in accordance with your views and intentions when you recently decided to employ that officer in your immediate office—announcing the new arrangement to me some few days since, it will be remembered no doubt by the Honorable Secretary that I remarked—'You do not intend I suppose Sir, that the Adjutant General will receive orders from the Assistant?' to which you courteously replied—'certainly not. I could not enjoin so unmilitary a procedure as that.' You added that you desired the services of an experienced officer in the Army to be always near you in your office, and that being now accustomed to Major Cooper, you preferred him to any other. But the official act which furnished the subject of this note, places the Adjutant General of the Army, whose station is in the War Office, whose duties habitually bring him in daily association with the head of the Department, and who is the responsible agent of the Secretary of War in all matters relative to 'Military Commissions' as some such
Chief of Staff of kindred duties and functions stationed at the seat of Government, has been for more than thirty years past, in the degrading predicament of receiving orders and instructions from his junior, an officer being an Assistant in his own branch of the Staff, and stationed in the same building and executive department of the Government.  

Cooper did not spend all of his time in the War Department offices. He went to the field during the Florida and Mexican Wars, serving in the former as General Worth's Chief of Staff, and being breveted colonel for his actions in the latter war. Secretary Poinsett was not the last Secretary of War to want Samuel Cooper's close support, Jefferson Davis was to find him invaluable.

It is interesting to note that officers such as Roger Jones, Lorenzo Thomas and Samuel Cooper who found themselves stationed with a War Department Bureau not only were faced with added expenses simply by having to live in the Washington, D. C. area, but were expected to provide hospitality to officers of the Army visiting the capital on whatever business. It was in recognition of this fact that a special per diem pay was made to them.

25 Roger Jones to Secretary Poinsett, July 31, 1838, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. II, p. 361. Italics are those of Roger Jones.


Roger Jones was not only concerned about his office in Washington, D. C. being staffed, he was constantly looking toward the development of Assistant Adjutants General to serve with general officers' staffs in the field. In 1836 he noted the lack of the most basic staffs for Generals Scott and Gaines and the fact that these generals had to copy out their own letters and orders. He recommended a field force of Adjutant General officers be established, suggesting eight as an appropriate number. The next year Secretary Joel R. Poinsett was to continue the appeal for such augmentation in his annual message to Congress, calling the Adjutant General's Department "entirely inadequate" because of the lack of a force in the field. Such field officers were finally provided. As time went on, it even became a device to deliberately bolster a commander in the field who was weak in administration with a good Assistant Adjutant General.

The record of these Adjutant General's Department officers in the field was one that they could be justly proud of. Some thirteen officers served in the field from the Adjutant General's Office in the Mexican War; eleven of them were breveted for gallantry and distinguished service in the presence of the enemy.

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28 Roger Jones, Annual Report, 1836, p. 150.
30 For example General Zachary Taylor was given Captain W. W. S. Bliss who was highly thought of as an Assistant Adjutant General to overcome "Old Rough and Ready's" noted lack of administrative ability. Charles Winslow Elliott, Winfield Scott, the Soldier and the Man (New York, 1837), p. 422.
31 Samuel Cooper to Secretary Floyd, May 31, 1858, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. V, p. 220.
But the Adjutant General's Office was composed of far more than its officer strength. There were also clerks, both military and civilian. The story of the clerical force of the Adjutant General's Office is illustrative of the development of this group of civil servants not only in the War Department, but to an extent in the entire federal establishment. The War Department differed from the rest of the federal officers by its ability to employ enlisted personnel to supplement the Congressionally-authorized clerical force. It became the practice to reimburse these enlisted personnel over and above their normal pay and allowances in order to attract higher qualified personnel and to compensate for the higher cost of living in the Washington, D. C. area.  

Roger Jones started this practice in 1826, shortly after he came to office. On July 7, 1826, he named a Sergeant Low to detached duty with the Adjutant General's Office. It would be unrewarding to follow each appointment of a non-commissioned officer to the office, but the career of Sergeant Gould who was named to the Adjutant General's Office on January 9, 1828, can be recounted in enough detail to illustrate a number of points. He was not born a citizen of the United States and therefore was one of the foreign recruits that, as we shall see, was to be the focus for so much controversy. He served as quartermaster sergeant of the Third Regiment of Artillery from 1824 until Jones selected him to serve in the Adjutant General's Office. We will have cause to return to Sergeant

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As time went on, the number of sergeants increased. By 1835 the number was up to three. 36 The next year the number was "temporarily" up again. As Roger Jones put it, "The amount of public business, has so much increased in this office, as to require additional clerical force, which from time to time has been furnished by the selection of competent non-commissioned officers of the Army to whom additional compensation has been allowed from the contingent fund of the Army. The extra numbers of clerks of this description now usefully and indispensably employed is three and recently a fourth person has been temporarily employed and I may say that the back work upon which he is engaged (the Official Registry of Commissioned Officers—commencing 1815) is indispensably necessary to perfect and perpetuate the Records of War Office." 35

In the same report he noted as a result of "the valuable and indispensable services" of these non-commissioned officers in the Adjutant General's Office, that "if this class of clerks be placed upon a better footing in any of the other Military Bureaux [as regard to pay], no exception could be made, which would be just, and not disparaging to the rest." 36

33 Roger Jones, April, 1836, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. II, p. 125.
34 Roger Jones, January 28, 1835, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. 1, p. 462.
35 Roger Jones, February 9, 1836, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. II, p. 75.
36 Ibid., p. 74.
One reason for the use of non-commissioned officers as clerks was that such help was less visible when repeatedly Congress set out on the search for that most elusive of public monsters—the unnecessary clerk. In fact, much of our knowledge of the clerical force that Roger Jones employed is the result of his answers to Congress or to the Secretaries.

When Roger Jones became the Adjutant General in 1825, he found an office that had been leaderless for years (partially through his own efforts), and a backlog of necessary public business. However, he also found a great asset in two civilian clerks who had been with the office and its predecessors since the War of 1812. We have already noted the difference of opinion between Roger Jones and the Secretaries of War as to whether the Adjutant General's Office was newly created in the Calhoun reforms. We will return to the question in connection with the court-martial of Adjutant General Jones. But it is interesting to note the continuity of clerical force from the old Adjutant and Inspector General's Office of Daniel Parker through the "new" Adjutant General's Office.

There was a stability given to the office by these two clerks. Mr. Brook Williams was named to the office as senior clerk on March 27, 1814. He was to serve there until he died in 1843, some twenty-nine years. When he died, he was succeeded by Mr. John M. Hepburn, who had been named to the office on September 12, 1812. Mr. Hepburn was to serve as senior clerk until 1850, some thirty-eight years in the office. 37

37 Roger Jones, January 13, 1830, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. 1, p. 204. Much of the information on the clerical force of the Adjutant General's Office is contained in the annual report on clerks that was submitted from the Adjutant General's Office through the Secretary of War to the Congress. The following discussion depends on these reports, however, because often the evidence of these reports is negative in nature.
All clerical force in the federal establishment needed to be constantly defended by whoever was chief of their respective office. On March 6, 1822, James Gadsden, who was serving as Adjutant General pending confirmation by the Senate, had to warn John C. Calhoun of the "manifest injury" that reducing the two-man clerical force would cause. Later the same year, Lieutenant Edmund Kirby, aide-de-camp to General Brown and acting Adjutant General, had to repeat that the two clerks in the Adjutant General's Office "are vital to the public service." Calhoun compiled Kirby's report with similar information from the other bureaus, to report to Congress that there were some thirty-four clerks and four messengers employed in his department. The secretary was candid enough to note there was one inefficient clerk—a Colonel (Retired) Henley—who is seventy-four years of age, and has been in the service of the United States, except for an interval of twelve years from the year 1775, up to the present day. He filled several offices in the staff during the Revolution; was aide-de-camp to Lord Sterling; at one point commanded the elite of the Army; and has, subsequently, occupied several important stations under the Government. From his age, he is incapable of performing the duties of a clerk, but, from his recollection of Revolutionary events, he is useful in the examination of Revolutionary

(for example, a given clerk is no longer listed or there is no change in personnel or their pay from one year to the next).

38 Gadsden to Calhoun, March 6, 1822, Calhoun Papers, Vol. VI, p. 728.

claims." Luckily, this inefficient clerk was in the bounty land and payment office and not in the Adjutant General's. ⁴⁰

Roger Jones upon coming to the office immediately requested more clerks pointing out the large backlog of work that could not be touched because of inadequate clerical help. ⁴¹ He succeeded in getting authorization for the employment of another civilian on a temporary basis to be paid twenty-five dollars per month in 1826. This was some two years prior to his bringing to the Secretary of War's notice the legal problems involved in doing this without Congress's consent. It has been noted how permanent some of these "temporary" increases were to become. ⁴² On March 2, 1827, Roger Jones was able to add another permanent clerk, Fredrick Barnard, who had served in a temporary capacity with the office for four and a half years. Because the permanent clerical force was fixed by Congress, it was often the practice to hire "temporary" clerks who remained until they could be incorporated into the permanent force legally. In 1828 Roger Jones noted to the Secretary of War that while it was a long-standing practice in the Army to use enlisted men as temporary clerks, that he seemed prevented from lack of appropriate appropriations from hiring civilians in such a temporary capacity. ⁴³ As Jones was to


make clear, he favored the soldier or veteran over the untrained civilian, but he was willing to take any aid possible to cope with the ever-increasing duties of his office. Mr. Barnard was replaced in 1829 by Mr. John Robb. Robb was in turn replaced within a year by Mr. James L. Addison. Addison was to serve for twenty years before becoming chief clerk. 44

There had been no changes in the permanent clerical force of his office when Jones responded to the inevitable question of possible reduction again in 1835: "I respectfully state, that, so far from reducing the number here, that the public business suffers for the want of more assistants in the performance of the multifarious and greatly augmented duties which are now discharged in the Office of the Adjutant General." A year later he repeated that "...it will be plainly seen that the numbers of clerks and assistants now employed in the Adjutant General's Department cannot at this time be reduced--Although engaged every minute of the official day in the performance of their respective duties, the current business of the Office cannot be kept under control...." 45

Roger Jones must have gotten his message through because by the end of the year he was able to add to his clerical force the names of Mr. J. G. Law, J. B. Lowry, Charles Little, and J. A. Gould. From the moment former Sergeant Gould was employed as a civilian clerk, he gave the


45 Roger Jones, February 9, 1836, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. II, p. 81. This was a very long letter and contained extracts from earlier letters sent. Italics are those of Roger Jones.
Adjutant General cause for concern over his drinking problem. In May of the next year Gould was dismissed and his place taken in turn by Benjamin Holms (until the end of November), and Robert Swann. Though Gould was temporarily rehired to fill in when Little left, he was not employed by Roger Jones for "the sole cause—and a very sufficient one was the sin and folly of Intemperance!" Sergeant Gould had fallen victim to a disability that too many fellow soldiers of the period suffered. 46

Mr. Charles Little also felt the Adjutant General's displeasure. Jones informed the Secretary of War in 1839 that "Mr. Charles Little is incompetent, and possesses none of the qualifications of a good clerk except the appearance of a fair hand—as a copyist he is exceedingly inaccurate, sometimes omitting important words, and even sentences, and such is the trouble in examining and revising his work that it often occurred when I desired the gentlemen of the office to employ him as a Copyist, they have declined doing so, saying it was far preferable to copy their work themselves than to examine and correct any manuscript that came from his pen." 47

The number of clerks remained at seven from 1836 to 1847 with variations only as one clerk replaced another. In 1842, Congress again examined the size of the clerical force. This time they went so far as to require an annual report, not only on the number of clerks but on their respective performances. These annual reports have been considered the


start of a system of efficiency ratings for the civil service. 48

In accordance with the dictates of Congress, Roger Jones had a sad situation to report in 1843:

In consequence of severe illness, one of the junior clerks has been absent, during the autumn for several weeks and for nearly three months was able to render but very little service. Of the two senior clerks appointed to this branch of the War Office in 1812 and 1813 [sic], heretofore well known as able efficient and faithful servants of the public, one in consequence of impaired health and constitution, has not been able during the past year, to discharge scarcely a moiety of the official business which formerly devolved upon him. The other veteran clerk of nearly thirty years service, it appears has also been unable to keep up his work in such manner, and as promptly as the regular routine of official duties demand. The business allotted to the desks of each of these clerkships, is less than in former years, been transferred to other persons belonging to the office—which succession of labor to them, necessarily tends to keep their subdivisions of duties occasionally more in arrears than should ever be the use. The current business of this office, stated and incidental, will not justify a reduction of the number of clerks at this time, as now authorized by law. Nor can I recommend the discharge of any faithful veteran clerk, who has devoted all his best days to the service of the Government. But I will respectfully suggest for consideration, the expediency, as regards the public interest, and the justice of the measure, with respect to persons; of some legal provision for the comfort of the meritorious clerks, who in the decline of life, may be found not fully competent to the duties of their station. 49

These clerks had served under Jones for some sixteen years, and neither the clerks nor the officers could retire with any pensions as of 1843 when the Adjutant General wrote. He had obviously resorted to the expediency of an on-the-job retirement for those he could not legally give


a pension to. Mr. Brook Williams was to die in office that same year.

Replacing Mr. Williams was to involve Roger Jones in a direct and protracted conflict with Secretary of War James M. Porter. At the time of Williams' death, Jones was absent in his nearby home state of Virginia, and the office in the hands of Assistant Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas. However the event was not unexpected, and Jones had left explicit instructions as to how to proceed after the clerks had each been advanced in rank and a vacancy opened up in the lowest rank. He recommended in writing former Sergeant John Gould as having "high and peculiar qualifications, the great experience and practical knowledge of the multifarious Returns of the Army, and in the military business of the Office generally." 50 This is the same Sergeant Gould who had been dismissed earlier for drunkenness. "But Mr. G. has repented; he is now a perfectly sober man and for nearly three years has been a member of the good fraternity 'The Total Abstinence Society'--In vain would the good works of the benevolent of every land--of the Father Mathewes of the old world and of this, if the Reformed Drunkard be put under the banms, and for ever after be denied any participation in the offices of Government. We are told in Holy Writ that 'joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than ninety and nine just who need no repentence.'" 51


51 Ibid., p. 195. Italics are those of Roger Jones.
Yet the Secretary was not inclined to listen either to Holy Writ or to Roger Jones. This despite the fact that Adjutant General appealed to the precedent that he had never been refused the personal selection of his own staff by any previous secretary. It seems the Secretary "had another in view—the son of an old friend, whom he was desirous to appoint Chief Clerk." Roger Jones pointed out that the Adjutant General's Office was not at the time organized with the position of a Chief Clerk, only a senior clerk.

In spite of his objections, Jones was forced to accept Mr. Moss, the Secretary's choice. However, the new clerk remained with the Adjutant General's Office for barely two weeks. He was transferred, and again there was a vacancy in the office. This gave Roger Jones an opportunity to lecture the Secretary of War. He noted that he must "have a competent, proper military clerk appointed—one who was well trained and already conversant with the very peculiar Army duties to be performed."

His arguments in Mr. Gould's defense are revealing of how he had staffed his office. Jones contended that "due regard to the public interest—due regard to the performance of a certain portion of the official labor in this military bureau will not justify the employment of any novice taken from civil life—I can select in any Regiment non-commissioned officers, and even privates, better qualified, and who would be able to render service in this office, than any civilian, whose

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52 Ibid., p. 193.

53 Ibid., p. 194.
services can be obtained for the paltry salary of $800." This is a theme that Jones returned to a couple of days later, stating that Gould had been "well trained in the practical duties of an important military branch of the Adjutant General's Office--being such duties as no citizen clerk can know--or be able to learn for years--if ever."

Despite all this and the strong urging of General Scott and Assistant Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas, the Secretary held firm. After all the political spirit of the age was patronage. There is some truth in Roger Jones' bitter conclusion: "You tell me Sir, in plain English, that you have lent a confiding ear to A or B to anyone--save the responsible officer of the Army who best knows the merits of the case! and whose only aim and interest are for the public service."55

Roger Jones was fighting against his times. Some two years later the Secretary of War was William L. Marcy, the gentleman who was said to have coined the phrase "to the victor belong the spoils." Secretary Marcy was to write a friend that "the President has ordered a thorough investigation in regard to the clerks in all the Departments and there is to be quite a sweep--I am altogether the most moderate man in the country."56 But there was one advantage that the bureau chiefs had over the spoils politicians--Roger Jones was there long after Porter and

54 Roger Jones, October 10, 1832, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. III, p. 199. Italics are those of Roger Jones.

55 Roger Jones, October 12, 1843, "Jones Papers," Record Group 94, National Archives. Italics are those of Roger Jones.

56 As quoted in White, Jacksonians, p. 311.
Marcy had left office. The Adjutant General continued to hire Sergeant Gould on a temporary basis after Secretary Porter was gone, and in 1851 he was lecturing a new secretary on the proprieties of hiring clerks. But the clerical force had to be increased in order to handle the increased work load after the Mexican War. In 1848, the work was handled by temporary clerks being put on the force and by the loan of an experienced clerk from the Secretary's own office. This situation was remedied by taking the staff up to a total of nine permanent clerks in 1849 and to ten by 1851. (Sergeant Gould had been put on as a temporary clerk at least twice in the process but was never again listed as a permanent clerk.)

The very fact that the War Department could employ either civilian clerks or enlisted men in the same positions resulted in a pendulum effect. When the Congress was concerned with the rigid enforcement of the limits on Army strength there was a tendency to "civilianize" positions. When the number of clerks around Washington, D. C. was the complaint of Congress, there was an effort to replace civilians with uniformed personnel. For example, Secretary of War Charles M. Conrad informs us that in 1851, the latter situation prevailed.

We noted earlier Senator Allen's comment in 1849 as to the increase of officers and their salaries. Roger Jones, in his fight for more


As quoted in White, Jacksonians, p. 378.
officers and clerks, did not neglect the fact that these men needed a spokesman at court to press their interests or they would be swamped by the rising costs of living in the nation's capital.

As early as 1819, Adjutant and Inspector General Parker was asking that a reduction in the salaries of "veteran clerks" Williams and Hepburn be restored. 60 Mr. Williams was receiving the sum of $1,150 per year, and Mr. Hepburn some $1,000. 61 The salaries were to remain the same, despite pleas from the Adjutant General, until 1836--fifteen years later.

In 1827, Roger Jones proceeded to address an appeal to General Samuel Smith, a personal friend of his and a member of the Senate from Maryland. He complained that his clerks "have seen their fellow labourers in other Departments advanced in their compensation whilst they continue stationary." 62 At almost the same point, he was suggesting that a third clerk be added to his force by the Secretary of War. Jones asked for the authorization to increase the total allocation for clerical salaries by some $1,450. This would allow Mr. Williams to receive that amount, raising his salary to comparable rates to those paid in other offices. Further, Mr. Hepburn's salary could be raised to $1,200, with some $900 for the "new" position. In fact the added clerk that Roger Jones had in mind, one Mr. Barnard, had been employed


"temporarily" for four and a half years (two and a half years more than Jones had headed the office). Mr. Barnard had been receiving $300 per year as "temporary" help.63

On March 2, 1827, the Congress honored Jones' request, but at an increase of only $800 to pay for a newly authorized clerk. The senior clerks got no raise, and the position of the junior clerk saw a turnover of incumbents that was uncharacteristic of the Adjutant General's Office. Mr. Barnard was replaced by Mr. William P. Page, who was in turn replaced first by John Robb and then by James L. Addison in 1830. Before the last gentleman named came to the office, Jones made another attempt to raise the third clerk's salary. He pointed out the discrepancy in pay between the Adjutant General's Office and the Paymaster General's Office.64

In the year 1834 the clerks of the various executive departments took matters into their own hands. They addressed a memorial to the Congress on their own behalf. Among the signers were Williams, Hepburn, and Addison of the Adjutant General's Office. Their plea went as follows:

That at the time of the passage of the act of the 20th April 1818, authorizing the employment of clerks in the several offices, the various rates of salary allowed were intended, and, doubtless, believed to be just and fair compensations for the respective services to be rendered; so great, however, has been the subsequent change of circumstances, consequent upon the growth and prosperity of our country, and the increased extent, importance, and

64 Roger Jones, January 13, 1830, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. I, p. 204.
responsibility of our official duties, that the propriety, and even the justice, of a correspondent increase of compensation will, it is believed, be readily conceded. Your memorialists feel no hesitation in declaring their conviction, founded on the experience of years, that the salaries generally, as now established, are not a fair and just compensation for the services required, and that they are insufficient, even when aided by the most rigid economy, for the decent and respectable maintenance of families, and the suitable education of offspring, which our stations in society justify, and which our official relations evidently require. Taking into view the nature of the services rendered by your memorialists, and the qualifications necessary for their efficient performance, they trust it will not be deemed unreasonable to expect their compensation to be such as will enable them to make that prudent provision for the future, which should be within the reach of all; and they feel this expectation strengthened by the consideration, that by the very nature of their employment they are cut off from the pursuit of other avocations, by which their slender incomes might be rendered adequate to their support. Combined thus to an entire dependence on the liberality of the representatives of the people, in whose service and by whose authority they are employed, the undersigned respectfully request that this subject may receive the favorable consideration of your honorable body, and that such increase of compensation may be granted, as to your wisdom may seem fit.  

Despite this Roger still had to continue to plea with the Secretary of War in 1835 and 1836 in another effort to raise his clerks' wages.

"... I more than once before have represented the hard fate and just claims of the veteran clerks who so assiduously labor in this office, nor should I have now so long deferred the renewal of my poor efforts in their behalf, had I not supposed that some general legislation would have taken place, respecting the increase and just equalization of the compensation of the several clerks of respective classes employed in the

various Departments at Washington--Perceiving that the respected head of the War Department will, on this occasion as in other like cases in other Bureaus, favorably consider the claims of the clerks employed in the Adjutant General's Office, to the end, that their compensation may be increased according to the rates recently provided by law, for the clerks in a kindred Bureau of the War Department—-that of the Office of the Commissary General of Subsistence; or according to the provisions of the Bill, just reported by a Committee of Congress for the better compensation of the Clerks in the Quartermaster General's Office.66

This time the Adjutant General's request was answered, for in 1836 his clerical staff received their long awaited pay raise. This established the salaries from that date until 1851 the year before Roger Jones died in office.

Yet to put in perspective the amounts that the Adjutant General's clerks received or that Jones asked for, we might have reference to a Congressional Report of 1836: "A salary of $900 will support a single man in this city, and if he be prudent, afford him a moderate income. A married man without children can barely subsist upon it!" Cave Johnson reported for the House Committee on Ways and Means that a salary of $1,000 or less was "wholly inadequate for a family of ordinary size."

The Secretary of War, Lewis Cass, reinforced these comments with suggestions of his own that all wages be increased at least over the $1,000 poverty level. Such was the final determination of Congress—five of the

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66 Roger Jones, February 2, 1835, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. 1, p. 517; Roger Jones, February 9, 1836, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. II, p. 81. Italics are those of Roger Jones.
seven clerks in the Adjutant General's Office were given the minimum $1,000. 67

It is indicative of the temper of the times that Roger Jones noted in his appeal for temporary hire of a clerk that "It may excite astonishment perhaps, but it is nevertheless true that even last Sunday one of the Clerks of this Office asked leave for the apartments to be opened so that he might labor on the Sabbath in order to hasten the completion of his Books." 68

The hours that the clerks worked did in fact come to public attention. At least by 1836 the Congress felt the need to legislate on the question. All offices were to be open from the first of October to the first of April eight hours, and at least ten hours the rest of the year. However as this affected the regular clerk, it was basically a 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. day. 69

Office space became over the years less and less adequate to the requirements of the War Department. In July of 1819, Mr. Williams and Mr. Hepburn had the pleasure of moving into a new office building. However by the time Mr. Williams died in 1843, that same office building was no longer able to contain all the expanded bureaus. The basic problems involved were the lack of easy communication with the staff separated, and (critical to the Adjutant General) the insecure storage of the different

67 As quoted in White, Jacksonians, p. 381.


69 As quoted in White, Jacksonians, p. 400.
War Department records. In the Annual Report of 1842, Secretary of War John C. Spencer pleaded for a new building. Secretary of War James M. Porter made similar recommendations in 1843. Secretary William Wilkins in 1844 called for "additional buildings, for the safety of the records of this department, as well as for the ready and convenient dispatch of its public business. The present occupation of the scattered private houses by the heads and the officers of the various branches of the department, whilst it does not promote true economy, involves the highly valuable archives in continued peril, and gives great personal inconveniences to the public officers, as well as to our citizens having intercourse and business with the several bureaus. This is not one of those exigencies from which we can escape by postponement; for every hour the mischief advances, and the necessity of reform urges upon us with the more force."  

The identical concern of secretary after secretary simply reflects the complaints of the permanent bureau chiefs, particular the Bureau Chief in charge of records, the Adjutant General. Much effort through the century can be attributed to the Adjutant's General's interest in a safe place to store the records of the War Department. The Adjutant Generals remembered the administrative problems caused by the loss of records in two previous fires.

73 Roger Jones, February 9, 1836, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. II, p. 78.
Records were vital to the Adjutant General. They formed the very basis for the essential nature and function of the office. The Adjutant General's Office was primarily an office of records. From records stemmed all the various functions that by 1826 had accumulated in the Adjutant General's Office, and from records many functions would evolve. From keeping the personnel records of the Army there was a progression to handling the matters of recruitment, promotion, and stationing. The other main development is that the Adjutant General was expected to issue orders for the Army. This naturally involved the Adjutant Generals in publishing and ultimately in the central issues of command and coordination of the Army. The records, personnel, and orders functions were developed not only before the Calhoun "creation" of the Adjutant General's Office in 1821, but before the Continental Army adopted the position of Adjutant General.

Part of Roger Jones' problem when he took over the office was the vagueness of the functions assigned to it. He complained that nowhere in regulations or even written down and officially recorded were its functions. He had to appeal to what he called "the common law of the War Department" to define his duties. He noted in 1826 "In the absence of a lawful Adj. Genl., the temporary incumbent it is presumed did not think it important to organize the office (which yet remains to be done)." No mention of course is made of his own role in preventing the appointment of a lawful incumbent. 74

74 Roger Jones, March, 1826, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. 1, p. 49.
The biggest problem Roger Jones faced in 1826 was bringing the office under his control and making it do as he wanted while at the same time facing the large backlog of work that had accumulated. The problems Jones summarized as:

1. The several Returns exhibiting the casualties common to the Army for the year 1824 are not recorded nor are the same character of Returns recorded for the year 1825 which as may be easily imagined is at once irregular and exceedingly inconvenient.
2. The alphabetical Register ofCommissioned Officers of the Army formerly or at present in the service is very incomplete. It is an Important Record and should be regularly kept up.
3. The Inspection Returns of Companies from 1815 to 1825 should be assorted, arranged and bound to facilitate the innumerable calls for information which daily occur.
4. The names of Recruits from 1816 to 1821 ought to be entered and alphabetically recorded in a descriptive book. The absence of this record is now sensibly felt, whilst seeking and collecting the information called for by the Resolution of the 27th of December [1825].
5. The force of the Office is so inadequate to the demands of the Office that the blank Returns necessary for and annually distributed to the Army have not been dispatched because the clerk on whom it devolves to discharge such duties could not divert so much time from other Regular and incidental service as would be required to inscribe the various superscriptions, and for the same reason the Military laws recently received and destined for the Officers of the Army have not yet been sent out, etc., etc.75

However, Roger Jones was not satisfied in simply getting caught up in the work of the office, for as he reported in 1828 "Shortly after I entered upon the duties of Adjutant General of the Army (in March of 1825), I commenced a system of Tabular Record, with the hope of

exhibiting in a condensed form, everything relating to the Army of the United States, since the adoption of the construction, so far, as concerned its organization under whatever might fall under the head of Casualties, or Alterations, as incidental to the service. If it should be necessary, promptly to know or report for example what was the organization of the Army, according to the Act of September 29, 1789, or under the act of May 9, 1794, or at any other period previous to the War, and for a long time subsequently or what was the number engaged and the names and number etc. of those who fell on the assault of Fort Recovery in 1794—or in several of the battles of the late War, etc. it would be found, without the consummation of this plan that the Office of the Adjutant General of the Army (nor the War Office) could not promptly or properly furnish such Records, is observable (to a certain extent) in the annual registry of Enlistments, of Discharges and Desertions etc. for although the Returns and some fugitive Tabular exhibits may be found which in a detached way may show these results still no where in a regular condensed and complete annual Record do they appear. ... The assistants and clerks employed in this Office have progressed in their important back work since I first commenced it, as fast as the current duties of the office would possibly permit—but during the present year, they have not been able to devote one day to such extra official labor."

Perhaps the most significant innovation that Roger Jones introduced, from the perspective of understanding his office was the creation

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76 Roger Jones, November 25, 1828, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. II, p. 78. Italics are those of Roger Jones.
of the book record of the reports and letters he sent to the successive secretaries of war concerning the business of the Adjutant General's Office itself.

The basic nature of the Adjutant General's Office according to Roger Jones was as "the Depository of the Records of the Army of the United States." He contended repeatedly, and at some personal loss, that in 1821 when the headquarters of the Major General of the Army was brought to Washington there was an addition of duties to the Adjutant General's Office. He contended that all the old duties to the Adjutant General's Office and its predecessor remained the same, and that the Adjutant General retained the direct contact with and responsibility to the Secretary of War. In regard to the new duties, Jones maintained that for convenience and to avoid duplication that would result from the Commanding General retaining his own Adjutant General and a separate set of returns, the Adjutant General of the Army performed these services. Roger Jones looked upon the headquarters of the Commanding General as being only temporary in the capital. Therefore Jones contended he was performing services for the Commanding General as a convenience on a temporary basis. It was only in the capacity of performing these extra duties that Jones agreed that he was under the Commanding General and subject to his orders. In all other things, that is all the permanent duties which pertained to the Adjutant General's Office and the Adjutant and Inspector General's Office before it, the office functioned as a bureau of the War Department, separate from and independent of the
Commanding General, and responsible directly to the Secretary of War.

Concerning the records function, it will be necessary to note the nature of the record-keeping procedure in the office through the course of its history. The Adjutant General’s Office and its predecessors used what is termed the "book method" for its records. They maintained large copy books into which correspondence was entered. There would be a copy book of bound correspondence of letters sent, letters received, correspondence and data of the recruiting service, etc. The books were of two types—"press copies," that is, copies made from pressing tissue paper on the original letter being sent out while the ink was still wet, and then bound up to form book records. The other type was the result of a laborious transcribing of each document of the clerks into already bound and prepared books.

There were several inherent difficulties to the book system of recordkeeping. Only one person could work on one volume at a given time. That meant that as letters were received, for example, there might be a considerable backlog of material waiting to be copied into the "letters received" book. While one clerk was copying the letters, all the others were prevented from checking that volume for reference to past correspondence. When the volume was free for examination, the clerk checking for material had to go through the entire thing because within volumes, letters were by date of dispatch or receipt, not

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Roger Jones, March, 1826, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. 1, p. 29; Roger Jones, February 9, 1836, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. 11, p. 75; Roger Jones, "Extract of the Adjutant General’s Letter to the Secretary of War of January 28, 1837, on the subject of his claim," "Jones Papers."
subdivided by subject. This requirement to search through the volumes not only consumed a great deal of the clerks' time, but eventually endangered the preservation of the records. There is only so much handling that records can take before they became unusable. This was particularly true of the "press copy."

In the case of incoming correspondence there was an individual hard copy letter. These originals, after they had been copied out into the proper copybook, were folded so as to be able to fit into the "pigeon holes" that were used for sorting correspondence. A number of letters together would be bound up by red cord. Though "red tape" did not originate in the United States Army, "pigeon holing" a request became a standard American expression. Even with all the difficulties involved in the system of recordkeeping, the "Book Period" was to last down to the 1880s. 78

There was little alteration in this system whatever else might occur. Despite all the impact that John C. Calhoun had on the War Department's organization and the personal sway he exercised over its staff, he did not measurably affect the records kept by the Adjutant General's Office. As W. Edwin Hemphill put it in his introduction to Volume Two of the Calhoun Papers, "Calhoun left unchanged the War Department's major files of incoming letters and most prominent series of letterbook copies of outgoing correspondence. He evidently found sufficient for his own

78 The holdings of the National Archives for the Adjutant General's Office are the remains of this process (Record Group 94). For ready reference, see Lucille H. Fendell and Elizabeth Bethel, Preliminary Inventory of the Records of the Adjutant General's Office (Washington, D.C., 1949).
needs, with few exceptions, the records management practices that had been developed under his predecessors."  

Roger Jones had occasion to list the respective duties of his clerks some time after he came to office. The duties were defined by the records handled in each case. Mr. Williams, for example, had to concern himself with: 1. the registry of commissioned officers; 2. promotions and appointments; 3. military correspondence (letter books); 4. reports and official communications; and 5. consolidated returns (No. 1).

Mr. Hepburn, the second clerk, was concerned with the promulgation of orders and the registry and entry of letters received. He also had to examine the files in order to answer "the innumerable inquiries daily made" with reference to any soldier who was or might have been in the Army.

The third "temporary" clerk was involved with the upkeep of the files on: 1. the original proceedings of General Courts Martial; 2. the registry of deceased soldiers; 3. the registry of desertions; and 4. the registry of discharges.

Both the officers and the non-commissioned officers that were detailed to the Adjutant General's Office were assigned responsibility for the same files. These consisted of: 1. the recruiting service; 2. muster rolls and monthly returns; and 3. consolidated returns (No. 2).  

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80 Roger Jones, undated, "Miscellaneous Records," Record Group 94, National Archives, 4 Statutes at Large 283.
In 1836 Roger Jones made a statement of these and other duties performed by the Adjutant General's Office to Secretary of War Cass. His statement read:

1. The Adjutant General's Office is the depository of all the Records, which refer to the personnel of the Army in War and peace; and of the military history of every commissioned officer and enlisted soldier from the earliest period of the Government as far as they may have escaped two conflagrations of the War Office.

2. It is here, where all military appointments are made out, under the authority of the Secretary of War.

3. It is in this office where the duties connected with the Recruiting service are conducted, where the names of all enlisted soldiers are enrolled, their enlistments and descriptive lists entered, where the deaths, discharges, desertions, etc. are noted and recorded.

4. It is in this Office, where all the monthly Returns of the Troops, and Muster rolls of every company are received, examined and preserved for the Department of War, as required by the 13th and 19th Articles of War and paragraphs 875, 878, and 879 of the General Regulations of the Army.

5. Where all applications for pensions are received and examined previously to being sent to the Pension Office for the decision of the proper authority.

6. Here the 'Original Proceedings' of Courts Martial, which the law requires to be preserved by the Secretary of War are deposited and entered in conformity with the 90th Article of War and paragraph 880 of the General Regulations of the Army.

7. Where the inventory of the effects of deceased officers and soldiers are forwarded, and recorded as required by the 94th and 95th Articles of War and paragraphs 1490 and 1491 of the General Regulations of the Army.

8. In this Office are registered--All appointments in the Army, Promotions, Resignations, Deaths, Dismissals, All commissioned Officers and their commissions.

9. This Office is charged with the publication and distribution of the Official Army Register under the Secretary of War, pursuant to resolutions of the Senate.

10. Here are prepared and submitted Special Reports to the Secretary of War relative to 'Military Commissions', etc., etc., etc.

11. The annual returns of the Militia of the several states and territories, of the Ordnance, Arms, Accoutrements and munitions of the War appertaining to the same required by law to be made to the President of the United States are here received and deposited for safekeeping.
12. The General Returns of the Militia annually required to be laid before Congress in conformity with the Act of March 2, 1802, are prepared and consolidated in this office.

13. Here, the appointments and commissions of the Officers of the Militia of the District of Columbia are registered and distributed, etc., etc., etc.\(^81\)

In 1843, Secretary of War Porter in his Annual Report was more succinct. The Adjutant General's Office according to him, dealt with orders, records, and recruiting.\(^82\)

The duties of the Adjutant General's Office were not static. As we have already seen, the personal style of Roger Jones was to increase the functions and usefulness of the Adjutant General's Office. But even without any increase in duties, the Adjutant General would have found his work and need for employees increased. In 1835, Jones had been in office for ten years. He looked back to the creation of the Adjutant General's Office and commented:

The amount of business in this office has greatly increased, since 1821, when the Head Quarters of the Army were first established here near the War Office. The aggregate number of letters and orders written, recorded and multiplied during three years ending December, 1820, or prior to the reduction in 1821, it appears to be about 35,000 and the aggregate of the like documents for three years ending December 31st, 1834, is more than 10,000. And since I first entered the Office in March 1825 the amount of business in every division of the duties has nearly doubled. The number of letters for example endorsed and entered in 1833 and 1834 is much more than doubled the numbers received and filed in 1825 and 1826. The multiplication of 'Orders and Special Orders', their distribution and recording, which, formerly was the business of one clerk, now requires the labour of two persons; and such is the increase of the current and

\(^{81}\) Roger Jones, February 9, 1836, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. II, p. 78. Italics are those of Roger Jones.

\(^{82}\) J. M. Porter, Annual Report, 1843, p. 51.
Miscellaneous duties required to be performed by the same persons, that instead of recording the Orders as fast as they are written and distributed which should be the case, they are sometimes not recorded for months after their date. 83

It might be felt that Roger Jones was an empire builder, as bureaucrats go, and his complaints of an increase would be self-interested pleading. Yet he was supported by the contention of Secretary of the Navy James K. Paulding's comments about the federal establishment in 1839:

The rapid growth of the country produces a corresponding accession to the duties of every department of Government and every public servant. The multiplication and complexity of laws involving new powers, new restraints, and new duties, call for additional labor and circumspection. The great increase of public records and documents renders all reference to the past more embarrassing; and the frequent calls of Congress imposing a necessity for researchers, which comprehended the history and transactions of the department from its first organization, all contribute to render the duties of every clerk more difficult, complicated, and laborious. 84

Over the years the office of the Adjutant General tended to pick up various duties of an administrative nature for both the War Department and the Commanding General's Headquarters. A discussion of miscellaneous duties and the changes in procedure to the end of Jones' administration would be in order. These duties were records, printing, publishing and the mails. These will be treated chronologically. One of the functions the Adjutant General's Office acquired was that of handling printing for the War Department. This began with Adjutant

83 Roger Jones, February 2, 1835, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. I, p. 503. Italics are those of Roger Jones.

84 As quoted in White, Jacksonians, p. 7.
General's related items such as Army Register, general orders, blank inspection returns, blank muster rolls. These printing requirements also included Army laws and regulations. 85

The printing requirements and the need to receive returns involved the Adjutant General's Office in the use of the mails. This was on two levels. The Adjutant General's Office dealt with the United States Post Office, and as early as 1827 had franking privileges. 86 But the Adjutant General also became the initial recipient for all correspondence, and therefore received the responsibility for internal distribution within the War Department. This task became more of a difficulty as the department expanded and some of the bureaus were housed elsewhere than in the one central building. The Adjutant General also had the responsibility of sending mail out in the name of the War Department. This involved the Adjutant General's signing documents that did not concern him either personally or functionally, but rather originated with action officers in other offices and bureaus.

By 1832 the Adjutant General's Office had become less than satisfied with the index system it had. At first it was determined that the simple alphabetical indexes that were then in use for the record books were not adequate. What was suggested was a subject index to supplement the existing ones. 87

85 James Gadsden to Calhoun, November 10, 1821, Calhoun Papers, Vol. VI, p. 503.
86 Raphael P. Thian, Legislative History of the General Staff of the Army of the United States from 1775 to 1901 (Washington, D. C., 1901), Act of March 2, 1827; 4 Statutes at Large 238.
87 As quoted in White, Jacksonians, p. 546.
But 1832 was not a good year to think of adding work. On June 7, 1832, a pension act was passed for the Revolutionary War veterans which meant extra work for the Adjutant General's Office verifying service records of persons submitting claims. 88

In 1836, Secretary Cass was still advocating to the Congress the idea of new indexes. He need not only "talent to suggest and mature the best plan," but also more clerks. 89

The publishing duties expanded. By the 1840s manuals had been written for each of the arms (Infantry, Cavalry, and Artillery). These were printed and distributed at the Adjutant General's directive. (Cooper authored a work, Tactics for the Militia). These were distributed to the Army, but without increased budgets, the Adjutant General's Office could not satisfy the requests for the same from the state militia. 90 This prompted Winfield Scott to make repeated recommendations to the Congress to this effect. 91

The Mexican War provided several problems in getting the returns and records from the field back to the Adjutant General's Office. Roger Jones was used to getting, at fairly short intervals, such things as periodical returns, muster rolls, and reports. By compiling these from each unit in the Army, he was able to report in tabular form the actual strength of the Army. It was of course just when interest was highest

88 Lewis Cass, Annual Report, 1832, p. 31.
89 As quoted in White, Jacksonians, p. 546.
90 Winfield Scott, Annual Report, 1844, p. 131.
91 Winfield Scott, Annual Report, 1851, p. 163.
in this sort of statistic that the system faltered. In December, 1847, Jones estimated that nine-tenths of the regiments were six months behind in reporting returns. This figure included regular as well as volunteer units. "The interruption of the communication with the army in the heart of Mexico, and the distant stations of other commands beyond the limits of the United States, account in a great degree for the delays and failure of many of the missing returns."  

After the war, things settled into routine again. The returns came in on a regular basis, and the Adjutant General could turn his attention to other things.

The administration of the militia was given to the Adjutant General to handle, and each of the states made whatever returns that were made to the Adjutant General's Office. Yet it did not seem to be an area that attracted the greater part of Roger Jones' attention and effort. In this he was little different from the rest of the Army or even the nation.

On the whole, the militia system of the second quarter of the nineteenth century was an object of ridicule. Repeated stories circulated of militia musters that were more drinking sessions than drills. The troops assembled were often lacking in weapons and were a joke or scandal to the local populace. When units were equipped, it was often the volunteer units who spent their own money on gaudy and fantastic uniforms—providing more targets for the local wits and satirists.  

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92 Roger Jones, Annual Report, 1847, p. 83.  
93 Marcus Cunliffe, Soldiers and Civilians (Boston, 1968), pp. 186-188.
The militia fell into two categories: enrolled and volunteer. The enrolled militia was often a purely theoretical paper army. The states were required to make returns to Roger Jones, and they often did so on the basis of their eligible population, whether or not those reported received any arms or training. The concept of a universal service among free adult males was retreating further into the realm of pure theory.

Arising in the different states were "volunteer militia" units. Many different motivations went into the participation in such organizations. The desire for military uniforms and pomp was one appeal as was the social usefulness of militia rank. The social and political advantages of the associations formed under the name "militia" need to be stressed. The very fact that the volunteer units were at times ridiculed as drinking and marching societies indicates the fact that these actives had their appeal to some.

There were attempts to improve the militia system during this period, and to make it into a more militarily useful organization. Shortly after Roger Jones became Adjutant General and had the responsibility for the militia, there was a board convened to revise the militia structure. The board was headed by Winfield Scott, and included Charles J. Nourse, formerly the acting Adjutant General. Their proposals suggested a completely new system with an Adjutant General of Militia. Under him each state would have an Adjutant General of its own. The different states would receive quotas of militia troops they would have to raise and maintain. The state governments could go about the recruitment any way they wished: enlisting volunteers, paying bounties, conscripting troops. The federal government in turn was to provide more
adequate federal support and armaments and pay for annual training. Such a comprehensive plan was doomed from the start because it inconvenience too many people. It remained simply a plan.94

The returns that Roger Jones received from the different states varied. The interest and tradition of the militia sank to such a low level in 1831 in Delaware that they did away with it altogether.95

In 1840, the War Department presented by far the most extensive plan for the militia since the 1790s. All able-bodied white male citizens between 20 and 44 years of age were to be enrolled in the mass of the militia. From this mass there were to be distinguished two forces: the Active and Reserve militias, each of approximately 100,000 men. Service with each would be for four years, with one-fourth passing each year from the Active to the Reserve. Each state would, on the basis of the population, be levied a quota to fill the initial requirements for the Active militia and to replace any losses that occurred to the force.

Only the Active militia would receive training, and this was to be in the form of federal service under Regular Army officers for some ten to thirty days a year. Again the need for such a plan did not seem to outweigh the cost and inconvenience it would have caused.96 And so the militia continued to go on, as it had before, a subject of ridicule and


95 Ibid., Appendix, p. 9.

96 Ibid., p. 6.
a series of tabular records in Jones' office, and not much more. 97

Roger Jones presided over an office that provided administrative support to the War Department and its bureaus as well as for the headquarters of the Commanding General. The diverse nature of these administrative duties have been presented here as Jones became concerned with them. The Adjutant General's efforts to secure the proper officers to his office has been dealt with and the efforts to provide for assistant Adjutant Generals in the field have been noted. The use of enlisted personnel in clerical positions was seen to provide the office with the necessary work force despite Congressional restrictions. The civilian clerical force was one of Roger Jones' great assets and constant concerns. Not only the employment of these civil servants has been noted, but the efforts of their supervisor to secure for them adequate wages. We have seen that many of their duties have hinged around the handling of records, but there were also the secondary administrative duties involving indexing, printing, publishing, and the mails.

Finally, the Adjutant General's Office was seen as the administrator of the militia. But the main business of the Adjutant General's Office, and the duties that occupied the great majority of the staff's time was the area of personnel. The maintenance of records on the personnel of the Army logically involved the handling of the vital areas of enlistments or appointments, promotions, and dismissals.

97Cunliffe, Soldiers, pp. 74, 191-192.
CHAPTER III

ENLISTED PERSONNEL, 1825-1852

The Adjutant General's Office was the office of personnel for the Army. This meant that unlike any of the other bureaus, the Adjutant General's Office was concerned every day in making decisions and taking actions that affected every person in the Army. Therefore, everyone had an opinion on how the office was performing its duties. When members of the Army spoke of the bureaus' having great power they usually meant the Adjutant General's Office. Other bureaus had functions, the responsibility for the dispersal of monies, and the supply of essentials to the Army. The Adjutant General's Office, however, directly affected every officer and every soldier in the Army in those matters the individual took most personally and vitally: recruitment, promotion, and dismissal.

There was, however, a difference between the personal concerns of the officers and the enlisted men. This extended even to the vocabulary used. Officers were appointed, while enlisted men were recruited. The problems of the Adjutant General were often too many applicants for officer status, and too few for the enlisted ranks. Often at the end of officers' military careers, the Adjutant General's Office was faced with a reluctance to resign their commissions (no matter how far past his prime the officer might be). On the other hand, the enlisted ranks
provided all too often the problem of mass desertion. The difference in the concerns of officers and enlisted men suggest that they be treated separately.

The great majority of the persons in the Army were enlisted. The Adjutant General had the responsibility to maintain records of the numbers of troops. Often these were what Roger Jones called "tabular records," lists of troops in each regiment with the numbers recorded of enlistments, desertions, and releases. Traditionally, the recruiting effort was the responsibility of the respective regiments. But this system was more suited to the settled life of the British army in England and Ireland, or to the similarity ordered existence of the original states. Increasingly, the regiments found themselves split up into small detachments out on the frontier far from the population centers that provided recruits.

And so, the Adjutant General's role changed from the recorder of the Army's strength to its maintainer. We see in the nineteenth century a number of patterns emerge in the recruiting service. At times the role of a centrally administered, Adjutant General controlled, General Recruiting Service was stressed. Other times saw a return to the older method of local or regimental recruiting. During the wars, the use of locally recruited volunteers cut into the numbers of recruits that the Adjutant General's men were able to enlist.

During each war there was a scramble to get troops recruited for the regular army. But after each war, Congress felt the Army should be reduced. This meant the recruiting service needed to be dismantled until such time as normal releases and desertions brought the strength of the
Army down to the Congressional limits.

Another cycle was the one that tied recruiting to the state of the economy. When times were good, money available, the opportunity abundant, the recruiters had a hard time coming up with the required numbers. But when the times were hard, after a crisis or panic in the economy, inevitably the job of the recruiter was made easier.

Prior to the reduction of the Army under Calhoun, the system was basically one of regimental recruiting. Each regiment was required to name one of its field-grade officers or captains to supervise the officers and non-commissioned officers in their recruiting duties. Recruits were inspected by medical officers to determine fitness, and then reported to the Adjutant and Inspector General's Office. ¹

Adjutant and Inspector General Daniel Parker was using funds allocated to his office as bounties to attract as many recruits as possible. As early as the spring of 1820, Parker noted that with the amounts allowed him for this purpose he was barely able to find recruits enough to replace the loss for desertion. ² Despite a lack of Congressional support, Parker continued his efforts to raise the numbers to the authorized 9,700. ³

Within less than a year, Congress reduced the Army's strength to an


authorization of 6,126, which was the lowest authorized figure between the War of 1812 and the Mexican War. The only enlistments coming in were from regimental efforts of those units stationed in the most populated areas.

From 1 January to 12 November 1822, the 3rd Infantry in Michigan, the 4th Infantry in Florida, the 5th Infantry on the upper Mississippi, and the 7th Infantry in Louisiana all failed to enlist any recruits; the 6th Infantry in Iowa obtained only 10. The artillery regiments serving in New England and along the east coast did better, their enlistments being: 1st Artillery, 134; 2nd Artillery, 78; and the 4th Artillery, in a more remote location in Georgia, 3. The infantry regiments near the larger centers of population did not have impressive recruiting records. Most successful was the 1st, in the vicinity of New Orleans, with 35 men, 9 more than the 2nd Infantry, which was recruiting in the populous New York region.4

By 1822 there was so severe a shortage that a crisis was created. The result was the establishment of a General Recruiting Service in the Eastern Department, an area commanded by Winfield Scott. Lieutenant Colonel W. N. MacRea was detailed to the duty of supervising some three recruiting stations in New York, Baltimore, and Philadelphia. In one-half of a year, the General Recruiting Service was able to raise more than double the number of recruits of the previous year.5

In 1823, recruiting stations were opened in Boston, Providence, and Albany. They did so well compared to the regimental system, that recruiting stations were extended to Louisville, Natchez, and Cincinnati in 1824. Success continued for the General Recruiting Service in contrast

4Lerwill, Replacement, p. 46.

5Ibid.
to the earlier troubles that plagued the entire recruiting effort.\(^6\)

Perhaps the statistics on the relative size of the Army at different points of the century would be of value in putting the recruiting efforts in perspective. The Office of the Chief of Military History compiled the following data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>Enlisted</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>U.S. Population</th>
<th>Army as % of Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>5,495</td>
<td>6,122</td>
<td>12,866,020</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>9,981</td>
<td>10,929</td>
<td>23,191,876</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>2,541</td>
<td>34,699</td>
<td>37,240</td>
<td>38,558,371</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>2,168</td>
<td>25,205</td>
<td>27,373</td>
<td>62,947,714</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By the time Roger Jones took over its operation, the General Recruiting Service had stabilized its operation and established its value. It operated with two superintendents under the Adjutant General’s Office, one each for the eastern and western departments. These were usually lieutenant colonels or majors, and were detailed by the Adjutant General on War Department orders. Each regiment was required to submit the names of two company grade officers to the Adjutant General’s Office to be detailed for recruiting duty under these superintendents. (This was often

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\(^6\text{Ibid., p. 47. In 1821, the General Recruiting Service obtained 1,908 men to the regiment’s 823. In 1824, the General Recruiting Service obtained 1,333 to the regiment’s 1,225. In 1825, the General Recruiting Service obtained 1,249, while the regiment obtained only 527.}

favored duty because it allowed a couple of years in the populous areas of the country away from the frontier.

These recruiting officers ran the recruiting stations or "rendezvous" as they were also called. Here prospective recruits were brought in and examined by medical officers. There was a period of waiting for enough men to be gathered to make up a "recruit detachment" that would travel together to the frontier stations of the regiments. During this period the recruits were issued uniforms and given basic instruction. This required normally non-commissioned officers, and there was a reluctance to detail non-commissioned officers for recruiting duty. Since the General Recruiting Service superintendents had the power to make some promotions of their own, there was a tendency to recruit and train individuals for the sole purpose of providing non-commissioned officers' requirements at the recruiting stations. Since Roger Jones considered this to be an abuse of the system and a downgrading of the rank, the practice was eventually stopped.8

The regiments were usually short of men and kept up pressure to ship the recruits out to the frontier as soon as possible. So they would be gathered up and put in the charge of an officer who was making a change of duty station. He accompanied them, turning over the muster rolls of their names to the appropriate regimental commander. There, they were often subjected to a second physical examination by the regimental personnel who did not always trust the recruiter.

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8 Lerwill, Replacement, p. 47.
There was an attempt to provide the sort of troops that the Adjutant General's Offices' records indicated were needed by the different regiments. There was an attempt, for instance, to equalize the distribution of artisans to the different regiments. However since there was no systematic classification of specialities, this was a less than satisfactory arrangement.

Branch requirements were easier to plan for, and the training at the recruiting depots was conducted in accordance to the needs indicated by the Adjutant General's Office. It was estimated that it took a year to recruit a man, equip and train him, and ship him to the regiment. Generally the first year of service saw the most frequent desertions. Roger Jones attempted to prevent the loss to the government by "seasoning" the troops at his recruiting depots. This meant training them and observing them for the high vulnerability period, and only then incurring the expense of shipping them to the far frontier. Regimental commanders were less concerned with the monetary loss to the government thru desertion, and more concerned with the operational requirements of their commands. Therefore they constantly urged the shortening of time spent in the rendezvous, so that shortages in the field could be made good.  

When Roger Jones took over the Adjutant General's Office, the entire recruiting service, general or regimental, was suffering the effects of a critical decision, pressed on the Army by Congress. This centered around the recruitment of foreign-born persons into the Army. The revision of Army regulations that came out in 1825 stated that "no foreigner shall be

9Ibid., p. 49.
enlisted in the army without special permission from general head
quarters." This was originally interpreted to exclude even foreign-
born who had secured citizenship. Special permission was hard to get
because of the need to appeal to Washington, D. C. 10

Jones quickly realized the prohibition of foreigners hampered re-
cruiting. The quality of the native-born recruits tended to be of the
lowest order. Taken from the worst part of society, the only part un-
able to gain other employment, the strong tendency of the native-born
enlisted man was to desert. Roger Jones quickly appreciated the fact
that the Army could have more usable soldiers at a lower total cost if
it could attract a higher quality of recruit, essentially one who would
be less likely to desert. 11

He proceeded to blame the system of cash bounties paid out to the
recruits for attracting the lowest quality. "Without the lure pre-
sented in the charm of a bounty paid down, such vagrants would seldom if
ever be tempted to enlist ... what avail eth it to recruit Soldiers who
enlist to desert and who do desert?" He had reference to bounty jumping
as it was called. An individual at this period could enlist, collect
his bounty and then proceed to desert, often taking the equipment issued
him. All too often the desertion came right after the government provided
him with "free" transport to the West. This was a period before social
security numbers and fingerprinting, and the deserter had a good chance

10 Roger Jones to Ethan A. Hitchcock and Willoughby Morgan, recruiting
officers in New York, February 1 and 21, 1828, respectively, "Adjutant

11 Roger Jones, December 31, 1827, "Reports to the Secretary of War,"
to get away without ever being traced, simply by changing his name.

But the immediate problem for Roger Jones was the drop in enlistments in 1825 and 1826 which he attributed to the restriction on recruitment of foreign-born. He wrote to his two superintendents: Major William Davenport of the Western Department and Lieutenant Colonel Emos Cutler of the Eastern Department. He asked first what effect the regulation prohibiting the enlistment of foreigners had on the number, character, and efficiency of recruits; and second, was the foreigner or the native citizen more likely to desert?

Major Davenport replied that few men in the West were rejected because of the regulation, but he pointed out also that many who might be disposed to enlist never applied because of the certainty that they would be rejected, and that in any event immigrants were likely to make application at the Eastern city where they disembarked rather than undertake the long journey to the interior. Colonel Cutler furnished more definite advice. He was convinced—and he believed his recruiting officers concurred—that if there had been no restriction on the enlistment of foreigners, at least twice as many recruits would have been obtained in the Eastern Department during the previous two years. Since the vast majority of recruits entered the service in Eastern cities, this opinion carried considerable weight.

As for the character of the recruits, neither officer voted definitely against the immigrants. Major Davenport considered the foreigners in general no worse in character than native citizens. In strictly military duties he found them as efficient as Americans, but the latter, he thought, were more resourceful and better acquainted with the use of
tools. Colonel Cutler had more reservations about foreigners. Many, he declared, were men of 'turbulent character and intemperate habits,' although many decent men, too, had enlisted out of necessity or inclination. Unless the punishment of flogging, which Congress had prohibited in 1812, could be reinstated as a method of ensuring proper subordination, Cutler preferred not to have immigrants in the Army, yet he acknowledged that desertion was likely to be less frequent among them than among Americans. 12

This was enough for Roger Jones. In 1828 he ordered that recruits be accepted as long as they were citizens of the United States. Place of birth no longer mattered as long as they were citizens. 13

Despite the misgivings of Congress and vindicating the insight of Roger Jones, the recruiting effort eventually had to be directed toward the immigrant. It is impossible to obtain exact statistics in this area. If the prospective recruit could speak passable English and was willing to claim citizenship in the United States, the only one needed to deceive was the recruiting party striving to achieve the necessary quotas. As one author put it: "A sample of enlisted registers gives the official proportion of native born recruits, just after the War of 1812, as around 80 per cent. The figure was maintained until the early

12 Roger Jones letters to Cutler and Davenport, November 9, 1827, "Adjutant General's Office Recruiting Service Letter Book," Record Group 94, National Archives; Cutler to Jones, November 14, 1827, "Letters Received," Record Group 94, National Archives; Davenport to Jones, November 23, 1827, "Army Commands, West Department Recruiting Service Letter Book," Record Group 94, National Archives; 2 Statutes at Large 735.

13 Francis Paul Prucha, Broadax and Bayonet (Lincoln, Neb., 1967), p. 44.
1830's, but by 1840 had dropped 54 per cent, and by 1850 to 40 per cent. One calculation in 1859 probably on the conservative side, put the number of foreign-born regulars at nine thousand out of a total enlisted strength of sixteen thousand: 'The Irish element ... predominates, and next to it, the Germans. It is estimated that we have over two thousand soldiers in the Army and marine corps, besides a large number of Prussians, French, Austrians, Poles and nations of every other European state.'

There was a captain in Florida who found that half of his privates could not understand him. He complained: "They never could comprehend the difference between the command to charge their muskets, charge the enemy, and charge the United States for services rendered."

On October 22, 1841, the Attorney General of the United States, H. S. Legare, ruled that the Adjutant General's Office had been too permissive in allowing aliens to enlist. He ruled that enlistments of foreigners were invalid unless specifically authorized by Congress. There was an immediate run on the courts by men seeking release from the service on the basis of this decision.

The Secretary of War in 1842, John C. Spencer, felt the recruitment of foreign elements constituted a problem. He informed Congress that: "an unprecedented number of men have been discharged by the judges and

14 Ibid., p. 36; quoted in Marcus Cunliffe, Soldiers and Civilians (Boston, 1968), p. 119.

15 Quoted in Cunliffe, Soldiers, p. 115.

16 Prucha, Broadax, p. 44 note.
courts (338 between July 1, 1841 and October 31, 1842), principally on the ground of their being aliens. The state of the law on this subject has occasioned various constructions, perplexing to the officers charged with the duty of recruiting, embarrassing to the Department, and injurious to the Government. It is very desirable that it should be rendered precise and definite. While, on the one hand, it is obvious our army ought not to consist of an undue proportion of foreigners, yet, on the other, the low wages offered constitute an inducement quite insufficient to the young men of our land, whose habits and enterprise enable them so easily to acquire the means of subsistence and of independence, if not wealth, in the cultivation of the soil. Probably a middle course would avoid all difficulties—namely, allowing those to be recruited who are citizens, or who have taken the preliminary oath and initiatory steps to naturalization.  

In 1847, Roger Jones had his way (admit the needs of war), and the restrictions on immigrant enlistments were done away with. Retained was simply a requirement that the recruit have "a competent knowledge of the English language."  

Statistics are available for recruits entering the Army in 1850 and 1851. There were some 2,113 from Ireland, 678 from Germany, 306 from England, and 126 from Scotland. It had been determined that America

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18 Prucha, Broadax, p. 44 note.
19 Ibid., p. 41.
was going to have an Army, even if that Army was not entirely composed of native born Americans.

Roger Jones also paid attention to the question of the best location for recruiting stations. The Western Department recruiting had originally held out the promise of recruiting in an area that was nearer the duty stations, and therefore would save the government travel expense. This proved a false hope because of the lack of population in that area. By May 7, 1829, Jones had determined to discontinue the General Recruiting Service in the West. But the idea of western recruiting did not die so easily. A western station was reestablished on June 14, 1833, only to be abolished again on April 11, 1837. This second dismantling of the recruiting effort in the West left the station at Newport, Kentucky, in operation under the Eastern Department Recruiting Service and added another station in Louisville, Kentucky, the same year. 20

The system Roger Jones had worked out involved collecting the recruits at central locations for training before proceeding to their units—the collection points were Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, for the mounted service and Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, and Bedloe's Island, New York, for the infantry.

Success attended the efforts of Roger Jones and his recruiters. By 1829 enough troops had enlisted so that not only could the less productive western recruiting be halted, but the recruiting officers in the

20Lerwill, Replacement, p. 48.
East could be directed to be more selective in accepting recruits.  

There was a desire on the part of Roger Jones and the other concerned heads of the War Department that some way be found by which a higher quality recruit could be obtained. They were attempting to break a vicious cycle: good men were reluctant to enlist because they would have to serve and associate with poor quality troops and the poor quality troops predominated because the higher quality refused to enlist. Thanks to the success of the Recruiting Service, the Army could now be more selective. They sought a way out of the cycle. As Secretary of War John Eaton put it: "Men of intemperate habits and dissolute character should not be received into the army."  

There were several attempts to improve the conditions in the ranks so as to attract the higher quality recruit. Often the attitude of the War Department equated the quality of troops with their tendency to desert. Roger Jones had, by 1830, already been using different devices to discourage desertion. As has been noted, he attributed some of the poor quality of the troops to the bounty system. To eliminate desertions at the recruiting stations he had the bounties split into an advance bounty paid right after enlistment and a premium and retained bounty which was held until after the first muster had taken place.  

\[\text{Ibid.}\]


\[\text{Roger Jones, May 25, 1830, "Reports to the Secretary of the War," Vol. I, p. 236.}\]
Under pressure to improve the quality of recruits and lessen the tendency toward desertion, Congress passed the Act of March 2, 1833, "for the improvement of the condition of the non-commissioned officers and privates of the army and marine corps of the United States, and to prevent desertion" providing for a raise of the pay of the enlisted men, a reduction of the term of service, and improved the condition of the non-commissioned officers. Within a year, the Secretary of War reported that desertion had decreased and recruiting had increased.\(^{24}\) General Macomb noted that the new recruits were "of a more respectable class," but the critical advantage seemed to be one of enlistment of veterans for a second term. "A further proof of the beneficial influence of the law on the rank and file of the Army, is found in the fact, that soldiers who have honorably completed their terms of service, now more readily re-enlist, which is considered a decided advantage to the public both as it regards economy in the expenditure for the military service, and in reference to the efficiency of the army."\(^{25}\)

Though the act of March 2, 1833, allowed two months extra pay for reenlistment, it eliminated bounties and provided for the retention of one dollar each month for the first two years of service.\(^{26}\)

But the idea that some device would help the perpetual search for more recruits persisted. Bounty, it was often thought, might be the


\(^{26}\) *Statutes at Large* 647.
answer if only a formula could be devised to prevent its bad effects.

Though he opposed consistently the standard use of the bounty, Roger Jones did not do so dogmatically or inflexibly. During the Mexican War, the Adjutant General noted:

The objection heretofore urged to the bounty in hand system, deemed to be valid in time of peace, are not applicable to a state of war. I recommend, therefore, that the provisions of the 12th section of the act entitled 'An act fixing the military peace establishment,' approved March 16, 1802, (repealed in 1833) be now reenacted, and continued during war, and no longer. The impulse given to the recruiting service would be prompt, and decisive of better success.27

Apparently acting on this advice Congress passed the act of January 12, 1847, which provided for a twelve dollar bounty; six dollars to be "paid in hand," and the rest upon joining the regiment. On March 3, 1847, the twelve dollar bounty was extended to volunteers reenlisting for the duration of the war.28 But these were war-time expedients. The War Department and the Adjutant General were reluctant to use this device in peace time.

An example of the continuing search for a proper formula (and one that shows Roger Jones' safeguards) was one made by Secretary of War Crawford in 1849. His plan reveals much about the recruiting system.

According to the practice which has long prevailed, the great majority of enlistments is made in the northern Atlantic cities and the adjacent interior towns, whence the recruits are sent to the general depot for instruction, and finally distributed to the southern and western posts, according to the wants of the service. It necessarily follows that considerable time intervenes between the enlistment of the recruit and his presence with his company. Independently of

27 Roger Jones, Annual Report, 1846, p. 66.
28 Statutes at Large 117, 184.
this loss of time and service, and fatal influence which a
change of climate not unusually produces on the health of
the recruit, his transportation and subsistence constitute
a heavy expenditure. To remedy these disadvantages, and to
encourage enlistments in the vicinity of troops serving at
frontier and remote stations, especially in California,
Oregon, and New Mexico, it is recommended that a bounty be
allowed to each recruit enlisted at or near such stations,
equal to the cost of transporting and subsisting a recruit
from the general depot to the place of such enlistment.
To guard against desertions and promote good conduct, it is
proposed that the bounty should be divided into install-
ments, so that their several amounts would be increasing
annually, according to length of service, and the largest
amount be paid to the soldier on his discharge. This
bounty would also be a strong inducement to old soldiers
to re-enlist in their respective companies; an object al-
ways deemed of importance to the service.29

Bounties were not the only device used to increase the recruitment
of reliable troops. An example of the expedients suggested was the one
of enlisting the prospective soldiers very young so that they could
form habits the Army deemed desirable. The members of the House Com-
mittee on Military Affairs in 1832 proposed the enlistment of boys at
the age of sixteen for a four year period that would include schooling.
General Macomb counterproposed to enlist boys between the ages of twelve
and thirteen for a twelve-year enlistment. It was decided to forego the
plan for the time being.30

In 1839, Secretary of War Poinsett argued: "Experience at some of
the recruiting stations where boys have been taken into the service, with
the consent of parents and guardians as drummers and musicians, convinces
me that a plan similar to that so advantageously carried into effect in

30 Leonard Dupree White, The Jacksonians: A Study in Administrative
the navy, might be adopted with great advantage in the army." In 1840, the Secretary again asked Congress to extend youthful enlistments to the Army. "Its effect would be equally beneficial to the class of people to whom the boys belong, and to the army. It would secure to the sons of the former a comfortable subsistence, proper moral restraint, and good practical education; while it would provide for the army well-instructed non-commissioned officers, so difficult to be procured by enlistment, and without which an army cannot be efficient." Indeed this suggestion got as far as receiving the recommendation of the House Committee on Military Affairs in 1841.

It has often been the popular contention that the military in its efforts to secure adequate enlistments has resorted to deception or fraud. Though in fact such has always been clearly against policy, there has always been a tendency among recruiters to stretch the restrictions and the truth in getting the recruits in numbers enough to fill quotas and impress superiors. Roger Jones faced the dilemma of needing the troops and therefore being dependent on those sent out on recruiting duty, while practically realizing both the efficiency and reputation of the Army could only be hurt by enrolling recruits under false pretenses.

Secretary of War John Eaton stated the Army's position on the traditional problem area:

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31 Joel R. Poinsett, Annual Report, 1839, p. 41.
32 Joel R. Poinsett, Annual Report, 1840, p. 22.
33 Prucha, Broadax, p. 40.
The efficiency of any army is to be discerned through the pride—the elevated character of the individuals who compose it. To secure this condition of things, no man should be inveigled into public service under false pretenses, and when his mind is not in a situation to engage in contract. He who should bargain with a neighbor for his property, when found in a state of intoxication, would be justly reprehensible, and obnoxious to the imputation of practiced wrong: how much more cautious should a Government be, the guardian of the rights of its citizens, to avoid a temporary purchase of their liberties, at such a time, and under such circumstances. Resting upon the correctness of this impression, orders have been issued prohibiting any, when intoxicated, to be enlisted and forbidding any contract to be finally consummated, until time and opportunity are afforded for deliberations.34

Despite official disapproval of any hint of impropriety on the part of the recruiters, accusations continued to be made. One dragoon stated:

...Many men were enlisted only on the express declaration that they were to rank with the cadets at the military academy, and under the belief that they were rather to be considered as a volunteer corps... Many were told... that they would have nothing to do but to ride on horseback over the country, to explore the western prairies and forests, and indeed spend their time continually in delightful and inspiring occupations!35

Even greater charges of culpability were brought by Roger Jones himself in his Annual Report of 1847:

Proceedings of courts martial in the trial of recruits on charges of alleged desertion from the rendezvous afford strong grounds to believe that there are instances in which the recruiting party have contrived to make out the case of desertion for the sordid purpose of obtaining and dividing among themselves the authorized reward of $30. The records show that recruit—enlisted the 24th day of May; that leave was granted him until 3 o'clock; that not returning at that

35 Lerwill, Replacement, p. 50; quoted in Gunliffe, Soldiers, p. 266.
hour, he was seized before 6 at the house of the friend who had accompanied him to the rendezvous in the morning; that he was confined as a deserter by the sergeant, and that on the certificate of the recruiting officer five of the party received and divided the reward.36

Despite the efforts of the War Department, the Adjutant General, and the recruiters to improve the situation, the quality of recruits remained low.

But it was not always the recruiters who were less than candid. Often the persons enlisting had reasons to hide something or make misstatements. The recruiters of course quickly came under attack for not examining all the statements made most carefully. Particularly this was a problem for the Army when a minor would deliberately misstate his age in order to enlist without parental consent. If the soldier later became in anyway dissatisfied with his life he had only to reveal his actual age, and if necessary, take the Army to court on the issue to gain a release.

In 1830, Roger Jones made a decision on one aspect of this misstating ages. He noted to the Secretary of War that:

The law authorizes the enlistment of minors—the condition is, that the consent of the parent, guardian, or master be first obtained 'if any they have'—I am of the opinion therefore that a Minor who has neither parent, guardian or master may be legally enlisted i.e., that in such case the absence of the parents' consent etc. would not invalidate the enlistment.37

36 Roger Jones, Annual Report, 1847, p. 93; General Orders, Number 26, War Department, July 23, 1847, para. 7.

But the basic problem remained and in fact, grew worse. By 1839 the Secretary of War had a sad tale to convey to Congress.

...Some further legislative enactments are required to prevent improper recruits being received into the military service, and to punish persons who knowingly and willfully swear falsely when taking the oath required by regulations to be administered to them. Minors not unfrequently impose themselves upon the recruiting officer, by swearing that they are of age, or by producing false certificates of the consent of their parents and guardians to their enlistment, and after receiving their clothing, and otherwise putting the government to expense, claim to be released on the plea of being under age. The commission of this crime is of so frequent occurrence as to call for a remedy. It is perjury, and ought to be so regarded and punished.38

Despite the efforts of the War Department, the Adjutant General's Office and the recruiters to improve the situation, the quality of recruits remained low. The nation seemed to believe that only those who were useless or disqualified from competing in the mainstream of the society would enlist. Though clearly not always true, this had all the signs of being a self-fulfilling prophecy. The Army and Navy Chronicle lamented in 1839 that: "The military profession in this country has been so poorly encouraged, that but little incentive is held out to devote exclusive attention to it."39

Earlier the same year that journal had republished the comment of the Burlington, Vermont, Free Press: "We had a recruiting sergeant from Plattsburg parading our streets yesterday, with a band of music, beating up for recruits. We hope he has been successful, for we could spare a goodly number of loafers, who, if they could serve their country as

38 Joel R. Poinsett, Annual Report, 1839, p. 41.
39 As quoted in White, Jacksonians, p. 187.
faithfully as they do the devil, would be a great acquisition to the Army.  

Often the decision to join the Army was not a positive one for some recruits, but rather a negative one of fleeing or avoiding something. As one soldier put it: "...family trouble, disappointments in love, riots and personal difficulties...often caused men to enlist who proved to be the best of soldiers. In my troop there were men isolating themselves from society for all sorts of reasons."  

The United Service Journal printed an account of an Army surgeon who made a confidential study of the motivations that led to the enlistments for some fifty-five men in one company: "...nine-tenths enlisted on account of some female difficulty; thirteen of them had changed their names, and forty-three were either drunk, or partially so, at the time of their enlistment." 

The unemployment that accompanied economic panics resulted in an influx of recruits. The Army looked like good work when no other was to be found. 

We have recounted the state of the recruiting service when Roger Jones took over, and continued the story through the early thirties. After giving the account of the general nature of recruiting throughout the Jones' period, it is now necessary to recount the various factors...

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40 Lerwill, Replacement, p. 51.
41 As quoted in Cunliffe, Soldiers, p. 113.
42 Ibid.; as quoted in Prucha, Broadax, p. 37.
that affected recruiting for the rest of Jones' term.

During the Seminole War there arose the question as to whether to bring the newly recruited men in new units or into units in the field. Winfield Scott expressed a view strongly in favor of the latter approach:

New regiments, or regiments of recruits, would be worth little or nothing in this war. I will therefore earnestly recommend that the companies of the old regiments be extended to 90 or 90 privates each. Recruits mixed up with the old soldiers in June or July would become effective by the 1st of December.\textsuperscript{44}

The period between the War of 1812 and the Civil War was one of rises and falls in enlistments affected by the economy, the need to raise more soldiers in times of hostilities, and lay them off upon peace returning. If periods of unemployment made the recruiters' job easier, periods when the country enjoyed prosperity made recruiting difficult. Roger Jones was faced with this situation in 1836, when he wrote the Secretary of War:

The want of success in obtaining Recruits is undoubt-
edly in a very great degree, attributable to the general prosperity of the country, every portion of which is more or less extensively engaged in prosecuting work of internal improvement, and the great demand for, and consequent enhanced rate of wages, absorb it is believed, the greater portion of that class of citizen from which the ranks of the Army heretofore have been drawn. This state of things rends it necessary to employ more officers and multiply the recruiting Stations which greatly increase the ex-
pense of the Recruiting Service. While therefore the operations of the Recruiting Service are conducted upon a more extensive scale, scarcely one-half of the numbers of Recruits are now enlisted.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{44}Lerwill, Replacement, p. 51.

\textsuperscript{45}Roger Jones, June 27, 1836, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. II, p. 165.
Concern for the turning of recruits into soldiers in the late 1830s and early 1840s resulted in several actions. In 1839 orders were issued to give each recruit a copy of the Soldier's Book before they joined their regiment. This was to give the recruit some insight into his new life, and the cost was to be borne by the recruit himself as he had twenty cents deducted from his pay to cover it. A comprehensive manual for the training of recruits was written by Captain John T. Cairns, entitled simply Recruit, and issued in 1845. This proved of such value that it went through five editions prior to 1855.46

The training of recruits at depots was continued and improved. Training for the dragoons was conducted at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, and for infantry, at Fort Columbus, Ohio.47 But at the same time, the Commanding General was praising this system, the Secretary of War was looking toward a concept of regimental training depots. Both agreed on the need to train the troops prior to their arrival in the field.48

When the Seminole War ended the recruiting system and the training depots were broken up. Congress reduced the size of the Army from some 12,539 down to 8,615.49 Roger Jones informed Congress:

In anticipation of the provisions of the act repealing the organization of the army, approved August 23, 1842, the general recruiting service was suspended by

46 Lerwill, Replacement, p. 52.
47 Alexander Macomb, Annual Report, 1840, p. 32.
49 Lerwill, Replacement, p. 52.
special instructions dated the 5th of August.... The several rendezvous and depots of instruction have been broken up, and all the recruits have been assigned and sent to companies, so as to equalize, as far as practicable the rank and file of the several regiments. When the recruits shall have joined, it is estimated that the average excess in the regiments of artillery will be about 117, and of the infantry 165. The loss and casualties incident to troops stationed at permanent posts and on the seaboard being far less than when serving on the frontier, and less advantageously quartered, render it proper, in the arrangement, to make the difference in the number of privates rather in favor of the infantry companies.

It is estimated that excess (2,160) ... will, by deaths, desertions, and discharges on account of disability, (none by expiration of service) be reduced by the 30th of June, 1843, to 1,200; and this number will be further reduced by about 680 discharges, during the last half year of 1843, to which add the loss caused by ordinary casualties of service, say 354, which would leave on the 1st of December, of that year, an excess of about 150 men. It will not, therefore, is it supposed, be necessary to resume the recruiting service, unless the army be increased, sooner than early in the year 1844.50

A year later, General Scott, the new Commanding General, echoed Roger Jones' sentiments about the resumption of the general recruiting service in early 1844. "To keep up the establishment, it will then be necessary to recommence the general recruiting service; particularly as returning in 1838-39 from the unsuccessful experiment of three years enlistments, to the old term of five years, the number of discharges, all in 1844, will be unusually great."51

Concerning those who had been accepted for enlistment during the suspension of the general recruiting service, Roger Jones explained:

50 Roger Jones, Annual Report, 1842, p. 203.

51 Winfield Scott, Annual Report, 1843, p. 63.
"The few men enlisted in the several regiments consist of 'reenlistments' of non-commissioned officers and musicians, and enlistments in particular companies, to fill the vacancies which had happened in these companies after they had been reduced to the standard of the new organization." 52

The General Recruiting Service was resumed and enabled the nation to have an Army up to strength and well-trained upon the outbreak of the Mexican War. This was not an insignificant factor in U.S. success in that war. 53 But now the challenge for the recruiters was to supply the men for the increases Congress authorized for the war. Congress was to authorize double the number of enlisted men for the regular Army during the war.

The problem with wartime recruiting was that the regular Army had to compete with the volunteers for prospective troops. As Secretary Marcy put it:

The want of better success in recruiting is, I apprehend, mainly to be ascribed to the large number of volunteers which has, in the meantime, been called out. The volunteer service is regarded, generally, by our citizens, as preferable to that in the regular army; and as long as volunteers are expected to be called for, it will be difficult to fill the ranks of regular regiments, unless additional inducements are offered, or the time of enlistment, or land at the end of the term of service, would, it is believed, have a most beneficial effect. Probably an equally favorable result would flow from annexing a condition to the present period of service, allowing the recruit to be discharged at the end of the

52 Roger Jones, Annual Report, 1843, p. 67.

53 Lerwill, Replacement, p. 52.
present war. It is presumed there are many thousand patriotic citizens who would cheerfully enter the service for the war, if they could return to the pursuits of civil life at its close.\(^{54}\)

As already noted, Roger Jones felt that the conditions of the Mexican War warranted a departure from his stand against bounties. The higher patriotism, and the competition from volunteer recruiters probably inspired him to so think. He detailed some of his problems in recruiting regulars:

The raising of numerous regiments of volunteers, and the greater inducements to enter for short periods, satisfactorily accounts for the want of better success in recruiting for the regular army. High wages for labor is [sic] another cause reported as having a decided influence upon the recruiting service; but more than all, perhaps, the distinction seen in the pension laws between the private soldier of the regular army and the volunteer, and which operates so unfavorably to the former. The widows and orphans of the volunteers who may be killed in battle, or die of wounds received in the service, are pensioned; while the widows and orphans of the regular soldiers who die under the same circumstances are entirely unprovided for by law.\(^{55}\)

Despite the difficulties of the Adjutant General's Office in recruiting the regular army, field commanders continued to request the detachment of experienced officers from the recruiting service to perform with units in the field. One such case involved Lorenzo Thomas of whom Roger Jones wrote:

... the continued services of Major T. in this office, I deem indisputably necessary. He is charged with the division of duties which fall under the head of 'General Recruiting Service,'... The duties in this branch can


never be delayed, and there is no officer that I know of whose services are at command, and who would be equal to the task.  

After the Mexican War Roger Jones reestablished the system of recruiting with its depots and schools on instruction. He was able to boast that it met with "the usual success." He further noted that: "The system, as heretofore, greatly conduces to economy, discipline, instruction, and dispatch in forwarding recruits to the several regiments." This he attributed to the senior Assistant Adjutant General officer stationed in his office: Lorenzo Thomas.  

Recruiting was the responsibility of the Adjutant General's Office. But Roger Jones realized the responsibility was bigger—it was his job to maintain the strength of the Army as close as possible to the levels Congress authorized. This meant not only getting recruits but retaining troops. The biggest problem Roger Jones, the Adjutant General's Office, and the War Department faced was the other side of the recruiting coin; that which made much of the recruiting necessary—the high desertion rate. Jones felt that if he could significantly curb desertion, the recruiting effort would be eased tremendously, and as he frequently pointed out, the government would save great sums of money lost when a deserter left the ranks.  

Long before Roger Jones took office, the problem of desertion was plaguing the Adjutant and Inspector General. In 1820, amid the financial

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56 Roger Jones, October 5, 1847, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. III, p. 520.

57 Roger Jones, Annual Report, 1850, pp. 116-117.
crisis of that period, Daniel Parker was to lament that recruiting was unable to offset a desertion rate of one-fifth. By 1823, the acting Adjutant General was faced with a desertion rate of one-fourth the enlistments and when Roger Jones took over in 1826, the rate had risen to one-half. Increasing prosperity was making alternatives more attractive to the men in the ranks who saw their opportunities and took advantage of them. In 1830, out of a five thousand man Army, some twelve hundred deserted. This involved a government loss of more than a hundred thousand dollars.

Everyone connected with the welfare of the War Department became concerned in the process of rising desertion rates. Commanding General Jacob Brown wrote to Calhoun in 1824 that desertion was

...an evil which has grown to a serious magnitude, and exerts an unhappy influence upon the numerical force and efficiency of the army, upon its moral character, and upon the fund appropriated by the government for its support. Its effect upon the numerical force and efficiency of the army's, by withdrawing from the ranks a large number of men, of whom the greater part succeed in eluding the vigilance of pursuit, and the rest are devoted to hard labor and imprisonment in garrison, which are the highest penalties awarded to the crime; in either case their services as soldiers are lost to the army. Its effect upon the moral character of the army is to degrade the spirit of the profession by relaxing its moral ties, and by merging the infamy of the crime in the multiplication of example. Its effect upon the fund appropriated to the support of the army


60 Roger Jones, Annual Report, 1831, p. 75.
is, by increasing the expenditures of the recruiting service from the necessity of keeping the ranks of the army full, by providing a recruit at a considerable expense, to supply the place of every deserter who eludes apprehension.61

He reiterated his observations on desertion in the 1825 Annual Report.62 The Secretary of War joined him in denouncing the evils of desertion and elaborated that:

Desertion, however, from the extent to which it prevails, is a serious evil. The state of society, which presents so many advantageous pursuits to our citizens, as also, the difficulty of apprehension, may possibly render the evil remediless; yet its results are so injurious to the Army, and constitute so heavy an item to our expenditures that any measures, promising a preventive, should be adopted.63

Roger Jones brought his analytical abilities to bear on the desertion question. Shortly after he had taken office he was able to observe that

...within the first twelve months after enlistment desertsions are more numerous from any given military force than during the remaining four years of the term of enlistment. The season of probation in the Army as in most other vocations is the one which presents the greatest trial for the soldier. That spirit of resistless inquietude which not infrequently induces him to enlist but too often stimulates him to desert. Thus its influence is more powerful than any moral restraint derived from the force of his oath to serve 'honestly and faithfully' the full period of his engagement. The Class from whence a majority of private soldiers are drawn, scarcely regard the circumstance of desertion as an act of turpitude. Whenever therefore the enlisted man deserts, he must commonly revert to his original society or to associates of kindred morality who so far from condemning him as a faithless perjured citizen, chose

61 Jacob Brown, Annual Report, 1824, p. 66.
rather to unite in rejoicing in his successful escape. This erroneous appreciation of crime superadded to the restless spirit incident to that ordeal common almost to every recruit probably constitute the primary cause of desertion.\(^6\)

Jacob Brown noted at the end of 1826 that the rate of desertion was tapering off, but still constituted an unwarranted drain on the Army.\(^6\) In 1827, he noted the same high rate of desertions continued, but also observed that: "Desertion has been of much more frequent occurrence in the regiments occupying Southern stations, than in those situated in more healthy latitudes." These "sickly stations," he felt inspired a higher desertion rate among the soldiers.\(^6\)

At the same time, Roger Jones noted that increased desertions were coupled with decreased enlistments. He attributed both

\[...] to the New Regulation which prohibits the enlistment of foreigners among whom desertions are not so prevalent as with native citizens. The reason is obvious. The facilities of escape, the security and protection afforded to our own people by their friends [...] are calculations for safety denied to the emigrants, who are generally a stranger in the land.\(^6\)

A few weeks later, the Adjutant General was writing the Secretary of War crediting much of the problem of desertion to the bounty:

\[...] a vast majority of the desertions [...] is ascribable to the influence of the bounty paid in advance, in order to induce what has been called success in the recruiting.

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\(^6\) Roger Jones, January 11, 1826, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. I, p. 11.

\(^6\) Jacob Brown, Annual Report, 1826, p. 179.

\(^6\) Jacob Brown, Annual Report, 1827, p. 49.

Without the lure thus presented in the charm of a bounty paid down, such vagrants as compose the recruits who desert from the Rendezvous, or before joining companies would seldom if ever be tempted to enlist. The absence of motive or temptation would certainly cut off all that class.68

In 1832, the desertion rate was particularly high, and the next year the Congress passed an Act to Improve the Condition of the Non-commissioned Officers of the Army and Marine Corps of the United States and to prevent desertion. However by 1836, the desertion rate was at alarming levels again.69

The effects of economic fluctuations and native birth on desertion have been noted. But sometimes these factors had different effects. For example, the logic of Roger Jones that foreign-born would be less likely to desert than native-born, presupposed that the troops would be stationed either within the settled areas of the United States or on our own frontier. In periods of foreign war the ratio of desertion between the two groups drastically altered. During the Mexican War the patriotism of the foreign-born was undermined by appeals of the Catholic Mexicans to coreligionists in the U. S. forces. The result was the notorious San Praticio brigade made up of mainly Irish that deserted from the U. S. Army.70

68 Roger Jones, January 25, 1830, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. 1, p. 207.
70 As quoted in Cunliffe, Soldiers, p. 120.
Economic factors never seemed to have such a severe effect on desertions as the impact of the discovery of gold in California. The Secretary of War in 1849 informs us:

The desertions have been most numerous in California, where the temptations to embark in more lucrative pursuits, and the facilities for the sudden acquisition of wealth, are so greatly multiplied. Out of a force of twelve hundred regular troops in that territory since the 1st of January, the desertions within the first eight months have equaled two-fifths of that number. The policy adopted by the commanding officer of granting short furloughs to the troops in small numbers, for the purpose of enabling them to work for their individual benefit at the places, had the effect to check desertions to a degree; but the emergencies of the service, and the limited number of troops for duty, prevented the measure from being carried out to the extent desired, and the evil of desertions consequently continues to exist.\(^71\)

A far more dramatic account of an officer stationed at Fort Vancouver, Oregon Territory, tells us of: "...a march of eight hundred miles in pursuit of a large body of deserters who attempted to push through to California by land.... We overtook and sent back seventy odd ... Thirty odd got through to the mines, eight were either killed by the Indians, starved or eaten by the others."\(^72\)

Roger Jones and the personnel of the Adjutant General's department devoted a lot of attention to the problem of desertion, and they realized that there was no simple solution. Often their considerations turned to the events that led up to the desertion of the individual soldier. In accordance with the sentiments of their day the personnel of the Adjutant General's Office attributed many of the desertions to


\(^72\) As quoted in Cunliffe, *Soldiers*, p. 125.
the intemperate use of alcohol.

Roger Jones noted that if a few recruits were under the influence of alcohol when they enlisted, a much greater percentage were intoxicated when they deserted. But the Adjutant General's Office did not take the lead in the campaign against the evils of drink, but rather the Surgeon General's bureau under Calhoun's administration. The point of attack was the whiskey ration that was issued to the troops. The assistance of the bureau of the Commissary General was obtained to start a program of voluntary substitution of a cash payment to the troops in place of their whiskey ration. This program was carried out on a pro-
visionary basis and was discontinued when it proved to be ineffective.  

Congressmen did not lose interest in this area, particularly as temperance movements gained. They introduced resolutions asking for information from the War Department on the effect of the whiskey ration on discipline and morals.  

Secretary of War Peter B. Porter responded with a lengthy report to Congress. He contended that the Army had to recruit from that class of the American population of which at least three-fourths were accustomed to consuming more than the Army issue of whiskey each day. He noted the harmful effects he felt would result from suddenly withdrawing the men from their liquor. He commented on the social stigma if the soldier, alone of all citizens, with the sole exception of the convict,  


was denied any access to alcohol. Finally, he pointed out the fact that while troops could be severely punished for consuming quantities of liquor, the civilians who sold them the whiskey were not, in most states, subject to any punishment.

In his treatment of the problem, Secretary Porter did make an uncomplimentary reference to the recruiting practices that had prevailed prior to Roger Jones' attempt to upgrade the quality of recruits. The Secretary attributed much of the Army's troubles with alcohol to "a practice heretofore too much indulged, of enlisting confirmed drunkards." 75

We have already noted problems of Roger Jones with drunkenness in his own office, and his strong personal reaction to it. By 1830, he felt he ought to take a stand on the Army's whiskey ration. He wrote the Secretary:

Ardent spirits should be discontinued in the Army as part of the daily ration. I know from observation and experience when in the command of Troops, the pernicious effects arising from the practice of regular daily issues of whiskey. If the Soldier has acquired some taste for Alcoholic drinks previously to enlistment which is the case with a Majority, the practice of administering to him half a gill of whiskey twice every day most probably confirms the habit: thus the tempter being presented in due stand and thus is a fair opportunity to practice self denial almost unattainable after enlistment. If the recruit joins the service with an unvinicated taste which is not infrequently the case, the daily privilege and the uniform example soon induce him to taste and then to drink his allowance. The habit being presently acquired, he too

75 Peter B. Porter to House, January 31, 1829, American State Papers, Military Affairs, Vol. IV, p. 84.
soon becomes an habitual taker. I would therefore substitute coffee and sugar and also molasses for the Whiskey part of the ration.76

The response of the Commissary General was less than enthusiastic. He contended that the root of the problem was not the whiskey ration but the alcohol supplied by civilians off-post.77 Nevertheless, the War Department engaged in a substitution program under Congressional urging.78 In 1832 the substitution was changed from one of money, to something more along the lines Roger Jones had suggested. The Secretary of War, Lewis Cass, reported to Congress:

In the subsistence of the army an important change has been made, which, I trust will prove salutary to the health and morals of the troops. In lieu of the spirituous liquor, which formerly composed a part of each ration, a commutation was some time since established, by which its value was paid to each soldier in money; but at the same time, he had permission to purchase this destructive article from the sutler of the post. The regulation you have recently authorized, substitutes coffee and sugar for the commutation previously established. Four pounds of coffee and eight pounds of sugar are hereafter to be issued with every one hundred rations.... Simultaneously with this arrangement, a regulation was adopted, prohibiting the sale of spirituous liquor by the sutlers to the troops, and its introduction, under any circumstances, into the camps and forts of the United States, with the exception of the hospital stores, and of the quantity necessary to issue under the provision of the law which allows an extra gill to every soldier, engaged in fatigue duty. No authority to dispense with this is vested in the Executive, and Congress alone can interpose the necessary remedy.79

76 Roger Jones, January 25, 1830, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. I, p. 211.
77 Langley, Social Reform, p. 219.
78 Risch, Quartermaster, p. 203; as quoted in White, Jacksonians, p. 204.
Secretary Cass was thus at some variance with the already noted moderate views of his predecessor, Porter, and closer to the opinions of Adjutant General Jones. He further advised Congress that he was "...satisfied the great cause of public morals, as well as the discipline and efficiency of the army, would be promoted by an entire abolition of these issues, and I cannot but hope, that the legislative authority will be exerted for that purpose." If the Congress had any doubts as to the position taken by the Secretary, he elaborated in detail:

A very partial knowledge of the actual condition of our army, is sufficient to satisfy the most superficial observer, that to habits of intemperance may be traced almost all the evils of our military establishment. These need no enumeration, but an adequate conception may be found of their nature and consequences. But it is time, that an enemy, so insidious and destructive, were met and overcome; that all paliatives were abandoned; and that a system of exclusion, of entire, unconditional, exclusion, were introduced and enforced. Every just consideration of policy and morality requires this measure, and public opinion is certainly prepared for, and would approve it.

It is no surprise to find that Secretary Cass, after voicing such strong views, should, the next year, join a Congressional Temperance Society that was being formed. In 1838 Congress enacted into law what the Secretary of War had done by regulation. When the Congress substituted, they went a bit further, providing some six pounds of coffee and twelve pounds of sugar added to every one hundred rations

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80 Ibid.

81 Ibid., p. 22.

82 Langley, Social Reform, p. 231.
issued in place of the whiskey ration.

Yet, despite all the official concern for the morals of the troops, alcohol was not so easily denied them. A good example of the irrepressible thirst of the troops is provided by the story of the Irish soldier who mistook "old rough and ready," General Zachary Taylor for a civilian and asked where he could get a drink. The general said probably in the women's quarters and the soldier was successful despite "unconditional exclusion" of spirituous beverage.83

If the troops were often inspired to desert by drink, the first line of defense was felt to be stern punishment. The Adjutant General was not only deeply concerned with what the Army termed discipline, because of its immediate impact on the desertion rates, but Roger Jones' office handled the records on courts martial and often found itself having to rule on questions of military law.

Before Roger Jones came to office, the Commanding General, Jacob Brown, defined much of the issue as it relates to desertion and punishment. In 1824 he maintained that conditions in the Army were so good that there was "...no imaginable cause for the prevalence of desertion but the inadequacy of punishment annexed to it by law." What the General had in mind was the fact that in war desertion was punishable by death, but such a verdict could not be obtained in peacetime. He then launched into a discussion of flogging as a punishment for desertion. He noted its use prior to the War of 1812 and its discontinuance during that war. He maintained that its abolition was "deemed

83 As quoted in Cunliffe, Soldiers, p. 121.
necessary, in order to engage individuals of respectable connections and
elevated spirits to enter the ranks, to expunge from the government of
the Army every feature which was repugnant to the moral elevation of
man." However, the General noted that the past war recruiting pattern
had involved the enlistment of a large number of foreign-born. These,
he felt with appropriate American superiority, had "generally been ac-
customted to the lash, and cannot easily be governed without it." He
took cognizance of the Congressional prohibition of foreign enlistment
and therefore urged "further experiment" as to whether peacetime de-
sertion could be curbed without the lash.\(^84\) All this is put into an
interesting perspective by Roger Jones' statement just two years later
that the foreign element tended to desert less.

The Congressional prohibition lapsed after two years, but had by
then been incorporated into the Army regulations. Congress approved
this solution and those officers that felt a return to flogging was in
order felt they needed to secure Congressional authorization to resume
it.

Secretary of War, John Eaton, in 1829, chose to disagree with those
holding with the lash as a cure for desertion. He maintained that:

I would by no means by understood as recommending a
return to the infliction of stripes; it is a punishment
altogether too degrading; it strips the soldier of that
proud spirit, and of those lofty feelings of honor, which
will tend to prepare him, when a suitable occasion may
offer, to become a traitor to the country that has branded
him with infamy; the stigma of which, no future good con-
duct, on his part, can remove.\(^85\)

\(^{84}\) Jacob Brown, Annual Report, 1824, p. 66.

Roger Jones had a series of comments to make to the Secretary of War on the relationship between punishment and desertion. In 1830 he wrote that:

The history of the Army for the last fifteen years and the experience of every intelligent Officer who has either served with or exercised command over the troops prove that the punishments which have been usually awarded in the case of desertions have had but little tendency to prevent desertions. The number of trials by Court Martial is not less remarkable than the number of desertions, and the frequent convention of Military Courts for the trial of enlisted soldiers denote some radical defect, somewhere in our Military partical system.86

But it would have been unlike Adjutant General Jones to bring to his superiors' attention a problem without some suggestion for a solution. In the process of providing his views on a solution he made it most clear where he stood on flogging.

The aggregate of crime ... the amount of punishment and the cost of Courts Martial etc. it is believed would be greatly diminished if corporeal punishment for the crime of Desertion should ever be authorized. The class of Offenders to whom this species of punishment with the sanction of law, would be applied, could not be more degraded by the infliction of stripes: He who shall have been convicted of Desertion has thrown away the mantle which would have shielded the faithful soldier from the reproach and penalty of the lash.87

When the Adjutant General and the War Department secured the passage, in 1833, of the Act to Improve the Condition of the Non-commissioned Officers of the Army and Marine Corps of the United States and to Prevent

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87 Ibid., p. 209.
Desertion, the officers of the persuasion of Roger Jones had their way on flogging. It was authorized, and remained so until 1861.88

There was a large drop in courts martial for all offenses including desertion in 1844. This was attributed not to the use of the lash but to the recent introduction of chaplains at isolated posts and the spread of temperance societies among the troops.89

The officers of the Army were aware that there were other ways to motivate the soldiers not to desert than simply the negative aspects of which type of punishment to use in the event. Not only the stick (or lash) but also the carrot entered into their considerations.

It was noted before that General Jacob Brown when faced with desertion at least considered the lash especially if foreigners were allowed to enlist. He did not stop there however, and proposed in 1824 a plan of which Roger Jones and the Adjutant General's Department were to become strong advocates. This was the holding of a portion of the soldier's pay which would be paid to him upon the successful completion of service and honorable discharge. General Brown suggested between one and two dollars be retained each month. He felt this was sufficient to allow the accumulation of a significant vested interest in the soldier, while still being small enough not to measurably hurt the troops on payday. Of course if the soldier was so foolish to desert despite this program, then the money would go to the government fund for recruiting to pay for the search of a replacement. It takes no imagination to

88 "An Act to improve the condition of the non-commissioned officers and privates of the army and marine corps of the United States, and to prevent desertion." March 2, 1833, 4 Statutes at Large, 647.

89 Winfield Scott, Annual Report, 1844, p. 132.
figure why such a plan appealed to the Adjutant General who was burdened
with both maintaining the Army's strength and the recruiting effort that
made that possible. ⁹⁰

The next year, after proposing this plan, General Brown suggested
it again with modifications. Basically he suggested that "additional
pay be allowed to the soldier as a condition of his reenlistment." He
urged this on the Congress with the recommendation that his plan had
"been adopted in almost every foreign service, and, it is believed, with
invariable success." ⁹¹

The Secretary of War at the same time felt desertion to be such an
evil that resort should be made to "any measures promising a preventive." This included explicitly General Brown's withholding scheme. ⁹²

Roger Jones, shortly after assuming office, struck the dominant note
of his solution to the desertion problem: improve the quality of the re-
cruits. This he did in his letter to the Secretary of War of January 11, 1826. ⁹³

At the end of that year General Brown again urged his plan:

The design of offering additional pay to the approved
soldiers, as a condition of his reenlistment; that of with-
holding a portion of the same, as a restraint and security
for faithful service, and the plan for the improvement of

⁹⁰ Jacob Brown, Annual Report, 1824, p. 66.
⁹² James Barbour, Annual Report, 1825, p. 3.
the non-commissioned grades of the Army, by a judicious increase of their enrollments, are measures which I still consider as promising the happiest effects, as well as promotive of the general welfare of the Army, as restrictive of that evil [desertion] which so greatly impairs its organization and efficiency.\textsuperscript{94}

As the nation prospered in the late 1820s, the discrepancy between the soldier's pay and the civilian's wages became more marked. Roger Jones noted this as a cause of poorer quality recruits as well as the high desertion rates. He and General Brown urged increased pay on the Congress, but the legislative process was very slow.

Roger Jones outlined a detailed plan to Secretary of War in which he combined his own plea for quality troops and the conditions that would attract them with General Brown's now shop worn (but still untried) idea of retained pay. The Jones plan was basically that:

1. The pay of all non-commissioned officers should be increased.
2. Not less than one dollar should be added to the monthly pay of the private soldier; Provided, that the same be retained until the expiration of his service (or a given portion of it) when upon evidence of honourable and faithful service, this accumulating fund like a retained bounty should be paid to him.
3. The bounty as now established by law should be abolished thereby dispensing with any bounty in hand or any bounty paid previous to two years' faithful service.
4. The term of enlistment should be reduced to the period of 4 years.

What are the practical advantages supposed to be derivable from a system combining the foregoing Propositions? It may be answered 1st the enlistment of Soldiers from a Class of Citizens more respectable than have been heretofore willing to serve in the Army. 2. The absence of motive or inducement and the consequent exclusion from Recruiting rendezvous of all that Class who 'enlist today and desert tomorrow;' and of that other class of kindred morality, a majority of which continue just long enough to join a Regiment, receive the retained bounty and the three or four

\textsuperscript{94} Jacob Brown, \textit{Annual Report}, 1826, p. 179.
months pay which may be due, besides the additional supply
of the most costly part of a year's uniform clothing and
then desert.

The inducement of this improved class of citizens to
join the Military service of the Republic would be yet
strong, when it should be known that their associates and
comrades most probably would no longer be drawn from that
exceptionable portion of society which now in too many in-
stances appear to furnish its pernicious quota of recruits
scarcely for any other purpose than to obtain present and
temporary relief.95

By 1830, Secretary of War Eaton had taken up the same basic ap-
proach. But no changes were enacted immediately, and desertion con-
tinued.96

The Army got a response from the Congress in 1831, when the House
Committee on Military Affairs reported. They agreed that the pay in the
Army was inadequate, and that if men of the proper quality were to be
induced to enlist they must be offered wages comparable to those which
civilians were earning. They also agreed that the reinstitution of cor-
poral punishment should be recommended in an effort to halt desertions.97

Much of what Roger Jones had been urging was enacted in the 1833
Act that has already been mentioned. This act provided for a reduced
enlistment period (from five years down to three), provided for the re-
introduction of flogging, and increased the pay.98 The pay went from

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95 Roger Jones, December 31, 1827, "Reports to the Secretary of War,"

96 As quoted in White, Jacksonians, p. 204.

97 Prucha, Broadax, p. 39.

98 As quoted in Gurniffe, Soldiers, p. 112.
five dollars a month to six (at which it remained until 1854), but soldiers who served on fatigue duty were given an extra fifteen cents a day.

General Macomb, the Commanding General, in 1833, already noted results "decidedly favorable and satisfactory." This was in the area of recruiting where the Army was attracting men of "a more respectable class." He also noted a drop of one-third in the number of desertions, but was particularly glad to report the success in encouraging reenlistments. He was to confirm his good opinion of the efforts of the Act in his Annual Report for the next year. Significantly, he noted: "The vice of drunkenness has diminished, and with it, desertion and other crimes."

However, the Congress felt that it had exerted itself on the Army's behalf and proceeded to neglect the necessary measures to keep the gains current. By 1837 The Army and Navy Chronicle was again complaining of the inadequacy of the pay, and the poor attitude of Congress in assisting the services.

The individual soldier felt it was poor pay for hard work. As one soldier put it:

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100 Alexander Macomb, Annual Report, 1833, p. 51.
101 Alexander Macomb, Annual Report, 1834, p. 46.
102 As quoted in White, Jacksonians, p. 187.
... never was told that I would be called on to make roads, build bridges, quarry stone, burn brick and lime, carry the load, cut wood, hew timber, construct it into rafts and float it to the garrisons ... drive teams, make hay, herd cattle, build stables, construct barracks, hospitals, etc., etc., etc. 103

A year later the Congress made new provisions. Pay was increased two dollars per month (to a total of eight), and the increase was entirely retained. Provision was made for a three-month enlistment bounty, and was supplemented by 160 acres of land to be awarded for ten years' good service. Commanders were given the authorization to hire chaplains by the same act. 104

This last provision was fully implemented by the time Winfield Scott had taken over as Commanding General and was able to report these chaplains were "each of good standing in his respective religious community." Scott could also boast of "the establishment of day schools for soldier's children, and night schools for the men themselves--with numerous temperance associations--all either set on foot or encouraged by the good example of the officers--have had the best effects on the rank and file .... Hence, of late, comparatively, but few prisoners, or courts martial, and fewer desertion." 105 Each area insofar as it was administered or administered or provided for at the War Department level fell under the Adjutant General's purview. Roger Jones could quickly see the value of anything.

103 As quoted in Cunliffe, Soldiers, p. 121.
104 Statutes at Large, 258-259.
105 Winfield Scott, Annual Report, 1843, p. 65.
One last area that the Adjutant General concerned himself with because of its obvious and immediate effect on recruiting was the introduction of new uniforms. Roger Jones was well aware of the impact that attractive uniforms had on the imaginations of prospective recruits and their female friends. He became noted for his advocacy of fashionable new uniforms. This did not always make him very popular with the officer ranks which had to outfit themselves each time a change came out. Particularly memorable is the reaction at the very end of his life when Roger Jones' pushing a new uniform provoked a satirical cartoon from the fertile pen of George Derby, otherwise known as "John Phoenix" or the "venerable Squibob." The cartoon showed Jones attired in his new uniform seeking admittance at the gates of heaven. St. Peter obviously had an old set of regulations on uniforms because he was refusing the Adjutant General admittance to a heaven well stocked with American heroes who had gone on before. 106

As soldiers rose in rank they were termed non-commissioned officers. They also became involved in other personnel matters than simply enlistments and desertion. These are the men that Roger Jones and Alexander Macomb were so concerned with during all their talk of reenlistments. The non-commissioned officers were viewed as the backbone of the Army and the Adjutant General's Office concerned itself with them as an invaluable personnel asset. It was not an accident that the critical act on the Army that was passed in 1833 referred to its title first to the non-commissioned officers.

106 Erasmus Darwin Keyes, Fifty Years' Observations of Men and Events, Civil and Military (New York, 1884), p. 199.
THE NEW UNIFORM

This cartoon satirizes the ridiculous tall cap which in 1852 superseded the cocked hat.
As early as 1825, Commanding General Jacob Brown was recommending

...that the monthly pay of the Sergeant-Major and Quartermaster-Sergeant of each regiment and that of the First Sergeant of each company, be increased to fifteen dollars and that the monthly pay of each other Sergeant be increased to ten dollars. This increase of pay would scarcely be perceived in the general appropriation under this head, while its beneficial influence on the mass of the Army would be incalculable. In order to command the talent and ability requisite in the station of the non-commissioned officer, it is necessary to hold forth a consideration proportioned to the importance of the object desired; and in the sphere of life from whence the candidates for this station are to be derived, the only inducement that can be proven effectual in an adequate pecuniary involvement.\textsuperscript{107}

Again in 1827 the Adjutant General and the Commanding General were seeking a betterment of the conditions of the non-commissioned officers and some inducements to reenlistment that would inspire more men to take up that status.\textsuperscript{108}

But in addition to the concern that the War Department had for the non-commissioned officers as such, the Adjutant General's Office repeatedly encountered the suggestion of promotion from the ranks into the officer corps. Sometimes the request came from the enlisted men themselves, such as in 1837 when they petitioned Congress for commissions. The increasing use of West Point as the sole source of officers they felt to be "...contrary to the true spirit of our country, and in opposition to all our republican institutions. Being barred from aspiring to commissioned rank was responsible for the present abandoned and degraded condition of the American soldiery." Within a year a

\textsuperscript{107} Jacob Brown, \textit{Annual Report}, 1825, p. 9.

\textsuperscript{108} Jacob Brown, \textit{Annual Report}, 1827, p. 50.
number were elevated from the enlisted ranks including a sergeant-major of eighteen years service. These promotions however were exceptional enough to be reported as newsworthy in The Army and Navy Chronicle. 109

This is not to say there were not those in high places who felt that the officer corps should not, as a regular practice, recruit from the non-commissioned officer ranks. So illustrious a name as General Gaines, long-time contender for the job of Commanding General, was used in 1839 in connection with pleas for the granting of commissions to enlisted men. 110

However, the major effort at such transfer of non-commissioned officers into the officer corps took place in the midst of the Mexican War and was attended by no small amount of party politics and high feelings. The main account we have is from President Polk's diary, and is not favorable to the Adjutant General who Polk considered a diehard "Federalist."

President Polk's account of his encounter with Roger Jones is as follows:

Several vacancies of officers of the army which had occurred, it was necessary to fill. I had repeatedly for several days past called on the Secretary of War for a list of these vacancies. He informed me that he had several times called on the Adj't Gen'l for the list, but that, it had not been furnished. When a vacancy occurs in the regular army, it is filled usually by regular promotion, down to the grade of 2nd lieutenancies, and these are usually filled by the appointment of brevet 2nd Lieutenants who are graduates of West Point, though there

109 As quoted in White, Jacksonians, p. 201; as quoted in Cunliffe, Soldiers, p. 265.
110 As quoted in Cunliffe, Soldiers, p. 265.
is no law requiring this to be done. I had determined to appoint a few private soldiers, who had greatly distinguished themselves in battle. To this the Adj't Gen'l and the officers of the army are generally opposed, and this I suspected was the reason that the Adj't Gen'l had failed to report a list of vacancies as he had been requested to do. With the assent of the Secretary of War, I sent for him and requested him to furnish me with the list. He was disposed to debate the matter with me, and to urge the claims of the graduates at West Point. He promised, however, to furnish the list. He retired and returned in about an hour, but did not bring the list. I became vexed at his hesitancy in furnishing me with the information which I required. His presumption in withholding the information which I had requested from me, and in attempting to control my action, vexed me, and finally I spoke shortly to him. Among other things I remarked that as I was constituted by the Constitution command in chief of the Army, I chose to order him to furnish the list of vacancies from the records of his office which I had desired. I repeated to him that he must regard what I said as a military order and that I would expect it to be promptly obeyed. I cannot be mistaken in his object. It was to keep open the vacancies which have occurred until the next class at West Point shall graduate, that they might be filled by them. My policy is to appoint meritorious private soldiers when they are competent and have distinguished themselves.  

Roger Jones himself was not a graduate of West Point, but he, like other officers of his time, realized the great improvement in professional level that the West Pointers were beginning to bring to the Army. Jones showed signs of being the sort of bureaucrat who recognized that routine procedures if they are based on solid and good policy decisions are threatened by any action that would easily lend itself to political motivation, if not blatant political exploitation. He chose the bureaucratic tactics of obstruction. The fact that the entire question went to the President, indicates how little control over the bureau chiefs  

Secretary of War Marcy had.

Roger Jones had dealt with the various problems of obtaining and retaining enough men to fill the ranks of the Army. His office had presided over the elaboration of the General Recruiting Service, which saw training introduced into the recruiting depots and rendezvous. The recruiters had been under constraints as to the enlistment of foreign but the Adjutant General had secured as liberal a recruiting policy as possible for them. Roger Jones had seen the dangers of a bounty system and had campaigned along with the Commanding General for the introduction of a delayed or retained bounty.

As irregularities developed in the recruiting service, Jones attempted to police them in the name of the Army's integrity. He also sought to meet the fluctuations in needs and available recruits by constantly opening or curtailing recruiting stations to fill the Army's current needs.

The Adjutant General also had to deal with the constant problem of desertion and the related areas of discipline and the quality of life of the soldiers. He was regularly concerned at the high desertion rates and sought repeatedly to devise methods of coping with the problem. Alcohol was identified as one of the problems involved, and Jones joined in the effort to eliminate the whiskey ration. The reintroduction of flogging was part of the realization that punishments played their role in curbing desertion rates, though this area did not have such agreement on it as did the area of alcohol. Roger Jones became involved in matters such as pay, chaplains, and uniforms as a result of his concern for the quality of life of the soldiers. The logic was that if the living conditions of
the soldier improved, better troops could be recruited and fewer des-
ersions would take place. Opportunity for advancement was part of
this improvement in the minds of several of the Secretaries of War.
Though the betterment of the non-commissioned officer ranks concerned
Roger Jones, he was less supportive of commissioning from the ranks.
However his office did finally establish a system whereby it was pos-
sible.

The appointment of officers was an issue far bigger than simply
questioning whether West Pointers or enlisted men would hold com-
missioned rank. The world of officer personnel concerns was completely
different from that of enlisted, and we need now turn to that area.
CHAPTER IV

OFFICER PERSONNEL, 1825-1852

The officer in the Army of Roger Jones' time lived an existence entirely different from the enlisted man. The social barriers constituted almost a cast differentiation as might be glimpsed from the infrequency with which one passed from one status to the other. The officers were taken from a different segment of society, served for different motives (it was felt), and left the Army in different ways. The very vocabulary that is used reflects the realities of this difference. The officer was "appointed" rather than "recruited" or "enlisted." In fact the government was usually embarrassed by too many applicants, rather as in the enlisted ranks, too few. The greater numbers of those seeking commissions allowed certain selectivity on the part of the War Department. The issue that the Adjutant General often faced was whether this selectivity was to be on the basis of politics or on a principle more in accord with Army efficiency. In the age of the Jacksonians, when a Secretary of War had uttered the fateful phrase about the spoils belonging to the victors, Roger Jones had a major challenge on his hands.

The vocabulary was different in aspects other than enlistment/appointment. The officer, for instance, was expected to "resign" his office rather than finish a set term of enlistment. Also, we hear little of a problem of desertion among the officers--though some of the other
difficulties were not unheard of, such as alcoholism.

It was not a new thing that officers coming into the Army had to face political discrimination as to whom did and did not receive commissions. Winfield Scott commented on the exclusion of Federalists during the period of Republican domination before the War of 1812.\footnote{Marcus Cunliffe, \textit{Soldiers and Civilians} (Boston, 1968), p. 285.}

Among the appointments to West Point during the period of Roger Jones was Robert E. Lee, whose connections in Jones' native Virginia were not insignificant, but also Abraham VanBuren whose father was a New York politician on the rise. The names of offspring of the illustrious in politics recur. Appearing are the sons of Henry Clay and Samuel Swartwout (notorious Jackson appointee to the Customs House of New York). There is also the son of Commanding General Jacob Brown and the nephews of Secretary of War Lewis Cass. The Donelson brothers who attended West Point had a yet more illustrious uncle in Andrew Jackson.\footnote{Ibid., p. 162.}

But these obviously politically-inspired appointments to West Point were on the whole accepted by the Army and, in fact, many rose to give great service. The resentment of the Regular Army officers was usually reserved for those who were appointed directly from civil life, often to an elevated rank, and always, it was felt, with the darkest of political motivation and maneuverings. There had been a long period of a shrinking army, and the already recounted political difficulties over who would be forced out dominated the scene until the 1830s. Then when the Army engaged in the Seminole War, more positions became available. The
Jacksonian Democrats could not resist the urge to satisfy political requirements and fill new officer slots at the same time. It seems impossible to determine whether Roger Jones' later Whig sentiments stemmed from before or developed after the Democrats' appointments.

Politics played a role in 1833 when a regiment of Dragoons were raised. Some fifteen officers were appointed to it straight from civil pursuits, including its commander who received the rank of colonel. This was Henry Dodge from Michigan, an area with which Secretary of War Lewis Cass had long had political ties.

When the Second Dragoons were raised in 1836, some thirty-three more civilians received the appointments rather than already serving officers. The pattern continued with thirty civil appointments in 1837 and sixty in 1838. In 1839 the number of civil appointments dropped to thirty-three. After that there seemed a lull until the Mexican War brought a fresh demand.3

To an extent, this reflected the civil populations' distrust for the "elite" of the officer corps. This was the age of the Jacksonian Democrats and they were highly distrustful of any group claiming special expertise or a superior right to hold the government offices. West Point particularly came under attack. The academy was felt by many to be a place of privilege producing a privileged class that, rather than harboring democratic sentiments, leaned toward a caste system. The Adjutant General was responsible for the acquisition of officers and received the reports of West Point on the efforts to instill professionalism. We have

3Ibid., p. 134.
already seen how Roger Jones responded to an attack on this source of superior junior officers. But there were other attacks on West Point.

For example, in 1837, a committee of Congress proposed that instead of West Point, there be initiated a program of instruction on the campuses of the civil colleges and universities which would teach the rudiments of military arts to the undergraduates. These in turn could receive commissions if they so desired. They also recommended that West Point be turned into an advanced school for officers already serving with the Army. Such suggestions have an ironic ring considering the future actions of the Army. But when made, they were dismissed for what they were: attacks on West Point.

The same committee also suggested that the same logic which allowed education at government expense for military service, should also hold for such financing for the education of civil servants. Roger Jones, as an employee of government civil servants, must have read that with interest. It was not so ridiculous an idea to those who had to employ the civil servant. But as we have seen, the Adjutant General preferred to get his clerks from the ranks of the Army. ⁴

This tendency to name persons from the civil life should not be made to seem a totally capricious process. In fact, the Adjutant General had to administer an elaborate system at different periods for such appointments. There was a board constituted in 1838 for the purpose of selecting those who would receive commissions in the units raised that year. In 1839, the Secretary of War directed that this be systematized. Each

September a board would be convened by the Adjutant General. This board would accept applications only from unmarried men from twenty to twenty-five years of age in sound physical condition and with good moral behavior records. The possible commissionees were then given an examination which covered mathematics, geography, and popular astronomy, history, and U. S. political and Constitutional principles.  

Then came the Mexican War and the appointment policies of President Polk. The President was concerned with the fact, as he perceived it, that the higher ranks of the Army were composed entirely of Whigs or, as he phrased it, "Federalists." He felt that the general officers and the bureau chiefs were uniformly against the Administration and its politics. Therefore he felt the need of naming persons with proper Democratic views to positions at all levels.  

In the process, President Polk became much more involved in the appointment process than normally would be the case of even a Secretary of War. Incessant political pressure forced the President to seek some relief. After examining a great deal of papers and recommendations on the applications of different seekers after office, the President attempted to shift some of the work to the Secretary of War. But he tried "in vain to turn over the horde of applicants to the Secretary of War, that I might have his Report upon their respective merits." The President protested that "I have pushed them off and fought them with both

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5 Ibíd., p. 206.

hands like a man fighting fire, and endeavored to drive them to the Secretary of War ... It has all been in vain."

Very likely the Adjutant General felt no great sympathy for the beleaguered President, because everyone in Washington quickly realized that Polk did not trust either Roger Jones or William Marcy to make such delicate political decisions. Polk kept the power of decision in the White House. As Marcy wrote to one Congressman: "I presume you are not ignorant ... that the selections are not made by the War Department, but by the President himself."  

The result was that members of Congress exerted increasing pressure on the President in behalf of their respective protégés. When the time came to name the officers of the volunteer force, the President was waited upon by an "unusually large crowd of visitors" including delegations from Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee. Polk's comment on these gentlemen was that "the selfishness, and I might add the corruption of a few members of Congress, if disclosed, would be incredible to the public." The President could at any time have at least partly eliminated the personal pressure and much of the politics of the appointments by simply turning the entire area over to the Adjutant General of the Army who could handle the process by means of military boards.

7 Polk, Diary, Vol. II, p. 382 (February 19, 1847).
8 As quoted in White, Jacksonians, p. 56.
The President passed over the claims of the Regular Army in making appointments for what he considered the very best of reasons. For example, in May of 1846 he noted:

The pressure for appointments in the new Regiment of Riflemen is beyond anything of the kind I have witnessed since I have been President. There are many hundred applicants, and but three Field officers, ten Captains, eleven First Lieutenants, and 10 Second Lieutenants to be appointed. Upwards of one hundred officers of the Army have applied for promotion. Except in the case of Capt. Fremont, I have upon full consideration determined to select the officers from civil life, for the reason that if any of the officers of the present army are promoted, it will produce heartburning with all the other officers of the same grade who have performed equal service and have equal merit with themselves.... Moreover it is peculiarly a Western Regiment, and I will give a larger proportion of officers to that portion of the Union than to any other. Besides the reason assigned for not selecting the officers from the Army, it is generally expected that they should be selected from citizens.10

One must wonder how Polk could feel there would be any less "heartburning" of the regular officers if they were to be excluded rather than have some of their number appointed. Given the highly partisan nature of Polk's actions, it was natural that the worst intencions would be assumed to operate. The President was given a letter written by Winfield Scott, the Commanding General, to a Mr. Archer.

Gen'l. Scott in that letter spoke of the new Regiment about to be raised, and said it was intended to make officers for Western Democrats, or rather, as he expressed it, to give them pay, and said he would never dishonour himself by recommending anyone to this administration for office.... The letter was of a partisan character, wholly unbecoming the commander in chief of the army, and highly exceptionable in its tenor and language towards the President. It

proved to me that Gen'l Scott was not only hostile, but recklessly vindictive in feelings towards my administration.11

In December of the same year, President Polk was again complaining to his diary of the burdens of his high office:

Senators and Representatives, however, called, and were urgent to see me, and [I] was compelled to yield or give them office [offence? seems like a Freudian slip]. When I did see them, I found that they were upon the very patriotic and never-ending business of seeking office for their constituents and friends. Every day that I remain in the Presidential office satisfies me more and more of the selfishness and want of patriotism of men in high office. To accomplish their own selfish ends members of Congress constantly deceive me in their recommendations for office, and the consequence is that many bad appointments are made; and when they are made the whole responsibility devolves on me, and those who have importuned me to make them never assume any portion of the responsibility, but on the contrary in some instances carefully conceal the fact that the obnoxious appointments have been made at their insistence. I am disgusted with trickery and treachery practised upon me by some members of Congress in their recommendations for office.12

Yet whose responsibility was it that Polk operated on a personal Presidential selection process? Ultimately he must bear the weight of responsibility for those "obnoxious appointments" because he dictated the departure from normal routine in the Adjutant General's Office.

Even in the determination of the size of the Army when peace returned, the partisanship of the period predominated, and not the least of the considerations was the concerns over the number of officer positions to be filled. Some of the problems were quite similar to those faced by Calhoun when he tried to reduce the Army in 1821.

11 Ibid., p. 414.
Polk confided to his diary that he was

...decidedly opposed to an increase of the army during the period of peace. There is a great disposition with many members of Congress, particularly of the Whig party, to increase it. The officers of the old army are in favor of an increase. This is natural because their profession is arms, and the larger the army the greater the prospects of promotion. Many of the officers who have been in service in Mexico, and who go out of service at the close of the war, are now in Washington and are anxious to have an increased peace establishment in the hope that they may secure for themselves appointments. Many of these officers are exerting their influence with members of Congress with a view to secure appointments for themselves. Some Whig members of Congress favor the measure because it is in harmony with their general policy. 13

Leaving aside the increased requirements of the Army in protecting and patrolling the vast new territories of the United States, we can easily see there was little love between the President and his regular Army officers. Not the least of the differences of opinion between Polk and the Army generals and bureau chiefs were his attitudes toward officer personnel policies.

From his office in Washington, D. C., Roger Jones kept an eye on the entire officer corps. Having the responsibilities of taking actions on any promotions that might occur, he needed to know the caliber of each officer. As early as the reduction in force of the Calhoun days, the War Department had received confidential reports on the behavior and ability of the different officers from their respective supervisors. 14

This sort of information was invaluable when occasion arose to promote an officer outside the routine of normal regimental seniority—such as in

13 Polk, Diary, Vol. IV, p. 48 (August 1, 1848).

the event of a new regiment being formed. Further, it was the determination of the Adjutant General which officers would be put on various details; the most notable that we have already mentioned was recruiting duty. But this also included staff duty to include generals' aides.  

He also was responsible for constituting boards which involved not only the selection of the officers involved, but the critical determination of relative claims of rank among those selected.

It seemed as the normal rise in rank by promotion became rarer and rarer, the fineness by which prerogatives of seniority was measured increased. The Army and Navy Chronicle in 1835 had an estimate based on the previous ten years' rate of promotion that a lieutenant who was twenty years old on commissioning could expect to be some fifty-four before he would make the exalted rank of captain, and that further promotion was virtually impossible. A lieutenant in 1838 was looking forward to his captaincy at age sixty.  

The Mexican War briefly sped up the pace of promotions. Much of the gallantry and even desire to get to the field however was motivated by the realization that this was their only brief chance of "glory and a grade." Promotion they realized would be slower again after the war.

Their rank and their glory were the publicly-accepted motivations of officers of the period. Pay certainly could not have inspired too many in the profession. General Jacob Brown in 1825 stated that:

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15 Erasmus Darwin Keyes, Fifty Years' Observation of Men and Events, Civil and Military (New York, 1884), p. 3.

16 As quoted in Gunliffe, Soldiers, pp. 357, 134.
The commissioned officer finds his reward in the honor which clothes his profession; in a refined spirit of chivalry, congenial with its character; and in that ready passport to the highest circles of society, guaranteed to him by his commission. 17

However such high and idealistic motivations were not always enough. Occasionally the high ideals carried the officers right out of the service, as happened with the religious revival that hit West Point in 1825. But, most frequently, it was the need of money proportionate to their abilities that drove the officer out. In the early days when there still remained an informality of the relationship between governmental branches, some thirteen captains petitioned the Congress for a wage hike. Within a year, in 1827, the Congressmen responded by raising captains' pay by some ten dollars a month. 18

Lack of adequate compensation and primitive conditions of service sometimes drove officers to drink. This was of course felt to be a very bad example to the troops, but the very fact that a Secretary of War would proudly report to Congress that he considered the officer corps had been made "essentially exempt from the degrading vice of intemperance," leads to the belief that all was not sober in the officer ranks. 19

The Army and Navy Chronicle published a letter from a captain signing himself "A Young Man of Twenty-two Years Service" in 1836. His pay

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17 Jacob Brown, Annual Report, 1825, p. 10.


amounted to $64 per month. While staying at a hotel in New Orleans he mused that "The 'Head Cook,' a worthy colored man in this Hotel, receives $75 per month... having a balance in favor of the knight of the spit of $11 per month." While the captain had to expend $3 a day on room and board, the cook received his free.

It requires but little ... calculation to determine which individual is best rewarded for his services, according to his supposed ... acquirements; and what the state of the Captain's finances will be at the expiration of the month.20

The result was resignations. There were some forty-one resignations in 1835 and another one hundred and seventeen in 1836. These were, by rank, two colonels, one lieutenant colonel, twenty-seven captains, one hundred and nineteen subalterns, two paymasters, one surgeon, and six assistant surgeons. Of these, thirty-two had received their commissions from civil life; and 1836 was a year when the Army needed all its experienced officers to fight the frustrating Second Seminole War.21

The linkage between pay and resignations was acknowledged by a committee of Congress in 1844 when they reported that the cost of living had drastically risen as a result of widespread speculation, but the pay of the officers had remained the same.

Here, then, we see the expense of living greatly enhanced, the style of living partaking of the magnificence of the imagined acquisition of wealth, and the officers pay remaining without increase. On the other hand, we see most tempting offers of large salaries ... and these same

20 As quoted in Cunliffe, Soldiers, p. 131.

officers possessing all the necessary qualifications to fill the situations thus proffered. Is it, then a matter of reproach that a man seeks by honest means to improve his condition in life? 22

But what of the officers who did not resign? They had no alternative but to grow old and die in the active service of their country. There were no provisions for a retired list or a pension that officers who had served their useful term could easily and gracefully pass to. An officer who resigned his commission, forfeited all claims on the bounty of his country's treasury. He would find himself too old for other employment, yet receiving no further recompense from the government. The result was inevitable. Officers stayed on active duty for far beyond the time when they could make any significant contribution. Younger officers were stifled and denied promotion, because higher ranking officers (often too infirm to perform their required duties) clung to the few positions available. The solution to many of the Army's ills--overaged officers, slow promotions and the injustice of lack of reward for the older officer--was apparent to Roger Jones. Despite his unremitting campaign to secure a pension system, he himself was forced to continue in active service until he died after twenty-seven years as Adjutant General of the Army. Only after his death did the Congress act to establish a retirement system and only did so with the spur of the Civil War to goad them into action.

There was of course the example of the British Army with its sizeable numbers of officers on half-pay. But it was a dangerous precedent to cite. There was a great deal of republican repugnance to saddle the

22 As quoted in Cunliffe, Soldiers, p. 10.
young American government with such expensive trappings of the royal system. Besides the entire system was under attack by the radicals in England.  

The problem really came into focus in context of the war against the Seminoles. It became apparent that many of the officers of the Army were not physically capable of taking to the field for active campaigning in Florida. Rather than simply force these officers into resignations that would condemn them to impoverishment in civil life, the Secretary recommended to Congress in 1838 that these officers be allowed to vacate their positions but retain their base pay. The younger officers would be thus given the titles of the higher grade, even if they could not receive the pay for same during the life of their service. Congress failed to act on these recommendations.  

The same scheme was proposed by General Macomb in 1840 rather than half-pay which he felt was not generous enough to entice the needed retirements. He got neither full nor half pay from Congress for the retirees.  

The Secretary of War in 1844, William Wilkins, put his proposal to the Congress in these terms:  

I do not consider it to be disadvantageous in the military service of a republic to encourage resignations, thereby causing enough vacancies to afford reasonable opportunities.

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23 Ibid., p. 55.


of promotions. Advancement in rank is the best stimulant to the zeal of the promising officer.... I shall venture the proposition, that no army can ever endanger the republic if its officers after any term of service, again become simply private citizens. Expediency, therefore, leads to the encouragement of resignations. This encouragement should be founded in justice to the faithful servant to the public. Twenty-five years' continuous service is enough to exact from any man; and it may safely be assigned as a general limit of the greatest efficiency of an officer. It would also enable him to retire at a time of life when still young enough to enter upon other pursuits. I would, therefore, submit the proposition for the passage of a new law entitling an officer, after twenty-five years' good and faithful service, to a section of public land, and two years' furlough, on full pay, with the condition, should he avail himself of this privilege, that his commission be vacated at the termination of his furlough. The officer thus voluntarily retiring carries with him valuable information into the ranks of civil life, which might be applied to the instruction of the militia, and would always be available upon any emergency requiring the employment of military experience.26

Congress did not act.

The issue became critical again as the United States fought the war with Mexico. Roger Jones prepared a special report that dealt with the shocking conditions in the field grades of the Army. Field grades consisted of the majors, lieutenant colonels, and colonels. He noted that eight out of twelve of the artillery field grade officers could not take the field because of age, wounds, and other disabilities. Only one artillery field grade officer was with Taylor's forces at the time. The infantry was hardly better off. One-third of the twenty-four field graders were so incapacitated as to be prevented from taking the field. Jones stated:

...there never has been an Army before so inadequately provided with field officers as that under General Taylor at this time.

But the Adjutant General went on to seek justice for these disabled officers. "Many of the officers not now qualified for active duty, it should be borne in mind, have well and faithfully performed their part—such as can perform light service are employed accordingly, and those who cannot merit and receive the kind treatment of the Government." 27

It is obvious that the Adjutant General, out of consideration for the aging officers had during peace time used his powers to assignment to provide easier, or no duties for them. Since the needs of the war now demanded field grade officers, the Army's manpower expert and manager suggested the expediency of authorizing another major to the establishment of a regiment. Roger Jones repeated the request in December of that year, noting that already battalions were under the command of captains. 28 On February 11, 1847, Congress granted the extra majors to be selected from the captains of the Army. 29

The appeals for a retired list were made year after year by the Adjutant General and the Commanding General and the Secretaries of War. 30

27 Roger Jones to William L. Marcy, July 31, 1846, "Subjects No. 40," Jones Papers, Record Group 94, National Archives.


Even President Polk agreed to the inability of many officers to serve but was somewhat less sympathetic. 31

But of these officers who did succeed in taking the field, some of the older ones gave occasion for such comments from the field, as:

The Army is almost paralyzed by the imbecility of its old officers.... Congress could not possibly pass at this time an act which would more essentially benefit the army than that establishing a retired list, and in saying this, I feel safe in adding that it is the uniform opinion of the whole army.

Though this was written to a member of the Senate by his cousin, Cond- did not act. When Roger Jones himself died, the Congress still had not acted. He died in office after forty-four years of federal service, twenty-seven of them as Adjutant General. 32

But between the original appointment and their resignation or death, the officers of the Army had basically their patriotism, sense of duty, and pride and honor in their rank to sustain their motivation. Of all the Army's policies, those which affected the officers' rank were the most deeply felt. The possibility of promotion, and the relative position with their peers were the most burning issues of the officers throughout the ranks. Promotions through major were by strict seniority within the regiments. Above major, promotions were made upon the advice of the Adjutant General, the nomination of the President, and the confirmation of the Senate. Obviously, the Adjutant General has less impact on the Chief Executive's decision on general officers than on field

31 Polk, Diary, Vol. II, p. 117.

grade. Since the Army was so small at this period, Jones was able to know each officer and personally was able to manage their careers easily. When there was need of identifying who should fill a particular detail, the Adjutant General was able to quickly name the officer he considered best qualified. Or if it was a question of who should get the positions in a new regiment that the President was willing to have officered by regulars, again Roger Jones could supply the name. Controversy on the whole did not surround this process. But there were personnel policies that affected rank and promotions that did in the period of Jones' tenure occupy a most central and controversial place in the activities of the Adjutant General's Office—the matter of brevets.

Brevets were defined by an Adjutant General's Department officer of a latter period who had made an extensive study of the matter as: "...a commission conferring upon an officer a grade in the army additional to and higher than that which, at the time it is bestowed, he holds by virtue of his commission in a particular corps of the legally established military organization." These brevet promotions were given as a reward for service, usually gallantry in battle. The question of prerequisites pertaining to brevet rank was the subject of a bitter and extended controversy in the first half of the 19th century.

General James B. Fry noted that:

...with all its advantages for purposes of special command, and however valuable and desirable it may be as a means of reward, brevet rank, as we have it, has always been and must continue to be attended with evils that are absolutely unavoidable whenever commissions, in two different grades, each conferring eligibility to command, may be held by an officer at the same time. Nothing is more fruitful of disorder in the military service than doubts and disputes in regard to rank and rights to command, and nothing is more fertile in producing these doubts and disputes than a system of double commissions.... 34

The use of brevet commissions was not something new between the War of 1812 and the Mexican War. In fact, it stretched back to the practices of the British Army from which it had been copied even in the colonial period. When the Americans drew up their original Articles of War the provisions for brevets were copied directly from English models. The use of brevets is attributed to the period when the British Army consisted of regiments in great part "owned" by their colonels. When troops of different regiments were to serve together, each with its officers owing their rank not to the government but their respective colonels, then brevet or general rank awarded by the government prevailed. 35

During the War of 1812, the practice of brevets in the American Army hinged more around the reward aspect than the rights and prerogatives it bestowed. Congress passed a bill providing a legal basis for

36 As quoted in ibid., p. 12. It is interesting to note that similar charges have been brought to the twentieth century Army practice of having Regular, Reserve, and active duty commissions, two of which are held at one time in many cases.

the awarding of brevets by the President on July 6, 1812. Some were greatly in favor of the usage. For example, General Winfield Scott, who had some reason to favor it as we shall see, went so far as to contend that a brevet commission was superior to a regular one. A regular commission simply expressed "special trust and confidence" or in other words, according to Scott, the hope that in the future the officer would be able to display the talent, courage, etc. expected of one of that grade. However, a brevet, the general contended, was awarded upon evidence that the officers had actually displayed the various sought-after virtues. 36 Others were not so attached to the brevet as Winfield Scott. During the War of 1812 brevets were passed out so freely that in the minds of many, they were valueless. As one captain put it: "Brevet rank in our army is getting to be 'dog cheap.' When they make 2nd lieutenants brevet lst lieutenants, I think it time to stop, and wish the general officers of the army would use their influence to put a stop to a practice that is destroying the army." 37

The generals were deeply involved in the system of brevets and hardly likely to furnish unbiased judgments in the matter. The Army Register arranged the generals in order of rank, and thus precedence and seniority was taken from where each general's name appeared on the critical list. The Army Register in 1815 listed the generals by their highest rank, brevet or regular. The order was generals Brown, Jackson, Scott, Ripley, Gaines, and Macomb. But the order would have been drastically altered

36 As quoted in Fry, Brevets, pp. 12, 20.
37 Ibid., p. 79.
if the regular rank rather than the brevet was acknowledged. It would have been Brown, Jackson, Macomb, Gaines, Scott, and Ripley. The regular rank was based on seniority and the day the officer was selected for the higher rank. But Gaines and Scott were named to the regular rank of Brigadier General on the same day, and Gaines was held to be senior because his name appeared first on the order which had them in alphabetical order. However, Winfield Scott had been breveted for his actions at the battle of Lundy's Lane, and his brevet rank was to date from the day of the battle, July 24, 1814. Gaines only received his brevet to the rank of Major General at Fort Erie on August 15, 1814. If brevet ranks were considered in determining seniority, Scott ranked Gaines.

The contentions of those who felt that brevet conferred an actual rank and precedence were greatly furthered when the Adjutant and Inspector General, who was deemed the determining authority in such matters, issued an order to Scott and Gaines on May 17, 1815. The order read "Major general Scott and Major general Gaines will for the present act as Brigadier-generals in the Division of the South." This, at the very least, seemed to imply that they were basically Major Generals (in accordance with their respective brevet ranks) rather than Brigadier Generals (in accordance with their regular ranks). 38

The respective claims of generals Scott and Gaines were further complicated by a host of conflicting acknowledgments and precedents that filled the period before the issue was brought to a head with the

38 Ibid., p. 81.
reduction in force of 1821. 39 Thus at the same time the Adjutant General's Office was officially launched, but the fact, leaderless, the simmering issue of brevets exploded. The potential for dispute between Scott and Gaines had been muted because both were ranked as brigadier generals by Alexander Macomb (whose brevet was much after theirs in its date. He did not get a date of brevet until September 11, 1814). Further, both Scott and Gaines had several superiors between them and the top grades of the Army. Then came the reduction in force. Andrew Jackson left the service, Macomb accepted the post of Chief of Engineers with a reduction in regular rank to colonel (retaining his brevet as Major General), and the only one between Scott and Gaines and the newly created Commanding General's position was the ailing Jacob Brown. (Brown suffered a stroke in October, 1821, that left him temporarily paralyzed).

As if the entire area was not sufficiently obscured, the order naming Alexander Macomb to the job of Chief of Engineers was phrased:

"Brevet Major General Alexander Macomb, late Brigadier-General, to be Colonel of Engineers, July 6, 1812, with the brevet rank of Brigadier-General January 24, 1814." This last brevet was one for his staff position, and did not invalidate the brevet he had won for gallantry at Plattsburg. When Macomb found out that both Gaines and Scott had succeeded in getting paid at their brevet rank of Major General, he similarly applied. In 1822 Macomb received the pay and back pay in

39Ibid., p. 96; Alexander Macomb to John Quincy Adams, November 15, 1828, "Select Papers," Record Group 94, National Archives.
accordance with the brevet rank of Major General. 40

There was no hope for clarification of the nature of brevets by looking at the regulations because a disinterested person had not been chosen to draw up the regulations in 1821. Winfield Scott was chosen, and of course General Gaines protested that the critical article (Article 3) was framed in favor of brevets (therefore of author Scott.) Gaines ignored the regulations and overturned a case appealed to him from subordinates on the basis of them. Scott took all this personally. 41

However, this is not to say that Scott and Gaines had no area of agreement on brevets. We have already noted that the two rivals had received pay in their brevet grades. This was counter to the wishes and ruling of Secretary of War Calhoun. They appealed his decision and in a decision from Attorney General William Wirt on December 29, 1821, they vindicated the principle that with the proper number of subordinates, the brevet entitled on to the pay of the higher grade. More than one person would regret that the Attorney General had not gone on at that time to define the questions of seniority. 42

The 1821 version of the regulations was the subject of no little controversy. Not only was the dispute over the section on brevets, but the official version at the War Department was not worded the same as the

40 As quoted in Fry, Brevets, p. 91.

41 Ibid., p. 97.

42 Ibid., p. 96; Charles Winslow Elliott, Winfield Scott, the Soldier and the Man (New York, 1937), p. 228.
version examined by Congress. In 1822 Congress felt obliged to withdraw its formal approval of the regulations and permit the President and Secretary of War to make whatever changes were deemed necessary. Again the vital question was avoided. 43

By 1824 the difference between Scott and Gaines had turned quite bitter. This was a period in which comparatively young men had been raised during war quickly to the very highest levels of the Army and praised as national heroes—only to find themselves stagnating in a peacetime and shrinking army competing with one another for every scrap of honor or prestige or power. This was also a period when men high in the government were inclined to public feuding. Finally one must realize when dealing with Gaines and Scott that these two gentlemen each established records for invective and vituperation that one hopes will stand unmatched in the annals of the Republic.

The two rival generals started with inflammatory letters addressed to one another. This progressed to the point of Scott's challenging Gaines to a duel which happily did not take place. Then they resorted to an appeal to official channels. Scott initiated action with a claim for rank and precedence over Gaines which he submitted to the Adjutant General's Office. Gaines in turn addressed a letter to General Brown as Commanding General. Scott replied to this letter with one of his own, provoking Gaines into addressing a letter to the Secretary of War. Meanwhile, pamphlets on the subject of the respective claims were also pouring forth. General Jessup, the Quartermaster General had written "Remarks

43 As quoted in Fry, Brevets, p. 89; Wiltse, Calhoun, p. 252.
on the subject of brevet rank" in 1823 which clearly placed him in the camp of Winfield Scott. A pamphlet upholding Gaines appeared in New York in 1825 with its anonymous author said to be General Gaines' own aide-de-camp. 44

Finally the entire affair was becoming so much of an open scandal that it was decided to submit the issues to a board of officers headed by Jacob Brown, the Commanding General. However the board deliberately avoided the issue. It reported

The board having devoted itself with great labor and assiduity from the first moment of assembling to the examination of the subject of brevet rank of major general, and, having found, notwithstanding every possible exertion to come to a decision, that it cannot arrive at any result which will be useful to the army or which will aid the President of the United States in making a decision in the case, unanimously beg leave to be excused from the further consideration of it. 45

The result of all the avoidance and confusion surrounding the question of brevet resulted in a major crisis at the time of General Brown's death. It was felt that the new Commanding General should be the senior general next in order of precedence. But the only certitude in the area was that a determination in favor of either Scott or Gaines would embitter the other and result in a resignation if not a challenge to a duel. President Adams' intervention with an assertion of the Chief Executive's prerogative to appoint the Commanding General he wanted, only avoided the issue again. But as we shall see when we turn to the politics of the War Department, this was nearly enough to lose the Army the

44 As quoted in Fry, Brevets, p. 97.
valuable services of Winfield Scott. Of course the issue was raised again on General Macomb's death when Scott and Gaines again contended for the first honors in the Army.

During the war with Mexico, the question of brevets came up again. General Taylor requested Roger Jones to give an official opinion on the relative weights to be given to brevet and regular rank. The response came from Winfield Scott but the assistance of such staff officers as Jones and Jessup could not be doubted. The Commanding General's official opinion was perhaps the most extreme statement on the subject of brevets made. It immediately provoked a protest from those officers who would be hurt by the decision as it would be applied to their own cases. 46

The result was the "Corpus Christi Memorial" of December 12, 1845 which we will deal with in detail later because it concerns the relationship between the line and staff of the army more than the prerogatives of brevets.

President Polk had recourse to the use of brevets to further his plan of commissioning enlisted men who performed valiantly on the field of battle. Congress on March 3, 1847, authorized that

...when any non-commissioned officer shall distinguish himself or may have distinguished himself, in the service, the President of the United States shall be and is authorized, on the recommendation of the commanding officer of the regiment to which such non-commissioned officer belongs, to attach him, by brevet of the lowest grade of rank, with the usual pay and emoluments of such grade, to any corps of the army; provided that there shall not be more than one so attached to any one company at the same time; and when any private soldier shall so

46 Ibid., p. 162.
distinguish himself, the President may, in like manner, grant him a certificate of merit which shall entitle him to additional pay at the rate of two dollars per month.\footnote{Statutes at Large 184.}

There was some thought that brevets were in some way built on particular regular ranks, and that when the regular rank was vacated the brevets built on it would crumble like so many paper ornaments. That this was not the case could be established by examples of transfers from one line to another during the Mexican War. One such example was the transfer of R. C. Drum from an Infantry to an Artillery regiment in 1848. This was a precedent not without impact, as later Drum was to become the Adjutant General himself and be required to determine on matters of brevets. All his brevets remained despite a change in his basic regular commission.\footnote{As quoted in Fry, \textit{Brevets}, p. 214.}

The overabundance of brevets encountered in the War of 1812 was repeated in the Mexican War. Of the 964 officers that stayed with the army, some 224 held brevet promotions.

The Secretary of War tried to prevent an entire new set of difficulties over the Mexican War brevets. He remembered only too well the disastrous effects of the 1812 War. Secretary George W. Crawford wrote the Congress in 1849:

Great embarrassment has heretofore arisen from the supposed actual rank which brevet commissions confer. Their recent multiplication will increase the difficulties and inconveniences to which the military service has been exposed. Apart from the conflicting claims of officers holding brevet commissions, it may be affirmed that instances frequently occur when pay is paramount to rank, and when the brevet
rank itself cannot in legal contemplation take effect. In the case of staff officers who have no command, and who can exercise none except by special assignment, these brevet commissions are only honorary distinctions; and examined closely, this is the basis on which rests all brevets. The presumption is reasonable and just that every officer performs his required duty, and he who does more is entitled to honorable reward. It is, then, respectfully submitted whether the object in authorizing this class of commissions is not accomplished by retaining them as honorary distinctions, and restricting the officers by holding them to their lineal rank and pay according to the commissions by which they are mustered in their respective regiments and corps. If any exceptions be made to the rule here proposed, it is believed that, in view of the more efficient discipline and service of the troops, brevet rank and pay should exist only when volunteers and militia are united with the regular army, or when officers having brevet commissions are detailed for duty, by special assignment, with difficult or expensive commands in remote departments or divisions. According to law, brevet rank takes effect in detachments composed of different corps; but from the liberal construction which has heretofore been given to the articles of war, it would seem that every garrison at each of our numerous and widely extended posts is considered a detachment from the army without any definite conception of the locality where its main body is concentrated.49

One way for the Army to settle such questions was to refer them to the deliberation of a board of officers, and in 1850 such a board was convened. The chairman of the board was none other than Winfield Scott, Commanding General of the Army. The board did not really solve any of the issues, though they did note part of the nature of the problem. They reported as follows:

...in England, as in the United States, there is no written law solving, in express terms, the rights and duties, except very partially, of regimental rank, brevet rank, or staff rank, toward each other; nor has the code of either country any table or scale of rank, to show

the regular subordination of titles or grades. (Indeed
the articles of war in the two countries (almost iden-
tical), on the subject of rank, would have been almost
unintelligible but for the military common law, viz.:
'the custom of war in like cases,' applied as a rule of
construction or explanation to those articles. This
'custom' being in all cases strictly followed in the
British army, uniformity of practice therein has been
the result. Not so in our service. With substantially
the same articles of war, adopted by Congress, September
30, 1776, and again reenacted April 10, 1806, it cannot
be denied that doubts and difficulties have, in the
last thirty odd years, arisen with us on every head of
rank and command now under consideration.\footnote{50}

The board did not end the controversy. Nor was Winfield Scott over
with his battles concerning brevet rank. It was only after Roger Jones'
death, when another and more hostile Adjutant General was handling the
personnel office that Scott got into his most violent argument over his
brevet rank. He would have no less an opponent on the subject than
Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War.

Brevets for gallantry have absorbed our attention. But there were
other forms of brevets given for other things besides valor in the face
of the enemy. For a while there were provisions for brevets for ser-
vice. Essentially this was an attempt by the Army (more particularly by
Adjutant General Roger Jones) to provide some sort of advancement and in-
centive to those officers who might otherwise have felt that they were
stagnating in grade. These brevets provided the officer who had served
faithfully and well for over ten years in the same grade a promotion, ad-
mittely for the most part honorary but as the Secretary of War pointed
out, often with pay advantages attached.

\footnote{50}{As quoted in Fry, \textit{Brevets}, p. 198.}
These brevets for service, unlike the war time brevets, were given out sparingly. Only seventeen brevet promotions to the general officer ranks were given prior to the Mexican War. This reluctance to give the brevets for service and the undoubted merit of those receiving them was a pattern that was to last up to the Civil War. 51

On July 6, 1812, Congress had enacted provisions for brevets for ten years' service in one grade which at first were interpreted to apply only to the topographical engineers. However on April 5, 1824, the Attorney General gave an opinion that greatly expanded the use of such brevets. He maintained that the act did not limit such brevets to one corps. The Attorney General went on to examine whether such a brevet could be awarded above and on top of another brevet granted for gallantry. Here he referred not to the 1812 act but to the Congresionally sanctioned practice of putting one brevet for gallantry on top of another of the same sort. The Attorney General saw no legal bar to brevets for service being placed and conferred in addition to and on top of brevets for gallantry, and he saw every reason to do so from expediency. However he pointed out that the brevet for service in any grade entitled one to brevetting to the next grade only after service for ten years in the next grade below that to which one was raised by the brevet. In other words, a captain who held a brevet for gallantry to the rank of major could be breveted to lieutenant colonel only if he had performed for ten years in his breveted rank of major (i.e., received pay for acting in his breveted grade under those special circumstances where the

51 Wade, "Roads to the Top," p. 158.
rank was effective rather than honorary). 52

Roger Jones submitted reports on the claims of officers to such brevets on December 6, 1826, January 20, 1827, and November 25, 1829. He succeeded in pushing through for Senate confirmation in 1829 a number of these brevets for service, but then the Congress forced a three-year halt in the awarding of such brevets. 53

The Adjutant General was able to convince the Secretaries of War of the justice and wisdom of such brevet promotions (particularly in light of the lack of more substantial promotions during this period). The Secretary on November 21, 1831, stated that such brevets

...cannot be abused, for ten years' services certainly qualify an officer for a higher grade, and to attain by brevet promotion the rank of brigadier general, from the commencement of the term of a captain, requires a period of forty years; and if to this be added the necessary progress through the two lower grades of first and second lieutenant, the prospect of a young man, on entering our service, is not very flattering. Nor has he much to hope for from his pay. It is barely sufficient to enable the officers, with rigid economy, to live respectively, and few of them leave for their children any inheritance but a good name. It is important that a just pride of character, personal and professional, should be encouraged in a class of men whose usefulness depends essentially on the cultivation of such a feeling. This system of promotion, so useful in war and economical in peace, offers honorable objects of ambition, and cannot fail to stimulate the exertions of officers of the army. 54

The Secretary did not propose a full promotion under such conditions on

52 As quoted in Fry, Brevets, p. 146; 2 Statutes at Large 784.
53 As quoted in Fry, Brevets, p. 148.
54 Ibid., p. 149; Lewis Cass, Annual Report, 1831, p. 25.
the grounds that the regimental system under which the Army was operating did not permit promotions except into slots authorized in the establishment by Congress.

Secretary of War Lewis Cass returned to the subject of urging such brevets on the Congress in 1833. He felt motivated to do so "as an act of justice to those entitled to them." But still the suspension had remained since 1829. He pleaded that

The officers have earned them by length of service agreeably to the established usage; and to make a discrimination, without any previous declaration, so as to exclude from this advantage those who are at this time entitled to it, does not seem called for by the exigency of any circumstance connected with this subject; and in fact, there are no very obvious reasons, occurring to me, why these professional honors which, in common cases, make no demand upon the Treasury, but serve to foster those professional feelings which give elevation to the military character, should not be granted as they have heretofore been. Under ordinary circumstances, they would produce no practical operation, either with relation to emolument or command. When they should do either it would be precisely when their value would be enhanced by the very state of things producing this change in their operation. When the greater experience of the brevet officers would entitle him to an enlarged command, and to a corresponding rank over those, whether in the regular army or the militia, whose qualifications, so far as these depend on service, are less than his. 55

The Congress responded to the Secretary of War by abolishing the entire ten years service brevet. Apparently the pleas for justice did not meet with the Congress' favor. They did provide however that "nothing herein shall affect any right already acquired by ten years' expired service." This phrase was to leave the door open for much hope at least. 56


56 As quoted in Fry, Brevets, p. 151.
Secretary Cass could rightly feel that Congress had not heeded his remarks. In 1834 he pointed out that the law was particularly harsh and unjust in its effect on those officers who had served part of ten years service with the expectation of receiving a service brevet. He recommended that the law not be applied to those who were in the service going toward service promotions at the time of its enactment. 57

The idea of the ten-year brevets would seem doomed when the Congress ignored the Secretary of War's advice in the area. But Roger Jones kept on urging its restoration, turning in reports on February 4, 1835 and February 26, 1845. The issue eventually died with the increased promotion prospects resulting from the Mexican War. After Roger Jones demonstrated the need for more field grade officers and Congress authorized the promotion into newly authorized positions, the entire question of the ten-year brevets passed into oblivion. Roger Jones had fought for the officer corps of the Army, but on this one, he lost. 58

At least one officer however they made special provisions for. His case is illustrative not only of brevets but of the retirement policies because he was eighty-five years old in 1850 when breveted to the rank of brigadier general for "sustained meritorious conduct." He had spent some fourteen years in foreign armies before he entered the service of the United States as a lieutenant in 1799. He was to rise in the ranks

57 Lewis Cass, Annual Report, 1834, p. 36.
58 As quoted in Fry, Brevets, p. 151.
until his death on active duty in 1857 when he was over ninety-two years old. The suspicion must remain that a retirement pension would have been more appropriate than a brevet. 59

There were brevets given for gallantry and brevets given for ten years service, and then there was rank accorded staff officers which was sometimes credited as a brevet rank and sometimes not. The entire question of rank in the staff positions of the army became tied up in the exact status of officers on staff duty. The system, until the crisis of the Indian Wars in the 1830s, was essentially one of detailing officers from the respective lines of the Army (Infantry, Artillery, and Calvary). When this system came under heavy fire because of the need of officers to serve with their units, two possible solutions presented themselves. The Congress could either authorize more officers with the regiments (allowing for a portion of them to be detailed), or provide for separate authorizations for some sort of independent staff corps. Roger Jones strongly favored the first course of action, because of the advantages of maintaining a close relationship between line and staff. Congress opted for the second course.

Roger Jones traced the staff brevet confusion back to the War of 1812. The act establishing the basis for the brevets for gallantry was passed July 6, 1812, while the one providing for brevet rank in the staff was dated March 3, 1813. Winfield Scott, attempting to defend the former type of brevets, asserted that it was only the staff brevets that became odious to the army and had all the officers of the line complaining about

59 Wade, "Roads to the Top," p. 159.
them. 60 Jones did not agree. He contended that staff brevet promotions were simply one more device by which the government encouraged service.

But staff appointments being the least stable and the Officer of the line ever laudably tenacious of his regimental commission, it was quickly perceived that the public interest demanded the revival of the ancient protection of lineal rank and promotion whenever he was 'transferred to the Staff.'61

The act itself provided that the staff brevet ranks which included those of the Assistant Adjutants General would be "without prejudice to their rank and promotion in the line according to usage, in the same manner as if they had not been thus transferred."62

These ranks were attached to the offices held, not to the officer holding them. Therefore when the officer ceased to hold the position in the staff, he ceased also to hold the staff brevet rank, and it in turn was assumed by another. 63 The very idea though of holding the staff rank by brevet seemed contradictory. If, in fact, brevets only were able to be used when officers of different corps (or as it is termed in the twentieth century branches and components) were brought together as was their status in the law providing brevets for gallantry, then the staff brevets were meaningless. They would not apply technically to two staff officers of the same department and they certainly would not apply to staff officers commanding line troops. 64 But this was a matter for the

60 As quoted in Fry, Brevets, p. 138; 2 Statutes at Large 785; 2 Statutes at Large 819.


62 2 Statutes at Large 819.

63 As quoted in Fry, Brevets, p. 137.

64 Ibid., p. 141.
quibbling of experts. In fact, officers accepted the staff brevet rank under the assumption that it was something of real and substantial value. They served in the grades conferred and were payed in them.

As the reformation of the Army structure that the reduction in force of 1821 involved triggered, there was some worry among the staff officers that the guarantees of their regimental rank would be swept away. Charles J. Nourse who was to be acting Adjutant General within a few years, conveyed his concern to Secretary of War Calhoun, warning about the provisions in law protecting the staff officers. 65

The act of 1821 provided for officers with staff rank (not brevet) for the heads of Calhoun's bureaus while placing under them officers detailed from the line. There is a difference of opinion on the provisions of that act's being adequate. Emory Upton, on the whole, praises the act but condemns it for not providing an adequate number of supernumeraries in the regiments to provide for those who were to be separated on detail. Jones, on the other hand, while agreeing that ultimately there were not enough extra officers provided, contended that in 1821 the Army was only able to keep as many men as it did in the officer ranks because the staff was being provided for. 66

The Adjutant General reminded former general and then President Jackson, that an


66 Statutes at Large 615; Upton, Military Policy, p. 151; Emory Upton, The Armies of Asia and Europe (New York, 1878), p. 325.
...avowed purpose of this increased ratio of commissioned grades [in 1821] as compared with the war standard, was, the employment of Regimental Officers in the 'Staff' and other military service than mere duty with the troops in garrison. The friends of the Army and the administration it is well known could not at that day have succeeded in retaining so many officers upon any other principle.  

One of the reasons given for the Senate's refusal to confirm Gadsden as the Adjutant General under Calhoun's reorganization of the Army hinged on the fact that the administration was, in fact, violating the integrity of the line and staff commissions. Butler and Jones were the next senior officers in the Adjutant and Inspector General's Department. Gadsden was being brought in from the line of the Army over them, and Jones was being sent back, reduced from Colonel to Captain, which was his rank in the line of the artillery. There were some arguments over the interpretation of the regulations of 1821 which governed this, but as we have seen, the very regulations themselves became a matter of argument. Versions published by the Congress and the War Department did not agree.  

Roger Jones, not long after he came to office as the Adjutant General, started defending to his superiors the principle of maintaining staff officers on the rolls of the units from which they had been detailed. In a report dated June 30, 1825, he told the Secretary of War that:

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68 Wiltse, Calhoun, p. 252.
The General interest and welfare of our military force depend in no small degree on the identity and union of interest and feeling between line and Staff Officers of the Army. If so, how can this result be so effectually or so naturally attained as by pursuing the principle which has been so long recognized? The tenor of these conservative provisions in relation to the 'privileges' of officers 'transferred to the Staff' and which have been cited prove that legislators of the day were not unmindful of the true interest of the service and the matured sanctions of the Army in general confirms their then intuitive perception.69

However the Adjutant General was far from unmindful of the difficulties of the units that saw so many of their officers separated on details. Jones even noted the lack of junior officers separated on details. Jones even noted the lack of junior officers with the units as one of the causes of the high desertion rate. The men in ranks were not getting the proper attention and supervision because the commissioned ranks were off on detail.

Facts exhibited by the records furnish a striking commentary on the insufficiency of the part of our practical system which should ensure the presence at all times of a due proportion of Company Officers and especially of the rank of Captain for duty with their companies. The records show that the average number of Captains in some of the Regiments who are reported on Company duty do not equal one-half of the number of Companies—that in many instances the command of companies devolve upon some of the most junior subalterns in the regiment; that in other instances not one officer belonging to the company has been present with it; that the same officer has had charge of more than one company at the same time; that at one Frontier Post, garrisoned with four companies each of the four Captains and each of the eight subalterns attached to the same has been absent at the same time.... 70


The Commanding General, Alexander Macomb, took up the same theme in his Annual Report of 1832. He told the Congress that he was compelled, by a sense of duty to make it known to you, that the requisitions for officers, for the performance of various duties not connected with regimental affairs, are so numerous, that it is seldom as many as two officers are present for duty with each company. It may therefore be conceived how difficult it is to afford the necessary instructions to our soldiers, or to maintain that discipline in the army which is requisite, in order to render it efficient for active operations. The line of the army can supply officers for the general and regimental staff, and for the Military Academy and Ordnance Department, but it cannot bear the drafts made for assistants in the Engineer, Topographical, and Indian Departments, without impairing the efficiency of the several battalions of artillery and infantry. If the corps of engineers and topographical engineers were so augmented, by the authority of law, as to furnish officers for their appropriate duties, without assistance from the line, it is believed the public would be better served, and the interest of all parties promoted.71

It must be remembered that prior to becoming Commanding General, Alexander Macomb had been Chief of Engineers at his own request. One must assume he still was favorably inclined to the best interests of that branch of the service.

The Commanding General was particularly pleased with the performance of the Staff and went on in the same report to praise their efficiency.

In 1834 there was some question raised with the Secretary of War as to whether a staff officer who held the regular staff rank was able also to be in the line of the Army. The question was whether the one individual held one or two commissions and whether if two, these commissions were incompatible. Roger Jones pointed out to the Secretary

the disabilities that the Staff commission faced and the less than
equal status a staff officer was put in. He pointed out:

The name and rank of a Colonel in the Staff are even
denied a place in the Official List of the Colonels of
the line; and the general regulations for the Army deny
the right of 'Staff Officers as such to exercise direct
command over troops.' Without stopping to inquire into
the propriety of the obvious disparagements and dis-
abilities thus fastened on the 'staff' by the regula-
tions of the service, I would respectfully ask, seeing
this to be the case, upon what principal can it be
maintained, that 'rank in the Staff' and 'rank in the
line' are deemed to be analogous, equal, and therefore
not lawful for the same officer to hold commissions in
each, at the same time?  

An officer in the second half of the nineteenth century recalled
the state of the Army just before the crisis came during the Florida
War over the problem of details. He noted some 155 officers were em-
ployed on the various staffs or detailed to duty elsewhere than their
unit. This number includes some twenty-three officers detailed for re-
cruiting duty. The same officer noted the impact of this from personnel
experience, and confirmed the Adjutant General's observations. General
Alvord recounted the time when he was a subaltern in 1836 in the Florida
War and

...had at one time command of three companies, being the
only officer with them—the captains and other officers
being absent in the staff. These officers were able and
distinguished in the staff, (one of them afterward Adjutant
General), and just in proportion as they made themselves
well versed and accomplished in the staff they were sure to
be permanently attached. Rotation was then a dream; it
was impracticable. The necessities of the public services
naturally and inevitably led to permancy.  

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72 Roger Jones, February 26, 1834, "Reports to the Secretary of War,"

73 Benjamin Alvord, Remarks of Brig. Gen. Benjamin Alvord, Paymaster
General, U.S.A., upon the Reorganization of the Army (Washington, D.C.,
1876), p. 3.
Roger Jones now was attempting to strike a balance. He felt the retention of line rank was important to the relationship between staff and line, and also essential to the attractiveness of the staff positions. Yet he was the first to admit that the detail system had been abused by overuse. He urged retention of details with strict limitations as to the duties for which officers were to be so detailed.\footnote{Roger Jones, November 26, 1836, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. II, p. 220.}

In the opinion of the acting Secretary, whom the Adjutant General was addressing, the provisions of the current establishment were inadequate to the needs of either staff or line. The staff in his opinion was not adequate because the time involved in attempting to get all direction and staff work done in Washington was prohibitive. What was needed was not only a War Department staff in the capital, but an elaborate staff with the commanders in the field that could be in communication with Washington, but also supply more timely the needs of the field. However the detailing of even more officers from the line would compound the shortages there. The line needed more not less officers with their units providing the essential leadership. The solution of the problem with the staff posed a greater need on the line of the Army.\footnote{R. F. Butler, \textit{Annual Report}, 1836, p. 111.}

The Secretary posed a problem and a dilemma but the Adjutant General saw a course of action that would satisfy both the clear need for an increased number of staff officers and would leave enough officers with the line units to enable them to fulfill their duties. Roger Jones in the \textit{Annual Report} for 1836 spoke of the need for Assistant Adjutants...
General. He felt that these could be detailed from the line as long as the system of detail was not abused (as it regularly was) by the detailing of large numbers to assignments other than those conferring staff rank (example was the detached duty for engineering). Roger Jones felt that to separate an officer from the line of the army for a position on the staff would result in many of the best officers refusing the staff position rather than relinquishing their line commission. He also noted the cost in pay for the officers detailed would only be the difference between their linear and staff rank. With the creation of a permanent staff corps the entire cost of the staff's salary would have to be borne by the government. He projected this as being a difference of $7,524 required for the assistant adjutants general under his proposal for $15,000 required for newly created positions not detailed from the line.  

The Adjutant General felt that the obvious need for staff officers was about to be solved by the creation of a staff corps separate, distinct, (and probably, over time, at odds with) the line of the Army. He wished to make sure that the officers he needed for the Adjutant General's Department were not forced to surrender their line commissions. He did not feel, however, that this opened him up to charges of undermining the line of the Army's strength. He made it quite clear:

In affirming that the number of officers of the line is adequate to the supply of staff appointments which may confer rank in the Army, the opinion should be qualified with the provisions that the employment of the officers

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76 Roger Jones, Annual Report, 1836, p. 152.
of the line away from their regiments and companies should be restricted to the military staff of the army proper, and that the practice of assigning them to any description of business not congenial to the spirit and character of military duty proper be discontinued.77

The next year Roger Jones had occasion to submit a report as to the number of officers that were separated from their commands for details elsewhere. There were some one hundred and eighty-three officers so detailed (two to the Adjutant General's Office) and of these twenty-eight were on recruiting duty.78 This resulted in what a later Adjutant General would term "constant and well grounded complaints."79

Secretary of War Poinsett by December, 1837, had not only a problem on his hands but a proposed solution. He told the Congress:

As the army is now constituted, officers are drawn off for staff duties, to the great injury of the service of the line, and these duties are by no means so well performed as they would be by officers properly instructed and entirely devoted to them. The present organization does not give to regiments or companies any supernumerary officers. There are no more than the performance of the various duties of their military command actually requires, and, to reduce the number, must weaken the army, render it irregular and inefficient in its operations, and greatly impair its discipline. Such, however, is the present defective state of every branch of the staff, that all are supplied from subalterns of the line...and the returns of the Adjutant General's Office of the regiments in the field during the last campaign in

77 Ibid., p. 153.

78 Roger Jones to B. F. Butler, March 3, 1837, "List of Officers of the Army Employed upon Duty which Separated them from their Regiments or Corps during the Year 1836," American State Papers, Military Affairs, Vol. 7, p. 119.

Alabama and Florida, exhibit a lamentable deficiency of officers to fulfill the duties properly belonging to them. 80

The Secretary had in mind a rather comprehensive plan to meet the need as he had outlined it. Nor, were his proposals half measures, but rather advocated a complete revamping of the entire staff of the Army. He advocated that there be a staff corps in the sense of a body of officers serving under a general officer who would be named the chief of staff. This staff corps would perform the duties assigned to the different bureaus, and would be large enough to allow promotion and advancement within its ranks. 81

The Commanding General of the Army on the other hand, felt that provisions should be made for authorized staff but that "...each branch be organized into a distinct corps, or department, complete in itself, and sufficient to meet every exigency which has reference to it." 82

A partial remedy was provided by the Congress when, on July 5, 1838, it passed an act that provided for a permanent staff in the capital. Each of the bureaus was provided with officers holding rank in the staff, except the Adjutant General's Office. As a direct result of the strong opinions of Roger Jones, the Assistant Adjutants General (alone out of the staff) were on detail from the line of the Army. They retained their linear rank and were given the only provision for continuing

81 Ibid., p. 187.
brevet rank in the staff.\textsuperscript{83}

But the provisions for the capital staff though profound in their effect in stabilizing the bureaus, did not fully answer the need that brought on the reform.

The problem was still present because officers of the line were still called upon to perform in the capacity of regimental or divisional adjutants or quartermasters. For the next few years, both the Commanding General and the Secretary of War brought this to the Congress' attention, and President Van Buren felt the need strongly enough to urge reform on Congress. The solution seemed obvious. If only Congress would authorize supernumerary (i.e., extra) officers beyond those needed strictly for command. All of the old arguments of units without officers were repeated again and again.\textsuperscript{84}

General Winfield Scott, after taking over the position of Commanding General, noted that provision had been made for extra pay to those officers who were serving on the staff. The arguments ran along the lines on the staff side that officers assigned to Washington, D.C., or to New York for instance, were faced with a much higher cost of living and further required to maintain a calendar of social commitments in connection with the needs of the service that involved costs way beyond those encountered on the frontier. The comments of Representative Johnson in 1836 are worth noting:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{83} Alford, Remarks, p. 4; As quoted in Fry, Brevets, pp. 140, 141; Statutes at Large 5:256.
\item \textsuperscript{84} Martin Van Buren, Annual Report, 1839, p. 9; Joel Poinsett, Annual Report, 1839, p. 41, and 1840, p. 22; Alexander Macomb, Annual Report, 1839, p. 60.
\end{itemize}
The reason for the allowance of the per diem of one dollar and twenty-five cents to each officer on duty in the military bureaus is founded in justice and equity, it being in consideration of the increased expenses to which the officers are subject by being placed on duty at the seat of government, separated from the benefits and advantages of messings, which officers at established garrisoned posts can avail themselves of; and, besides the small (comparative) expenses at which they need be at by several messing together, messes derive advantages from allowances made to them by the government, to wit; mess rooms and fuel for them.... Your committee are decidedly of the opinion that the officers whose case is now under consideration are under as heavy extra expenses as those who are provided for by law can be, and indeed, greater: for, to the seat of government officers come from all quarters of the country--some on business connected with the public service, some on leave of absence, and some for other reasons, over which those on duty in the bureaus have no control; and unless they are treated civilly and receive some attention from their brother officers at the seat of government, the reputation and character of the army suffers in public opinion--but few persons taking into consideration whether their means can justify the expenses of hospitality or not. Your committee are not ignorant of the fact that a prejudice has existed in regard to the employing of officers on bureau duty, but it has been without understanding their true position. They work hard, and are not seen absent from their duties when the public interests require them to be at their posts. Some of them scarcely visit the halls of Congress half a dozen times during a whole session, unless sent on public business. The responsibility of the army requires that those who are on duty at the seat of government should show some attention to their associates in arms; and the heads of bureaus or chiefs of staff departments can do this in consequence of the allowance to them of additional rations under the law of 1802; but the subordinates in those bureaus can have no means of doing this now, unless Congress affords them relief, and by the granting of which, the public service, as your committee believe, would be benefitted, because it would enable them to have associated with those from distant posts and parts of the country, thereby deriving information that would assist in the administration of the affairs of the departments to which they are attached.85

Conversely it was argued by officers of the line that while they had to undergo all the hardships, discomforts, and dangers of the service, they were not receiving rewards equal as those who enjoyed the comforts of the centers of civilization did. The Secretary of War in 1844 suggested the compromise that when line officers were detailed to staff positions where they would encounter the same financial burdens as permanent staff they would get the extra pay. Such must have sounded quite good to the Assistant Adjutants General who would be the main beneficiaries. 86

During the Mexican War the relationship between the staff and line of the Army became quite strained. This occurred over the question as to the right of command going to the highest ranking officer. They disputed whether this meant the highest linear rank or whether brevets counted for this. Winfield Scott ruled in favor of brevets—which included staff brevets. The reaction was the "Corpus Christi Memorial" of December 12, 1845, in which more than a hundred officers addressed Congress. They felt that the line of the Army had been made "a mere convenience for the staff corps," noting that the staff officers who presumed to assume command, were most jealous of the integrity of their own department and bureau affairs. 87

The Congress felt this was purely an executive matter and that the President had the power and responsibility to resolve it. President


87 As quoted in Fry, Brevets, p. 173.
Polk chose the precedent of an order issued by President Jackson on August 13, 1829, coming out of the struggle over the Commanding General's Office to overturn the opinion of Commanding General Scott. 88

The Congress did act to eliminate the possibility of an officer's holding equal rank in both the line and the staff. This was a direct blow to the position of the Adjutant General's Department officers. It became law on June 18, 1846, and it is interesting to note, despite Roger Jones' fear that no good officer would accept a staff position at the expense of his linear commission, the majority of the officers affected chose to surrender this rank and place in the line of the Army rather than their staff positions. 89

Secretary of War Marcy used the necessity of war to urge successfully the supernumerary officers that had been asked for by the Adjutant General, Commanding General and Secretaries for so long. Finally, the Congress could see the danger of not having officers with the units because they were off on other necessary duties. The request for additional majors was satisfied. 90

The changes in law and procedure resulted in some issues that still had to be worked out. For example, the effects of Congress' forcing some of the officers of the Adjutant General's Office to surrender their line rank resulted in Roger Jones' being extremely reluctant to proceed on any principle except promotion by seniority among the officers under

89 As quoted in Fry, Brevets, p. 140; 9 Statutes at Large 17.
90 William L. Marcy, Annual Report, 1846, p. 54.
him. When he deemed it advisable to bring in an officer from the line over the heads of officers already serving in his office, he made it very clear he considered this to be a rare exception. He wished no precedent set in such matters that would work to harm the interests of junior officers in his bureau.\footnote{Roger Jones, January 10, 1848, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. IV, p. 3.}

Nor were the problems of the Corpus Christi Memorial easily resolved by President Polk's ruling. The Secretary of War in 1849, George W. Crawford, felt urged to write Congress concerning:

\ldots the anomalous position of officers holding staff commissions which confer rank. These officers are not considered by established usage as eligible to command of troops unless specially assigned, whilst at the same time they claim exemption from the orders of their juniors in the line who succeed to such commands. This state of things is calculated to injure the service by a suspension, for the time being, of the functions of the staff officers in cases where a junior line officer exercises the command. To alleviate which it is suggested that a law be enacted requiring officers of the general staff, serving with troops, to execute, according to their respective duties, all orders emanating from the senior officer of the line which may relate to the discipline, policy, and good order of his command for which he alone is responsible.\footnote{George W. Crawford, Annual Report, 1849, p. 92.}

This really could not solve the dilemma either because every staff officer would immediately think of examples where the staff officer was not only senior in rank, but much greater in experience and even possibly having more command time than a junior line officer that the chance of battle left alive when the regular commander was killed. This would be argued long after Jones, Scott, and Crawford were all dead.
In dealing with the history of those who kept the records of the Army, one often finds that the subject of study is not content but how that content was handled. In the words of Marshall McLuhan: "the media is the message." Yet occasionally the subject becomes the very figures that are running the system. We have been discussing the various personnel policies of the period of Roger Jones. It might make several of these policies clearer if we dealt with an example or case study that involved them. There was one case that seemed to absorb more of the Adjutant General's Office's time and interest than any other, and at the same time, involved almost every issue that has been raised. This was the case of the rank and pay of Roger Jones.

The exact issues surrounding the rank of Roger Jones go back, by all accounts, to the point when the former marine lieutenant was named to the rank of Captain in the Third Artillery on July 5, 1812. Based on this linear rank he received brevet promotions. The first came on August 3, 1813, when Jones was named Assistant Adjutant General with the brevet rank involved in this staff position being that of Major. While performing in that capacity under the command of Winfield Scott and Jacob Brown, Roger Jones performed gallantly at the Battle of Chippewa. For this he was breveted again, dated July 5, 1814. Both Jones and Scott were to contend that since he already held the rank of Major by brevet, that he was in fact entitled now to the brevet rank of Lieutenant Colonel. However the brevet for gallantry read Major. Later the future Adjutant General again displayed gallantry in a sortie from Fort Erie on September 17, 1814. Again he was breveted—this time the commission read Lieutenant Colonel—though of course Jones supported by Scott was to
contend that it should have been to full Colonel. Precedents were used by both Roger Jones and Winfield Scott in later arguments of the cases of Colonels Leavenworth, McNeil and Brooke. The War of 1812 left a tangled legacy in Jones' personal file. Even those not included to grant the Adjutant General's argument admitted that the law conferring "staff rank by brevets" was confused. 93

Then on August 10, 1818, Roger Jones was advanced to the position of Adjutant General of the Northern Division, which position carried with it the brevet staff rank of Colonel. Jones requested that he keep his linear rank of Captain in the Artillery and Secretary Calhoun responded that this

...was what he desired, that for the future he intended that Staff Officers should also be officers in the line of the Army.

Roger Jones held this brevet of Colonel for some two years, nine months and twenty days (by his later calculation) until the reduction in force in June, 1821. With the elimination of his staff position and the desire of Calhoun to elevate Gadsden rather than Jones to the Adjutant General of the Army's Office, the latter had no choice if he remained in service but to return to the position, rank, and pay of a humble Captain of artillery. That he did so with some bitterness is likely. He was thus no further ahead in rank and pay and even prospects of promotion than the day he had entered the Army he had so gallantly served. 94


As we have seen, in 1825, President Adams saw fit to elevate Roger Jones to the position of Adjutant General of the Army. This entitled him to the rank of Colonel (dating from March 7, 1825).

Now by 1825 promotions had become painfully slow in the line of the Army, and many of Jones' fellow officers in the artillery who were junior in rank to him hoped that his good fortunes would also be theirs. They were most disappointed to find that the new Adjutant General had no inclination to vacate his position in the line and thereby advance all below him in rank. Some of Jones' bitterness from the reduction comes through in his statement to the Secretary of War on the demands that he surrender the line position:

...unconnected with the allurements which have been so kindly suggested, I will frankly observe that in communing with myself I do not perceive that force of that species of argument or persuasion which is meant to strike at the more vulnerable part of our nature. I mean that kind of impulse which fain would pass for 'magnanimity', 'Generosity'! Those indeed I own are noble properties of the Soul, but I humbly apprehend they would have been more naturally and more easily evolved amidst a community of kindred spirits. Isolated as I have been and long under the influence of a genius which meted out to me scarcely any of these imposing and inspiring qualities—no one should be amazed, if the genial St-r of this my recently regenerated day (Being just then restored to my commission by President Adams immediately after his inauguration, whose justice would not longer permit it to slumber.) should not so soon have collected all its scattered rays. Neither should any one be surprised if I ask no more than the laws of the Republic bestowed ...I seek then in this instance not her gratitudes—but I do claim also the rituals of her statutes and all the benefits of promotion 'according to established rule.' (vide 5 Sec. Act June 26, 1812, Crofs Laws Page 176).\(^95\)

\(^{95}\)Ibid.
Roger Jones was never again to grace the files of his office with such vivid prose. The impact of his treatment by Calhoun was understandably profound. He was not inclined to vacate the commission that had prevented his being forced out of the service altogether like had been the fate of Adjutant and Inspector General Parker. He contended that if he gave up his line commission that all brevets for gallantry based on it would fall also, contending that these were no more than attachments to the original line commission and depended on it for their existence. This argument was in fact repeatedly destroyed by the practice of transfers without loss of brevets from one line to another or to the staff. Already the example of the future Adjutant General Drum has been noted. Also, this argument was ridiculed by the later Adjutant General's Officer who had made himself the all-time expert on the issue of brevets, James B. Fry. 96

Another argument that he advanced was that though he was going to a staff position in Washington, D. C., he wished to retain the close interest and connection to the line of the Army. This in the light of later estrangements between the line and staff of the Army might have been a sounder observation than those in the 1820s realized. Finally, there was the basic reaction of the man that had been badly burned and only saved by this line commission who wished to retain it against some possible future problems. Jones even went so far in attempting to secure consent to his position as to leave the papers dealing with his rank in the line

96 As quoted in Fry, Brevets, p. 220.
with President Adams himself. 97

In February, 1827, Major (brevet Colonel) Hindman of the Second Artillery died. Since, at the time, Roger Jones held the commission as Captain of artillery senior to all others, he expected now in due course to be carried on the records as having a lineal promotion to Major. However, just as his juniors in the line had wished to force him out before, they attempted to block his being in the normal course eligible for this promotion. They petitioned the Congress on the matter, but the decision was made by the President in Jones' favor. The Senate confirmed the promotion. Thus the principle that the Adjutant General was entitled to retain his full rank in the line with full rights of promotion in the normal course was given the highest sanction. 98

In March, 1829, President Jackson chose to bestow a brevet promotion of full Colonel (based on Roger Jones' rank of Lieutenant Colonel by brevet for gallantry) using the provisions of the law which provided for brevets for ten-years service in one grade. While it was clear that the Adjutant General had held the brevet rank of Lieutenant Colonel for more than ten-years service in that grade or higher, Jones himself was to note that he had in fact been serving in the grade of full Colonel (by staff brevet) most of that time. However, to make the issue more


98 Roger Jones, February 26, 1834, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. I, pp. 412-413; Roger Jones, June 20, 1825 [so dated in file but probably misdated], "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. I, p. 92; as quoted in Fry, Brevets, p. 220.
confused the date of the ten-year brevet was made retroactive to September 17, 1824, the ten-year anniversary of his second brevet promotion for gallantry. So after the President's action, Roger Jones claimed to hold a commission in the line of the Army as a Major with brevets based on that commission for both gallantry and ten-years service to the rank of Colonel. At the same time as Adjutant General of the Army, he held a staff brevet as Colonel.

In May of 1832, there came again a challenge to the right of the Adjutant General to hold onto his position in the line. After requesting the views of Roger Jones on the subject, the Secretary of War informed him that (in the words of Jones himself):

...the agitation of the subject 'could not affect the Adjutant General' as the time had passed by when perhaps it might have been debatable (alluding to the period when I was transferred from the Staff in 1825) if viewed as a measure of expediency merely. This I felt I well knew and yet believe to be the true state of the case; and I was gratified to learn that the Honorable Secretary of War in 1832 correctly considered it as one over which, according to the rules of equity his jurisdiction was deemed to be at an end; for if regarded as a civil Magistrate who had once exercised his jurisdiction over the Secretary of War, in reference to such case, would in technical language, be functus officio.

After such a display it is easy to see why the personnel affairs of the Army at this period were said to run by a sort of "common law" or "usage of the service" based on precedent and previous decisions.


100 Ibid., p. 399.
This decision was hardly final though, because in February, 1834, Captain (brevet Major) Heilerman addressed an appeal to the same Secretary of War contending that he should have the line commission of Roger Jones because the latter was in fact, holding two offices in the government in contravention to the Constitution and the law. When the Secretary asked his Adjutant General for views on this, Jones responded with surprise that the Secretary had allowed the issue to be raised again.

However Jones used the occasion to reiterate all his old arguments in favor of his retaining rank in the line to include the concept that without his line commission, the brevets for gallantry would no longer exist and the record of his acts be wiped out. He added far sounder arguments to include the observation that the rank he held as Adjutant General was in the Staff (he correctly observed that whether one called it brevet or not did not change its nature). It was not like a rank in the line which could be used to exchange with another Colonel, but rather adhered in the office not in the officer. He certainly claimed law and "usage" on his side for the right to hold both, and the clear distinction between them. The two commissions were not two separate offices each bringing pay and benefits to their holder nor were they comparable. Roger Jones contended that he was an officer of the line detailed to staff duty and styled with the title and increased pay of Colonel for the position he was in.  

That same year, 1834, however, was the twentieth anniversary of Roger Jones' brevet to Lieutenant Colonel for gallantry, which, under

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101 Ibid., p. 405; as quoted in Fry, Brevets, p. 220.
the ten years service in one grade rule, would allow the Adjutant General to be raised to the brevet rank of Brigadier General. Further, as Roger Jones was quick to point out, he had been serving in the Staff brevet of Colonel for over ten years. But 1834 was also the point that Congress decided to end the passing out of such brevets. Jones attempted to get his elevation to General officer rank confirmed prior to the cut off.

First of all, Winfield Scott, former commander and long-time friend of his fellow Virginian, wrote to the Secretary of War a long letter that highly praised Jones and recommended him on every possible ground for the brevet promotion. In addition to the contention that Jones had been denied a promotion by brevet because of the double brevet to Major during the War of 1812, Scott contended that the ten-year rule applied to both the line and staff rank of Colonel that Jones held (both by brevet). He further noted that the actions of Roger Jones in the Battle of Niagra July 25, 1825, also clearly deserved another brevet though none was awarded. Scott notes that the ten-year promotion of 1829 would have been to Brigadier General if the actions at Niagra were properly rewarded. He even noted the names of officers who were so advanced "without performing more signal services." The foremost exponent of brevet rank also contended that Jones had now served more than ten years as Colonel and should be made a Brigadier. Scott contended that "in the opinion of the whole Army" Jones had earned the promotion on the grounds of meritorious conduct, and even gave precedents when this was used to elevate someone who lacked the ten years service. Finally, Scott noted that though holding the office of Adjutant General, Jones alone of the
heads of bureaus, was denied the general officers rank.  

That this letter was written not only on the behalf of, but with the cooperation of Roger Jones, cannot be doubted. The same logic and even the same working was repeated in parts of a lengthy report that the Adjutant General prepared on his own behalf to the President. The chief executive saw the justice of the case (though even former General Jackson might have wondered at some of the detailed arguments). Roger Jones was nominated for the rank of brevet Brigadier General and confirmed by the Senate.

Roger Jones won the struggle to wear a star, but he was to be less successful in holding on to his commission. In January, 1835, Lewis Cass had occasion to write to the President on the subject of the Adjutant General's retention of linear rank. His letters were most complimentary. The Secretary wrote

...with the highest feelings toward General Jones and with a high opinion of his services and qualifications. I know him to have been a gallant officer in war, and an able and indefatigable one in peace. And as far as personal predilections may go, mine are altogether in his favor. But....

The Secretary advanced two views in support of Jones' vacating his line position. The first was that in this period of almost non-existent promotion, the Adjutant General was denying the advancement that otherwise would be possible in the artillery. Further, the Secretary noted the inability of one man to perform both the line and staff functions.


103 Roger Jones to President Andrew Jackson, June 28, 1834, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. I, p. 395.
Jones sent his reply straight to the President, pointing out the second argument was equally true of every officer that the Army had on detail. But this time Jones lost; the line commission was vacated. 104

The difference of opinion did not embitter the relations between Roger Jones and Lewis Cass as became evident in the Secretary's assistance in securing to Jones the full benefits of his brevet to Brigadier General. On the first of October, 1836, the Secretary noted "I have found him [Jones] an able, faithful and zealous officer, and his services are of the same nature and his liability to expense the same as other Military Officers having brevet rank stationed at the seat of Government." 105

It is interesting to note that it was the precedent of Alexander Macomb (by then Commanding General) who as Chief of Engineers that Jones used in his claim to receive pay in his brevet rank. This went to the military committee of the House of Representatives who clearly feared to make a precedent in their decision. But they agreed to the justice of Jones' case, and recommended that a bill be passed providing for his receiving pay for his brevet rank. That was in 1837, and it was 1839 before the Congressional mill ground out a favorable act that provided the Adjutant General might be so payed. 106


105 Lewis Cass, October 1, 1836, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. II, p. 264.

106 As quoted in Fry, Brevets, p. 92.
It seems fitting that the Adjutant General of the Army would be a prime example of all the various policies and practices over which his office labored. Though at times there might be justification for charges that Jones was judge in his own case or that his judgment was clouded by his personal interests, nonetheless, the Adjutant General found enough opposition and difficulties with the system to indicate less well placed individuals at the time must have indeed found it frustrating.

Roger Jones had dealt with the many concerns of officer personnel matters. He had attempted to make the appointment process one of system rather than politics and had found himself working against the spirit of his age. He had seen the lack of speedy promotions and adequate pay forcing out of the service many of its better officers. Repeatedly he had fought for some sort of retirement program that would give justice to the older officers and advancement to the younger. Brevet rank did allow for some advancement, but only at the cost of continued arguments. Arguments raged over the relative powers of brevet and linear ranks. Brevets for service were curtailed though in the Adjutant General's opinion very much needed. The rank and position of the staff was a constant concern of Roger Jones. He felt that the system of detailing an officer for special duty should be very limited but that the staff of the Army should be so provided for. In this he ran counter to the desires of the Secretaries of War and of the provisions of the 1836 staff reform. Roger Jones himself provided an excellent example of many of the personnel matters that his office dealt with, often becoming involved personally in the issues because of his own interests.
The personnel matters of the Army had their effect on the careers of every officer of the period and the office that handled them became involved in every major issue facing the War Department as a whole. Roger Jones was to see his office becoming ever more important to the operation of the entire Army during his term as Adjutant General.

As interesting commentary on the Adjutant General and the concerns of his office can be found in the "Editor's Drawer," Harper's New Monthly Magazine, June to November, 1851:

There is a very amusing story told of a curious fowl called 'The Adjutant,' in the East Indies. They are as solemn-faced a creature as the owl, the 'Bird of Minerva.' Sometimes they become great favorites with the soldiers and officers of the army stationed there, and numerous, and not unfrequently ridiculous, were the tricks which the wicked wags played on them. Sometimes the soldiers would take a couple of half-picked beef bones, tie them strongly together, at each end of a stout cord, and then throw both where some two or three Adjutants would be sure to rival each other in the first possession of the desiderated luxury; the consequent of which competition would be, that two of the ravenous birds would attack the treasure at one and the same time: the one would swallow one (for they have most capacious maws) and the other. Then there was trouble! Each saw before him a divided 'duty,' the 'line' of which, while it was sufficiently defined (and confined) was very far from being convenient to follow, so far as the practice was concerned. But each, in the consequent struggle rose into the air; a pair of aerial Siamese twins, with power of severing their common ligament; so that very soon down they came, an easy prey to their ingenious tormenters. But the funniest trick was this: A soldier would take a similar unconsumed beef-bone; carefully scoop out a long cavity in it, establish therein a cartridge and fuse, with a long leader, lighted, and then throw it out for the especial benefit of the feathered victim. It was of course swallowed at once; and then, like a snake with a big frog in its belly, the uncouth bird would mount upon some post, or similar eminence, and with one leg crossed like a figure four,
ever the other, it would stand, in digestive mood, and
with slim visage, until suddenly the secret mine would
explode, and the unsuspicous 'Adjutant' would be 're-
duced to ranks' of birds 'lost upon earth.' 107

(June to November, 1851), p. 853.
CHAPTER V

THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE AND THE WAR

DEPARTMENT, 1825-1852

The politics of the War Department involved not only the Office of the Adjutant General as such, but also often hinged around matters of administration and personnel that were the special prerogative of that office. The organizational questions that involved the Adjutant General's Office during the time it had Roger Jones at its head were to remain questions and issues for the rest of the office's existence. These usually could be traced back to the unresolved relationships between the positions of the Secretary of War, the Commanding General, and the staff (of which the Adjutant General would come to have the preeminent role). In fact, the full potential of the Adjutant General's position would not emerge during the period of Jones' tenure because the tensions between the Secretaries and the Commanding Generals did not fully develop until shortly after his death. In fact, because of Jones' personal friendship with one of the two Commanding Generals of the period (Winfield Scott), the Adjutant General's Office was even to be used against the will of a Secretary of War. Yet during the period of Roger Jones, the Adjutant General's Office was strengthened and came to be looked upon as an arbitrator in those personnel issues that seemed to plague the high command of the Army. Further, the entire Army became
used to receiving its direction from the Adjutant General. Whether he issued his orders in the name of the Commanding General or the Secretary of War was an issue for Jones' successors to face.

It is now necessary to trace the relationship of Roger Jones as Adjutant General to the two critical personalities that held the Commanding General's position, Alexander Macomb and Winfield Scott. However, the very existence of the Commanding General's rank and office was brought into question when Jacob Brown (Jones' former commander who had recommended him to Adams) died in office. To lay the groundwork for a discussion of the struggle over the Commanding General's position, attention must be turned to the role of party politics and faction in the concerns of the War Department.

This was a period when politics intermingled with the military far more than in later times. If the officers of the Army were not completely caught up in the political aspirations of the early Secretaries of War, Monroe, Crawford, and Calhoun, then they could draw inspiration from the political successes of Generals Jackson, Harrison, and Tyler. Indeed, many still in the Army could remember periods when these chief executives were equal or subordinate in rank to themselves. And if politicians wished to secure the support of illustrious military names, it seemed to several officers that their way was clear to participate in the process of selecting their future civilian superiors. Brown, Scott and Gaines all were fishing in the disturbed waters of the period before the critical election of 1824. We have already seen the resort Roger Jones had to political support when he found himself in opposition to John C. Calhoun. When John Quincy Adams succeeded to the presidency,
the Chief Executive had reason to complain of Brown's continued efforts at dealing in politics. ¹

Engaging in politics was not always viewed as appropriate behavior, and periodically, actions were taken to curb the political actions of the officers. These actions were also used to curb the tendency to take quarrels between officers or factions of officers into the public press and therefore into the political arena. The good of the service dictated that the generals not only be restrained from fighting physical duels with one another, but be prevented from firing literary batteries back and forth in the press. The attempts to curb the officers met with only partial success. Orders were issued in 1825 (the year after Scott and Gaines nearly went from words to pistols) prohibiting these battles in the press, but the order was largely ignored.

When a board headed by Commanding General Macomb, looked into infractions of this order in 1837, they were told by such officers as Captain Hitchcock and Captain George A. McCall that this order violated the officers' freedom of speech. ²

But though Macomb was not noted for efforts in journalism, he could be accused of occasionally tempering his judgment for political considerations. Scott had said of him that he was "not always of absolute proof against combinations of audacious power and official influence." One must concede that Winfield Scott was an expert on the influence of

¹ Marcus Cunliffe, Soldiers and Civilians (Boston, 1968), p. 302.

² Ibid., p. 272.
politics on the American military. General Scott was referring to a board of investigation in 1836 into his actions. The board's findings were unacceptable to President Jackson and were refused until revised.

Scott was an officer who could, while avoiding even so much as casting a ballot in an election, "from a sense of propriety," yet proceed to campaign for President while supposedly on an Army inspection tour. Yet those in the Army who accused Scott of politics could just as easily be shown as political activists themselves.

The personal and political contentionness in the Army put it in a most unfavorable light. The press, from time to time, admonished the government to remedy this breach of discipline and decorum. The Secretary of War, James M. Porter, even felt it necessary to advise Congress in 1843 that:

Some further provision is believed to be necessary effectually to prevent dueling between officers of the army and citizens--many of the officers who constitute the military courts holding that the provisions of the 25th, 26th, and 27th sections of the Rules and Articles of War have relation only to officers of the Army in disputes among themselves. The propriety of this construction is at least doubtful, but explicit legislation on the subject would put the matter beyond all doubt. The practice is a barbarous one, and should be suppressed in a civilized and Christian country.

The Secretary does go on to compliment the officers of the Army in

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3 ibid., pp. 635, 369.
avoiding duels between one another, though his describing their conduct
as "gentlemanly and decorous" leaves out such obvious examples as Scott
and Gaines, the new Commanding General and his longstanding antago-
nist.  

There was an accusation as early as the Mexican War that the War
Department was being run by Southerners in a sectional manner. If this
had validity at all it must have had reference to Winfield Scott and
Roger Jones, because the series of Southern secretaries did not occur
until after the Mexican War.  

Finally on the subject of politics and the War Department, some-
thing should be said about the great and heated hostility that arose
between the President and Secretary on one side and the Commanding
General and Adjutant General on the other during the Mexican War. Clear-
ly Polk and Marcy were very biased in their views of the generals, and
inclined to see constant sabotage in their efforts. Yet the actions and
words of both Scott and Jones as we have already seen gave grounds for
much of this suspicion.

This was an age when military questions of rank and position were
political issues, and military men were political figures. To judge them
by the standards of another age or ethic would be perhaps unfair. We
must expect, as we trace the course of War Department struggles, that
these were often viewed politically. The first question we turn to, the
continuance of the office of the Commanding General, was clearly

6 James M. Porter, Annual Report, 1843, p. 52.

7 Erasmus Darwin Keyes, Fifty Years' Observations of Men and Events,
political, and it was in Congress that it was debated and settled.

As a result of the long and bitter struggle between Scott and Gaines over the relative merits of brevet and linear rank, everyone knew that with the death of Jacob Brown there would be a hotly contested succession. President Adams noted in addition to the two long standing front contenders that the claims of General Harrison had been put forth by the congressional delegations from Ohio and Indiana, while those from New York were bringing Alexander Macomb to his attention. However, he considered it probable that Congress would abolish the office altogether and he would make no objection if they did so. 8

At the same time a senator from North Carolina contended there were too many officers being kept on the peace establishment. He contended: "When war came, the kind of character you want will come out, nor was it necessary to be seeking it out when it was not wanted." John C. Calhoun who sat in the Chair of the Senate now had expressed quite a different view of the matter. 9

It is interesting that Harrison's name was presented as a possible Commanding General, because he also was in the Senate and became the fiercest defender of the Commanding General's slot. He succeeded in getting the proposal sent to a committee which he chaired. His response in the form of a committee report was a sustained defense of the office.


Senator William Henry Harrison argued that the Commanding General was to the entire Army what a Colonel would be to his regiment. He contended that the Commanding General was the point of contact between the Army and the government. He went further to attribute to the Commanding General, personally, functions that were in fact performed by the military staff, including the Inspector General such as recruiting and convening of courts martial. He used the argument that there was an unwritten "common law" of the Army composed of precedents and usages that required an experienced officer to rule on, rather than leaving these questions to an uninformed civilian Secretary of War. To the obvious response that in fact these functions were already being carried out by Roger Jones in his capacity as Adjutant General, Senator Harrison had an answer. A situation whereby a Secretary was in fact dependent on his staff for the administration of the Army without the prestige of the rank of the Commanding General, Harrison contended would be "particularly odious." He dreaded the effects of the Commanding General being dispensed with in favor of the direct rule of the Secretary advised by the Adjutant General. This situation was in fact (if not in law) to exist later when the Commanding Generals abandoned the seat of government and the control of affairs.\(^1\)

Senator Harrison received support for another argument in defense of a Commanding General in the form of a letter from Roger Jones. In response to a question as to whether in fact there would be any savings

to the government from the abolition of the Commanding General's position, Jones responded in the negative. There would be no savings because the effect of brevets would be to have an officer serving in the rank of Major General anyway.

...it is nevertheless fair to presume that the general officer next in rank and for duty in the field would succeed to the duties and responsibilities which had devolved upon the last major general, and he would therefore virtually be general in chief of the army. The senior officer being thus assigned to the highest command, a simple process of detail or assignment would fall upon the senior of each intermediate grade in the descending line of rank, inclusive of captain and brevet major. That is to say, the senior brevet brigadier (being a colonel) would succeed to the command of a department; his regiment would be commanded by the next field officer; and to supply the place of the absent field officer, the senior captain having the brevet of major would be assigned to the appropriate duties of his brevet commission.\footnote{Roger Jones to William Henry Harrison, March 1, 1828, American State Papers, Military Affairs, Vol. 3, p. 922.}

It is significant that the Senator turned to the Adjutant General for an opinion on the effect of brevet and rank for that was the office that normally decided such matters.

Harrison also received support from Secretary of War Porter who noted that, if the Commanding General's position was abolished, the press of business would force him to rely on "the instrumentality of the adjutant general, or some other subordinate officer stationed at the seat of government under the secretary of war, and who would in fact perform the appropriate duty of the chief of the army."\footnote{Peter B. Porter, January 14, 1829, American State Papers, Military Papers, Vol. 4, p. 91.}
Though Senator Harrison was successful in blocking the abolition of the office, and therefore President Adams was forced into choosing a successor, the question of abolishing the Commanding General's position was not over. A year later a bill was introduced into the House of Representatives that would have eliminated the Commanding General and also the awarding of any brevets in times of peace. President Adams informed Alexander Macomb, the incumbent of the office, that he should use whatever influence he had to defend his job. It is interesting to observe that the one Macomb turned to was Lewis Cass, who had long been associated with Michigan where Macomb had been born, and who would, before too many years passed, be the Secretary of War himself. ¹³ Again the effort was squelched.

Another attempt was made in 1834 to do away with the Commanding General. This time it was in the role of Secretary of War that Lewis Cass responded. He contended that unity of command dictated that one general superior in rank to all others be at the capital to direct "those parts of the administration of the army which are strictly military." The Congress again saw fit not to abolish the office of the Commanding General. ¹⁴

When the Congress, in 1828, gave no indication of removing from President Adams the difficult choice of a new Commanding General, he had to proceed. The respective claims of Gaines and Scott have been already treated, and they certainly were well known to those in the government.

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¹⁴ As quoted in White, Jacksonians, p. 192.
in 1828. General Macomb brought forward his claim, based on his having had linear rank senior to either Scott or Gaines prior to the reduction in force of 1821. In support of his claim, Macomb presented the War Department with a letter from Vice President Calhoun confirming his statement of the facts and also copies of the Army Register of 1820 and 1821, showing his seniority and the alteration of 1821.15

Of all the prospective candidates, Macomb had been least involved in political maneuvering. However on March 20, 1828, he made the necessary concession to the requirements of expediency and to President Adams he "avowed his own partiality for the present Administration." This was particularly notable because the President was aware that he had so far "maintained an exemplary neutrality." Surely such a deft declaration had some effect on Adams' thinking.16

Winfield Scott, for one, contended a far more sinister influence was exerted on President Adams' decision. General Scott in after years was to contend that he had been denied the top position in the Army by a petticoat conspiracy. It seems that Macomb had already identified the officer who, in the event of his elevation to the command of the Army, would serve as his aide, one Lieutenant Samuel Cooper, then stationed at Fort Monroe. Now this prospect had in fact excited the family of Lt. Cooper's young wife, the powerful Mason family of Virginia. Two prominent ladies of this family in Washington, D. C. society at the time were Mrs. Mason and Mrs. Rush, the latter the wife of the Secretary of the

16Ibid., p. 480 (March 20, 1828).
Treasury. These two approached Mrs. Adams hoping to secure her support for the candidacy of Macomb and the early transfer of Cooper to the capital. As Scott recounted it, Mrs. Adams replied, "Truly ladies, though Madame Maintenon and Pompadour are said to have appointed all the generalissimos of their times, I do not think that such matters appertain to women; but if they did, and I had any influence, it should be given to Mrs. General Scott, with whom I accidentally in travelling, last summer, became acquainted." The ladies had been so indiscreet as to have approached the first lady in front of witnesses so General Scott could claim corroboration for his version of this part of their efforts. 17

The next effort, contended Scott, was far more subtle and ultimately successful. Secretary of the Treasury Rush was among the Cabinet members that John Quincy Adams summoned to discuss the naming of the new Commanding General. All the Cabinet agreed on Scott as the general until all of the members started to depart.

Rush soon turned back as if he missed his gloves or handkerchief. The game was now readily won; for knowing Mr. Adams' horror of bloodshed in private combat, he pressed the strong probability, according to him, of a deadly affair of pistols between Scott and Gaines (of which there was not the slightest danger) if either of them should be appointed to the vacancy whereas, he argued, with Macomb at the head of the army, all would be acquiescent and harmonious! 18

Scott finished the story with Macomb's appointment, Cooper's posting to Washington, D.C., and Mrs. Cooper's reuniting with her family. Scott could not resist the urge to note (he was writing during the Civil War)

that Mrs. Cooper was such an excellent woman that she had been kind to a Union prisoner in Richmond, thus subtly reminding his readers that the cause of the General's misfortune was then Adjutant General of the Confederacy.

President Adams recorded that Cabinet meeting in his diary, though there is no mention of the conversation with Rush. The President commented that indeed the Cabinet favored Scott. However, he felt that to name Scott to the position would give official forgiveness and even condole to "outrages upon the discipline of the Army." 19

Many years later Erasmus Darwin Keyes had occasion to critically examine Scott's version of the events. He conceded that in fact the women were quite active in this affair, but concluded that it is undervaluing President Adams to believe that he was swayed by their conversations. 20 Indeed, the decision does seem to have been Adams' alone, and one that without violating law of usage of the service seemed to assert in the most dramatic way possible the Presidential prerogative. Future presidents might have occasion to bemoan having one or another man as their Commanding General, but Adams at least asserted in the plainest possible terms that the Commanding General was the chosen agent of the President and subject to the Presidential will, not a person holding office by right of seniority alone.

The two figures, Macomb and Cooper, that now assumed central roles in the War Department and the future of the Adjutant General's Office

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20 Keyes, Fifty Years, p. 115.
deserve some identification.

Alexander Macomb was born in the vicinity of Detroit, Michigan, and at an early age was taken by his parents to New York. He joined the militia on May 28, 1798. Under the patronage of Alexander Hamilton, he entered the federal service on December 31, 1798, considerably before either Scott or Gaines did. In the assembly of troops of 1799, the seventeen-year-old Macomb was appointed as Assistant Adjutant General. 21

It would be unnecessary for our account to detail the career of Macomb from that point until the War of 1812, except to say that he held a variety of duties among which was that of recruiting officer. One story told of him during this period however deserves attention if only to cast light on Winfield Scott's suggestion that Macomb was swayed by political considerations later. When still a very junior officer in an army experiencing a change in direction and leadership with the coming to office of President Jefferson, Macomb had occasion to get into a conversation with a fellow officer who "was very abusive of the new President, in terms not merely indecorous but punishable by the Articles of War. Macomb proceeded to stop the conversation, but not before an account circulated that in his tent such things were being said. The young Macomb had to convince the authorities that he was not, in fact, responsible. 22

21 George H. Richards, Memoirs of Alexander Macomb, the Major General Commanding the Army of the United States (New York, 1832), pp. 13, 26.

22 Ibid., p. 34.
By the War of 1812, Macomb had become known for his work as an engineer, but he was called to Washington to take up the duties of Adjutant General of the Army. So when we have occasion to treat the difference of opinion between Roger Jones and Alexander Macomb over the exact role the office of the Adjutant General should play in the affairs of the Army, the latter could draw on his own highly credible experience in that office.

While Adjutant General of the Army, Macomb also performed many of the functions of the Chief of Engineers because he wished Colonel William Williams, the person holding the latter office, to remain in it even though incapacitated "from the infirmities of advancing age." 23

But Macomb was only one of a number of officers who acted as Adjutant General during the War of 1812. He went on from there to a command in which at Plattsburg he so distinguished himself that he was breveted Major General. The account of how he assisted the War Department in 1821 by agreeing to accept the reduction in rank involved in serving as Chief of Engineers has already been given. Finally, in 1828, it was perhaps the great contrast between Macomb and the contentious Scott and Gaines that prompted the President to look upon him as the next Commanding General.

As to Samuel Cooper, he will occupy even more of the attention in any history of the Adjutant General's Office than Macomb. He was to serve as the chief of that office for a longer period and was to have a more profound effect directly on the office. Cooper was born in 1798

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23 Ibid., p. 49.
in Hankensack, New York, quite far north for the ranking general of the Confederacy that he was to become. He entered West Point at the age of fifteen and completed the two-year course there. He served like Roger Jones in the line of the Artillery. In 1827, he married the daughter of General John Mason of Clermont, Fairfax County, Virginia, and a granddaughter of George Mason of Gunston Hall. This resulted in his being brought to the Army headquarters in Washington, D. C. He was to remain there for the most part with periods away during the Indian and Mexican wars until the time he went south to offer his services to his friend, Jefferson Davis. 24

However, all was not easy for Macomb and Cooper at first. There was clear delight in the letters Macomb penned shortly after his being named to that office. He even went so far as to acknowledge that he was now going to "take care of Cooper and my other friends." 25 He sounded confident that his authority would be acknowledged because of the "firmness and decision in the head of the government." He even predicted the speedy elimination of problems with brevets as the result of new regulations being drafted. 26

In fact, however, there were still problems. The day Macomb formally went to pay his acknowledgments to President Adams, the House of

24 "Obituary," December 3, 1876, newspaper clipping on blank page of Army Historical Collection copy of James B. Fry, A Sketch of the Adjutant General's Department, U. S. Army, from 1775 to 1875 (New York, 1875).

25 Alexander Macomb, June 16, 1828 (from Washington, D. C.), Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.

26 Alexander Macomb to George Izard, Governor of Arkansas, August 10, 1828, "Selected Reports," Record Group 94, National Archives, p. 11.
Representatives passed a resolution calling for the abolition of the Commanding General's Office. 27 The Secretary of State, Henry Clay, had backed Winfield Scott and used Macomb's appointment as an excuse to offer his resignation. 28 But the greatest opposition was to come from within the Army, and to no one's surprise, from Winfield Scott.

The struggle to get Winfield Scott to accept the decision to place Macomb over him became, before very long, a personal battle carried on between two very strong-willed gentlemen, Adams and Scott. The figures of Secretary of War Peter B. Porter, Commanding General Macomb, and Adjutant General Jones were constantly seen but distinctly subordinate in the contest between the President and the disgruntled General.

This struggle however was conducted on comparatively high grounds (compared that is to some of Scott's other administrative battles). At the end, both of the antagonists could look upon the other as a friend. Scott's characterization of President Adams in this affair, though obviously biased, is quite fair to the chief executive compared to the sentiments he harbored for General Gaines and Secretary of War Davis in later years. Scott said of the President that

Mr. Adams, as was well known, read, during his presidency, with conscientiousness, every paper, connected with every important subject, that required Executive decision, and, in this controversy, in which, by inveiglement, he had become, virtually, a principal—he did more, he wrote, himself, most of the replies to my formidable appeals and demonstrations. With the obstinacy of a Roundhead, equal

to his invincible honesty, he brought to bear against me all the great resources of his rhetoric and ratiocination; and, perhaps, it may even be added--some of the tricks of the schoolmen--being hard pressed and animated to forgetfulness. ²⁹

On May 24, 1828, President Adams received the resolution of the Senate confirming Alexander Macomb as Commanding General, and at the same time confirming Senator Harrison as the U. S. Minister to Columbia. That day he sent over Peter P. Porter's name as the new Secretary of War. ³⁰

On May 26, Roger Jones brought President Adams the draft of an order appointing Macomb as Major General of the Army and "requiring all officers and soldiers of the Army to obey and respect him as such." The need for such an order, so worded, Jones said was that General Scott had indicated an intention to disobey Macomb openly in the event of his appointment. Adams decided in favor of some such order and directed the Adjutant General to have General Macomb resign from the position of Chief of Engineers and accept the position of Commanding General in writing. Roger Jones had gone to the trouble of preparing for the President's consent the respective rearrangements in the Engineer Corps that Macomb's elevation involved. ³¹

The resolutions on Macomb's appointment prompted a visit that evening from Representative Mercer of Virginia to talk with Adams on the

³¹ Ibid., p. 11 (May 26, 1828).
relative merits of Macomb and Scott. Mercer had many harsh things to say of General Macomb, most of which were clearly untrue, but the most interesting of his assertions was that Macomb's nomination had resulted in twenty-five votes in the House being turned in favor of abolishing the Commanding General's position. The Representative proposed that Scott and Macomb be subjected to a board or court martial and both be required to adhere to the decision as it pertained to Scott's claims for brevet rank. President Adams pointed out that in choosing Macomb, he had already made a determination of the claims for brevet rank, and that it would be pointless to submit the question again to a court martial board in that he as President would simply have to overrule any decision that ran counter to his own. Further, he noted, it was impossible to get a fair ruling from a court martial board on the subject of brevets "for every soldier upon it would be interested in the issue on one side or the other." Adams pointed out the board headed by General Brown had been unable to deal with the question for just that reason. 32

Meanwhile, Winfield Scott had heard in Cincinnati that another had been selected for the spot he so coveted. In a letter to Adams dated May 3, Scott claimed that as a result of brevets he would still rank General Macomb even after the latter received a linear promotion to Major General. Jones' information on Scott's intentions was quite correct and by the end of May, the general was in the capital to defend his

32 Ibid., pp. 13-14 (May 26, 1828).
interests himself. Washington was not a large city in those days, and Generals Scott and Macomb accidentally ran into each other, giving occasion for the former to snub the new commander of the Army at least twice before the end of the month.

On May 30, Scott received a copy of General Macomb's assumption of command order dated May 28, 1828. Scott immediately put in a request that either Macomb be court martialed for issuing an illegal order, or that he, Scott, be brought before a court martial board for a refusal to obey Macomb.

Since Porter had not yet assumed the job of Secretary of War, it was an acting Secretary who refused, on June 2, to court martial either officer, noting that Macomb had acted "by express command of the President." This response had in fact been prepared in President Adams' office, at the chief executive's own direction. Acting Secretary Samuel L. Southard was simply the person writing it up and signing it.

General Scott now commenced an approach that involved open disobedience of all orders that were issued in the name of Macomb. However, while taking such a stance publicly, he proceeded to make sure that in fact, the orders were carried out by his command. He proceeded to get word back to President Adams of his covert compliance by means of Adjutant General Jones, to whom an exact account was sent by General

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Scott's aide. 36

Then commenced an exchange of letters that seems to be a characteristic of General Scott's career. Scott here contended that he was the senior Major General by brevet over Macomb and therefore could not be commanded by his junior. He was quite willing to allow the Executive (as he termed the War Department and Adjutant General's Office) to assign him separately from Macomb and thereby avoid the issue between them, but refused to be placed subordinate to Macomb. This was not much of a concession in the eyes of the President. Nor was Adams duly impressed by Scott's contention in a letter dated August 21 that "the office of 'Commander in Chief,' or 'General in Chief,' or 'Commander of the Army'" did not exist in law, but only existed as a convention of the service because Calhoun had kept Jacob Brown in Washington, D. C. 37

But Roger Jones found President Adams getting a good laugh out of one passage of the letter when he came to the White House on business. Adams explained to the Adjutant General that in recounting the Articles of War on the subject of brevets and command, Scott had complained of a change in 1806 that had weakened the authority of brevets. Scott contended that "some bungler, no doubt a clerk in the War Department, had ignorantly made the revision." The President confided to Jones the cause of his mirth: "I am that bungling clerk, for being a member of the Senate's committee, to which the subject was referred, in 1806, the labor

of revision fell to me!\(^{38}\)

Scott received a long reply in a letter from Secretary of War Porter on November 15, 1828. But the frequency with which the Secretary used the President's name and authority leaves little doubt that in fact this reply was dictated by Adams.

The letter assured Scott of the personal good intentions toward him of the chief executive. "The respect which the President cannot cease to entertain for your former service, has induced him to extend to the spirit of insubordination manifested in your late correspondence with this department, a degree of forbearance which he has found it difficult to reconcile with the stern principles of military obedience."

The General again had explained the government's position that brevet rank was honorary and did not necessarily confer the right of command. Again it was stressed that the President was the highest authority that the questions could be submitted and that he had already ruled on the case.

The constant request for a court martial by General Scott was responded to in much the same manner as Adams had used to Representative Mercer of Virginia:

That, a reference in the present case, to a court, or a board of officers would be inexpedient inasmuch as it would be impossible to constitute a disinterested tribunal from the materials of the present army. On looking to the higher grades of the army for a president of the tribunal, he will find, first, General Macomb who is directly interested in the issue of the inquiry; secondly, General Gaines, who, besides being interested in a similar question of rank, would be still more objectionable on account of the personal

hostility known to exist between you and him; and indeed it would be found that almost every brevet officer would be interested in swelling the importance of that species of rank, and thereby, his own positive rank in the army; and those holding rank by commission only, would, on the other hand, be inclined to increase its relative importance by detracting from that of the other. 39

On November 26, Scott was suspended, and he began the process of memorializing Congress for redress against the President. By the 30th, his letters to the War Department were taking on the tone of a martyr.

...my present, disjointed and dispirited efforts will therefore be rather thrown out for my brother officers and more particularly those veterans of the war; now few in number, who, like me, had the misfortune to win rank in the field, and who, surviving me in office may, I hope, profit by my sacrifice. 40

On December 29, 1828, Scott submitted to Congress a memorial denying the existence of the Commanding General's position in law and claiming to be the injured senior Major General (by brevet) presently in the Army.

But the climax of Scott's struggle was certainly not the major concern of either the War Department or of Washington, D. C. on that winter day. Adams had not been reelected, and the new administration was headed by General Jackson. All of Washington society was alive with "intrigue and controversy" over the matter of the wife of Jackson's appointment as incoming Secretary of War, Margaret Eaton. There is no need to recount the various details, but it seems that not only the ladies but even the politicians of Washington felt that who did or did not receive this

39 Peter B. Porter to Winfield Scott, November 15, 1828, American State Papers, Military Affairs, Vol. 4, pp. 49, 52.
40 As quoted in Fry, Brevets, p. 117.
woman was more important than who did or did not command the Army. But perhaps only Winfield Scott considered that anything but a settled issue by then.  

Similarly there was a neglect of the good citizens of Washington for the affairs of General Scott because most of the federal employees were concerned about their own jobs. The civil servants feared that a great purge was about to take place. Rumor, intrigue, and bureaucratic infighting were apparent. Clay had occasion to comment that the civil servants felt "something like the inhabitants of Cairo when the plague breaks out; no one knows who is next to encounter the stroke of death; or which, with many of them is the same thing, to be dismissed from office. You have no conception of the moral tyranny which prevails over those in employment." The tensions became so great for one War Department clerk that he proceeded to slit his throat, despite having a record as a Jackson partisan.  

It is interesting in light of Macomb's statements to Adams of having a preference for his administration, that one of the new members of General Jackson's government would be convinced by Macomb that he was "a Jackson man."  

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41 Adams, Memoirs, Vol. VIII, p. 159 (December 30, 1829); Marquis James, Andrew Jackson, Portrait of a President (Indianapolis, 1937), pp. 183, 229.  

42 As quoted in White, Jacksonians, p. 330.  


It has already been noticed that the "sweep" from office did not greatly affect the veteran clerks working in the Adjutant General's Department. Though many statements on the inauguration of the spoils system are from persons who could be accused of being biased on the subject, there does seem to be some substance to their charges in reference to the War Department as a whole.\footnote{Adams, \textit{Memoirs}, Vol. VIII, p. 138 (April 16, 1829); \textit{ibid.}, p. 149 (May 1, 1829); \textit{Keyes, Fifty Years}, p. 111.}{45} An often recounted case was that of Colonel Thomas L. McKenney, who headed Indian affairs for the War Department. He was informed "Why, sir, everybody knows your qualifications for the place, but General Jackson has been long satisfied that you are not in harmony with his views in regard to the Indians."\footnote{\textit{Bowers, Party Battles}, p. 73; as quoted in \textit{White, Jacksonians}, p. 92.}{46} There was also the case of the family of Charles Nourse, who had served as Acting Adjutant General. His father, Joseph Nourse, had been at the Treasury Department for years, and was removed as part of the attempt by Jackson, in his own words, "to clean out the Nursery." Others of the family were also dismissed. Charges, it should be noted, could be brought against the head of the clan for defaulting.\footnote{Leonard DuPree White, \textit{The Jeffersonians, A Study in Administrative History, 1801-1829} (New York, 1951), p. 408; as quoted in \textit{White, Jacksonians}, p. 418; \textit{James, Portrait}, p. 192.}{47}

The first year of the Jackson Administration saw the removal of some eight out of forty clerks in the War Department. When time came to fill positions, as the biographer of President Jackson put it, "no objection came from him when the father and brother-in-law of Mrs. Eaton appeared
on the War Department payroll."  

As a result of these replacements, the bureaucracy was responsive to the will of the government in power—something that had not always been true of the period just before. Further, the replacements satisfied the popular clamor for rotation.  \(^49\) It was an associate of Martin Van Buren who would later rise to be Secretary of War himself, William L. Marcy, who stated the phrases that would characterize the coming period:

> It may be, sir, that the politicians of the United States are not so fastidious as some gentlemen are, as to disclosing the principles on which they act. They boldly preach what they practice. When they are contending for victory they avow their intention of enjoying the fruits of it. If they are defeated, they expect to retire from office. If they are successful, they claim, as a matter of right, the advantages of success. They see nothing wrong in the rule, that to the victor belong the spoils of the enemy.  \(^50\)

Nor did the new administration stop with the elimination of the civil servant's tenure. The pay of senior officers under provisions of brevet, double rations, and contingent emoluments had been increased during the previous administrations. These were now cut, though former President Adams considered it clearly a case of foolish economy, reducing as it did already inadequate wages.  \(^51\)

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\(^{48}\) James, Portrait, pp. 216, 217.


\(^{50}\) James, Portrait, p. 196; as quoted in White, Jacksonians, p. 320.

Just before Adams left office he had his last battle with Scott. Nourse brought word that Scott was going to resign, but when the letter came on January 5, 1829, it was a request to proceed to Richmond and an intention of resigning by March 3 if Congress had not acted favorably on his memorials.52

On January 10, Scott received from Roger Jones a series of statements and rulings on brevet rank which the general was hoping to use to substantiate to the Congress that it was not the usage of the service to have an officer with brevet rank to serve under anyone else of inferior rank whether brevet or regular. That such support from the Adjutant General to Scott's case would be unpleasant to the government is clear. Jones, however, did the work on it as a personal favor, and he ended the statement, "I have employed at home the hours which during the day were unavoidably denied me at the office."53

The response of the government was in the form of a letter from the Secretary of War on January 14 which once more outlined the need for the position of Commanding General. The Secretary resorted to heavy sarcasm about General Scott's claim:

The Constitution and laws of the United States are, indeed, so destitute of anything which can, in the remotest degree, sustain the claim of the memorialist, that a rigorous examination of them can only excite surprise that the attempt should ever have been made to deduce the pretension from them. He has therefore been compelled to resort to the practice of foreign armies for a principle which he affirms to be always applicable to our own.

52Ibid., Vol. VIII, p. 95 (January 5, 1829).
53Roger Jones to Winfield Scott, January 10, 1829, American State Papers, Military Affairs, Vol. 4, p. 63.
But the most surprising argument came straight from Adams. Porter announced that he was directed by the President to say that Adams considered the charges of Scott to be matters for impeachment of the President himself if true as stated. Further, Adams through the Secretary of War told the Congress if they credited Scott's complaints in the least, he was ready to defend his actions in an impeachment proceedings.

The Congress refused to act. Administrations changed. President Jackson's first acts included reinstating Scott and putting him on an extended leave to travel and think things out. This gave Scott the opportunity to save face. He sought out the advice of no less a figure than the visiting General Lafayette who advised him, for the good of his country, to concede. With such high minded advice from such a personage, even Scott's pride was satisfied, and he consented to serve under Macomb.

Adams and Scott became friends again, and the heat of their controversy died down. Adams even went so far as to prevent the publication of a pamphlet he had written on the subject of brevets (which he had become quite expert in, thanks to the controversy) rather than allow the harsh words he had used toward Winfield Scott to pass into the public view.

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55 As quoted in Fry, Brevets, p. 123.

Though Jones became only indirectly concerned with the affairs of Mrs. Eaton and the replacement of War Department clerks, he found that the very definition of his role as Adjutant General became critical in the attempt of General Macomb to assert his authority over the Army. Both Macomb and Jones looked to precedent and usage to determine the proper duties of an Adjutant General and the relationship of the Adjutant General's Office to the Commanding General. Macomb looked to his own days as Adjutant General amidst the flux of war-time conditions and to the period under Calhoun when often the person functioning as acting Adjutant General was the aide of the Commanding General. Roger Jones, on the other hand, looked to the period when Parker had been Adjutant Inspector General or to the equally stable period in the office after Jones himself took over prior to General Brown's death.

Macomb was out to establish his authority in the Army. Everyone was, in fact, aware of the open defiance of Winfield Scott. Macomb became in turn very conscious of any opposition to himself on the part of any that he might view as being friends of Scott's. Nowhere was the new Commanding General's attention focused more than on what he considered his own military staff. Macomb felt that under General Brown a number of lax practices had been created that were not conducive to good military discipline. In short, Macomb felt that the staff of the Army was under himself, and that staff officers should only communicate with the President and Secretary of War through him, never directly.

This was clearly a departure from the usage that had existed since the creation of the Commanding General's Office by Calhoun. When Calhoun had created a Commanding General, he had placed at that officer's
disposal the services of the Adjutant General's Office. However, there
were functions performed by the Adjutant General's Office for the Secre-
tary of War that came down from the old Adjutant and Inspector General's
Office. These functions involved War Department business and direct
contact with the Secretary and had not been transferred to the Commanding
General (though since the latter's functions never were fully defined and
Brown's aides served as acting Adjutant Generals, there were grounds for
confusion).

Roger Jones was quick to perceive a threat in the new Commanding
General's desire that all communication to the Secretary pass through
him. The Adjutant General felt strongly enough about it to bring the
matter to the attention of President Adams. Jones attempted to establish
from the start a status as an independent bureau chief of the War Depart-
ment who was assigned extra duties as a convenience to the headquarters
of the Commanding General then stationed in Washington. The papers Jones
brought to President Adams' attention were those which authorized him to
draw the pay for double rations that were due War Department staff heads.
Jones then requested the President to give him a decision in favor of his
right to have direct communication with the Secretary of War. These con-
vocations took place in June of 1828, shortly after Macomb assumed of-

Roger Jones became most upset in July when he realized that General
Macomb had invaded the realm of the issuance of orders by getting a list
of cadets graduating from West Point from Charles Nourse who then held

57 Ibid., Vol. VII, p. 11 (June 9, 1828); Vol. VIII, p. 38 (June 21,
1828).
the position of Chief Clerk of the War Department, and in turn publishing orders for them to report to their respective stations. All of this had bypassed the office of the Adjutant General, one of whose main functions was to make such assignments and issue and authenticate the orders.  

Macomb contended later that at this juncture early in the period he was in office that he had occasion to complain that Jones was issuing orders without apprising the Commanding General of their content beforehand. In particular, he remembered the question arose over promotion orders and an order dealing with the medical department. When asked if he had given the order in writing or in front of witnesses, Macomb replied no but "Out of delicacy to the Adjutant General, I sent for him privately into my own room...."  

One of the more critical phases of this difference between the two officers as to Macomb's pretentions as the new Commanding General was the question of whose name the orders were to be issued in. Shortly after taking office, Macomb noticed that Roger Jones was issuing orders with the authority line on them reading "by order." Since this left it in doubt whether this was by order of the President, the Secretary of War, or the Commanding General, Macomb felt it was not enough. The new Commanding General wanted it clear that orders were going out in his name, so that General Scott would be placed squarely in the position of disobeying Macomb's orders if the issue were forced.

58 Ibid., Vol. VII, p. 53 (July 9, 1828).

Roger Jones on the other hand preferred to retain the traditional "by order" line. He was jealously guarding any indication that in some matters he worked for the Secretary rather than for Macomb. As the Commanding General put it, "I did not agree with him on the subject of his having any independent control or authority; but persisting in them, the subject was referred to General P. B. Porter, the then Secretary of War...." Macomb won, and all orders were issued "by order of Major General Macomb" or some similar formula. 60

In fact, the Adjutant General in the daily conduct of his office continued to interact with the Secretary of War on a direct basis. As Secretary of War Eaton said in a sworn statement later:

Communications have gone from the War Department both to the major general and to the Adjutant General's Office; most frequently, however, they have gone to the latter. Applications to be discharged from the army, for the appointment of sutlers, and in cases where information wanted was on file in the Adjutant General's Office, the application and references have been usually made directly to the Adjutant General. 61

The records and files of the Adjutant General's Office supported Jones' claim to a direct relationship having existed with the Secretary, and he did not hesitate to point this out. 62

One function that had long been a prerogative and duty of the Adjutant and Inspector General or Adjutant General after him was the publishing of the Annual Register of the Army. Prior to 1828 this had not

60 ibid.
in fact been the concern of the Commanding General at all but solely of
the Adjutant General. But in December of 1828, General Macomb pro-
ceeded to present to Secretary of War Porter (whom had never dealt with
the registers before) a project for a new format. When the Secretary
gave his consent to the proposed format, Macomb immediately sent out for
printers to prepare it. The main difference that Macomb was trying to
secure was the elimination of the first table of the old format which
arranges all of the officers of the Army by their relative ranks. Such
relative ranks were understandably of a delicate concern to the Com-
manding General because it was at this moment that Scott was preparing
his memorial to Congress (with Roger Jones' assistance).

When the Adjutant General found out about the entire handling of
the Register, he was understandably indignant that his functions had
been usurped. But it was too late to change back the Register for 1829
which was published according to Macomb's format early in January. 63

The final crisis between Jones and Macomb came a year later when a
series of petty incidents was magnified by the publishing of the next
Annual Register. One such incident involved the issuing of routine
orders. Macomb contended that Jones had standing orders to show the
Commanding General all orders before sending them out. On January 16,
1830, a Lieutenant Ryan applied for leave. Jones proceeded to inform
him that the request had to be in writing. Ryan went to Samuel Cooper,
Macomb's aide and a friend of Ryan's to get assistance on drafting the

63 Roger Jones to Peter B. Porter, December 24, 1828, "Reports to
137; Army Register for the Year 1828, American State Papers, Military
Affairs, Vol. 4, p. 68.
request. When the lieutenants had completed the request, Cooper had the messenger attached to his office take it to Adjutant General Jones. Since the request came from the Commanding General's aide by the Commanding General's messenger, Roger Jones made the assumption that in fact Macomb had already approved it, so orders were issued accordingly. It is a commentary on the size and administration of the Army at that point that the Commanding General would be concerned about a lieutenant's leave.64

Frequent and heated discussions between Jones and Macomb over the format of the Annual Register occurred. The Commanding General assumed that everything Army officers did was within his purview, and directed Jones to submit the 1830 Register to him prior to publishing. Roger Jones, on the other hand, felt this was a bureau matter for which he was responsible to the Secretary directly and not subject to General Macomb's orders. The Adjutant General then resorted exactly to the same tactics that Macomb had used the year before. Just as Secretary of War Porter had no experience of previous publications and their procedures when Macomb approached him, so now the new Secretary of War, Eaton, was ignorant of the controversy surrounding the matter. Roger Jones took both the 1828 and 1829 versions of the Register to the Secretary. After pointing out the advantages of the older format, he asked Eaton for a decision. The Secretary gave the verdict which Jones sought.

That Saturday, January 23, Macomb went to the Adjutant General's Office to again discuss the format for the Register and why it has been

64 Alexander Macomb, "Jones Court Martial," p. 455; Samuel Cooper, "Jones Court Martial," p. 460.
published without consulting him. Jones, of course, stated that the Register had been approved by the Secretary. When Macomb asked for proof of this (as he later recounted), Jones "exultingly showed me an Army Register of 1828, with the endorsement in the handwriting of the Secretary of War: 'This being the most concise, is preferred.'"

The conversation then became somewhat heated as Macomb accused Jones of having approached the Secretary in an "underhanded manner" to which the Adjutant General took immediate exception, knowing that even the Secretary of War himself would mention that Jones had been to see him in the normal course of business.

There are two versions of what then transpired. Macomb reported that he had said:

I regret exceedingly, Col. Jones, that the manner in which you have treated me in relation to this business of the Register, in publishing orders without my authority, and in the general disposition manifested by you to usurp my powers, will oblige me, however reluctantly, to order your arrest. He replied, he never before heard of a commanding officer saying he would order the arrest of a subordinate, or speak in that way to a subordinate. I then said it was the only treatment by which such conduct as his could be settled; that I had forbore for a long time from personal considerations of regard and esteem; but, since my authority was set at naught, I feared I should have no other alternative. 'This,' he said, 'is exactly, sir, what I would wish, and I defy you, sir, to do it; I defy you.' These last words were spoken with a good deal of warmth. In the proceeding relation I may have failed of giving the express words of the accused but am positive that they are in effect equal to those given.65

One reason General Macomb was reluctant to let the version as he presented it stand without the final line of qualification was that there had been working in the nearly deserted office that Saturday, a

Sergeant Charles Baker who was attached to the Adjutant General's Office. Since he was not a party to the dispute, his testimony should bear weight. As he presented it, "I heard General Macomb say to Colonel Jones, 'if it was not for the regard I have for your family, I should arrest you;' and Colonel Jones replied, 'very well, General, as you please.'" 66

Of course President Jackson and Secretary of War Eaton wished to be informed as to why Macomb had taken such extraordinary steps as to arrest the Adjutant General of the Army. After Macomb presented his version of the situation, the President suggested that some arrangement to settle without a court martial be arrived at. Therefore Macomb offered Jones the opportunity to make a public admission and apology. The Adjutant General, believing he had in fact done nothing wrong, refused. And so charges were prepared and presented. Roger Jones was relieved from office, and Samuel Cooper, Macomb's aide, was named acting Adjutant General of the Army. 67

On the eighth of February, a set of charges were presented and then again on the 24th, another set of charges were presented. Both sets were officially attested to by the Judge Advocate. Now Jones asked that the entire trial be tossed out because it was illegal for the prosecutor or judge advocate to alter the charges once presented. The only authority allowed to alter charges was that of the Commander, who ordered the convening of the court martial. This court martial had, in fact, been


67 Alexander Macomb to Roger Jones, February 8, 1830, "Jones Court Martial," p. 453.
ordered to convene by Samuel Cooper as acting Adjutant General in the name of Macomb. Therefore, Macomb stood at once in the position of prosecutor and convening authority. Despite these discrepancies, and despite the change in charges the night before Jones was brought to trial, the court martial board ordered the trial to proceed.  

Roger Jones was accused on three charges. The first was for disobedience of orders. Here, the charges consisted of issuing several orders without General Macomb's consent, and issuing the *Annual Register* under the same conditions. The second charge was conduct subversive of good order and military discipline which was essentially seeking the approval of the Secretary of War for a format on the Register that Macomb disapproved. The third and final charge was for disrespect towards his commanding officer. This hinged essentially on Jones' having said "I defy you, sir, I defy you."  

The facts in reference to each of these charges Roger Jones was able to establish. On the first charge of issuing orders without Macomb's approval, Jones was able to establish that all of the orders except the one involving Lieutenant Ryan were totally routine matters that an adjutant of a regiment would have not bothered his commander about. In the case of Ryan, Cooper's actions had given a false impression of Macomb's approval. This charge was clearly trumped up to be added on to

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70 Roger Jones, "Jones Court Martial," p. 458.
those dealing with the Register. The second charge of having secured
the Secretary's approval in an underhanded way was refuted by state-
ments of the Secretary himself. As to the third charge, there were
reasons to believe (that is the testimony of a third party), that the
open defiance was not in fact as Macomb presented it.

That left the part of the first charge that Jones had published the
Annual Register in violation of Macomb's direct orders. The defense of
the Adjutant General hinged on the very nature of his office, and was a
contention that the Commanding General had no legal right to give a
binding order in this area to Jones' functioning in his capacity as an
independent bureau chief.

Macomb's assertion was that as Commanding General, he had the right
to give orders to any Army officer on anything concerning official busi-
ness, that the bureau chiefs were in no way exempt or superior to his
jurisdiction. The overwhelming amount of evidence was introduced on the
part of Roger Jones for his contention.

The Adjutant General drew a distinction between the military duties
of his office which the Adjutant General's Office had performed for the
Commanding General since the headquarters were moved to Washington, D.
C., and the ministerial duties that the Adjutant General's Office had
performed before General Brown had been named Commanding General. 71

Roger Jones asserted that the obligation to publish the Annual
Register

71 Ibid.
...was not military duty proper; that it was a ministerial duty, specifically assigned to the Secretary of War by the Senate of the United States, to be performed by himself or whoever he might select, and which had been, by ordinary usage, deputed to the Adjutant General. That this duty, as far as it is deputed to the Adjutant General, constitutes, with others not specially defined, one branch of the two-fold relation born by the Adjutant General to the War Department and to the Commanding General; that, although this double relation gives him no 'separate and distinct authority,' it binds him to a separate and distinct obedience.72

The Adjutant General, for this contention, appealed to the expert opinion of the Quartermaster General of the Army (who had his own independence as a bureau chief to protect). General Jessup agreed there were clearly ministerial duties involved in the Adjutant General's Office. "The grounds of this opinion consist in the fact of his performing certain duties which are essentially those of the Secretary of War himself, and not of any military man, to wit, the publication of the laws, everything relating to commissions, the Army Register, and the duties connected with the militia."73

Earlier Jones had assisted Winfield Scott in the argument to uphold the General's position. The Adjutant General proceeded to put questions to Scott in turn to support his own defense. Scott agreed there were functions of the Adjutant General's Office that were ministerial in nature including the "preparation and publication of the Army Register, which I suppose, in point of fact as well as of law to be the act of the Executive, signified through the Secretary of War and the Adjutant General." Scott also, from his own experiences as an Adjutant General

72 Ibid.
in the field in the War of 1812, supported Jones' contentions that routine orders should be issued by an Adjutant General without recourse to the commander for guidance on every one.  

At this point Roger Jones introduced a lengthy account of the entire history and function of the Adjutant General's Office. The argument and history have all been recounted earlier.

The Adjutant General further pointed out that the entire question of the relationship between the respective officers of the Secretary of War, the Commanding General, and the Adjutant General had been in contention ever since Macomb had taken office. Jones further revealed that in December of 1829, just before the incidents involved in the court martial had taken place, that he had formally requested a decision from the Secretary of War on whether he or Macomb had the correct interpretation. Jones pointed out that the Secretary had not as yet been able to answer the letter addressed to him. (Delicacy restrained anyone from pointing out that the Secretary and most of the rest of Washington was more concerned over Mrs. Eaton at this juncture.) Jones also noted that Macomb had rushed him to a court martial on the very point in contention and under deliberation by the Secretary.  

The Adjutant General, however, proceeded to sum up the entire case against himself when he commented:

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74 Winfield Scott, "Jones Court Martial," p. 460.

He who ordered the arrest; who threatened it before it was ordered; who instituted the charges, and appears as the only witness to sustain them, is one and the same person. In him, the commanding general of the army of the United States, I see the actual prosecutor. 76

The court martial board knew why they had been convened. Roger Jones was found guilty of the first and second charges and sentenced to be reprimanded in general orders. He was released from arrest and resumed his duties as the Adjutant General of the Army. 77

The effects of the trial must be evaluated. Obviously, this was not a real blow to Roger Jones' career, for he held the Adjutant General's Office for another twenty-two years. Macomb succeeded in what he was after, a dramatic demonstration that he as Commanding General had control even over the bureaus. His battles attempting to assert his authority over the other sections of the staff were not over, but the treatment of such can be left to histories of other staff sections. 78

The message got to the friends of Winfield Scott that Macomb would tolerate no opposition over questions that touched on his authority.

It is interesting to note that two months after the trial concluded, Congress passed a law revising the Articles of War. It provided that

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76 Roger Jones, "Jones Court Martial," p. 461.

77 "Jones Court Martial," pp. 478-479.

78 William B. Skeleton, "The Commanding General and the Problem of Command in the United States Army, 1821-1841," Military Affairs, Vol. 34, p. 120.
a court martial; because, in doing so he would render himself 'the accuser or prosecutor,' and, as such, be prohibited, by the new provision, from appointing a court for the trial of the offense.

General Scott was to complain of this article later when it inconvenienced himself as having "perhaps, in a hasty moment, found a place on the statute book." He himself had been part of the events that led to its being written. 79

The efforts of Macomb to bring the staff under his direction resulted in the attempt to have the bureau chiefs meet under his chairmanship as the "Military Board." This early attempt at a true general staff unfortunately did not continue under Macomb's successors.

Attempts to prevent individual officers from coming to Washington, D.C., to plead for assignments and particularly to contact the legislators, resulted in an 1832 regulation to prohibit such visits without the express permission of General Macomb. As the result of an outcry against this provision, the next year, it was repealed. 80

But the ultimate question of the relationship of the Adjutant General's Office to the Commanding General and the Secretaries was not resolved during Macomb's period. Jones outlived Macomb, and the Adjutant General was nothing if not persistent. Macomb's successor, Scott, was far less keen on imposing control over the bureau chiefs, so their special relationship to the Secretary of War was enhanced after the firm hand of Alexander Macomb was removed.

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79 Winfield Scott, Annual Report, 1843, p. 66; 4 Statutes at Large 417.

80 Niles' Weekly Register, October 5, 1833, Vol. XIV, p. 94.
Macomb died in office on June 25, 1841. Scott was chosen to succeed him, and was therefore named Major General, now in linear rank, and stationed in Washington. That the headquarters of the Army needed to be in the capital was not at this period entirely accepted. Secretary of War J. M. Porter, for example, was able to state that the headquarters were so positioned "for the convenience of communication with the department." 81

The best description of the effect on the question of the brevet rank by the accession of Winfield Scott was the account by General James B. Fry:

But he had no sooner been tempted away from his powerful brevet guns, than they were seized with all their ammunition by his old enemy [Gaines], and the fiery bolts he had forged for others were poured into his own camp. The position of major-general-in-chief which he now occupied, had, however, been so strongly intrenched by the government, against his attacks while it was held by another, that he could occupy it in a state of security. The situation was comical but not critical. 82

The necessary involvement of the Adjutant General's Office in the politically overcharged atmosphere of the Polk administration had already been noted several times. The fact that the President would choose to use his undoubtedly prerogative to interfere with the daily routine and internal business of the Adjutant General's Office indicated, at the very least, exceptional circumstances, if not a major breakdown of normal governmental process.

81 James M. Porter, Annual Report, 1843, p. 51.
82 As quoted in Fry, Brevets, p. 127.
The situation came about because of the interplay of various personalities and personal political commitments. President Polk was a strong president. Though he was often narrow, biased, and even vindictive in his relations with his generals, he did have the force of will and the personal competence to run the war effort. He needed these qualities because they were notably lacking in the New York politician he had as a Secretary of War.

Secretary of War Marcy had risen to his position through the politics of the state of New York. It has been said in his favor that he had a lively sense of humor. As was evident to all by the time he finished at the War Department, he should have brought other qualities. President Polk, for one, had good reason to place a low value on Marcy's abilities. The chief executive found that the Secretary was useful in bringing over dispatches and reading them aloud for Polk's decisions. When Marcy could not cope with the affairs of the office he was supposed to run, the President had to step in. The example of Adjutant General Jones and the list of vacancies was just one example.\(^\text{83}\)

The problem that President Polk faced was that for political reasons he could trust neither the generals in the field nor the staff officers in Washington. Despite this lack of confidence (most acutely felt in the case of the Commanding General but still figuring in relations with Jones and the rest of the staff), Polk could not remove the Army officers that openly opposed his administration. Polk had been elected President and felt that he had the right and prerogative to conduct policy along

\(^\text{83}\) As quoted in White, Jacksonians, pp. 51, 63.
the lines he chose. Yet the instruments for implementing that policy were officers who consistently interposed their own contrary will and views. Further, the President was engaged in a war. If all went well, the generals who were in political opposition would take all the credit, and from a position of being national heroes, attack and displace his government. Of course his administration would be blamed for anything that went wrong with the war effort.

Winfield Scott repeatedly proved that he was a truly great battlefield commander. However, as has already been shown, even prior to his becoming the irremovable Commanding General of the Army, he was not known for his harmonious personal relationships. Polk was a Democrat and Scott a Whig. Neither man saw much need to like the other, and their relations deteriorated steadily.

For example, a letter that Scott wrote on February 6, 1846, about the personnel policies of the administration came to Polk's attention. The President could hardly have read it with any pleasure:

The proposed Riflemen are intended by western men to give Commissions or rather pay to western democrats. Not an eastern man, not a graduate of the Military Academy and certainly not a whig would obtain a place under such prescriptive circumstances or prospects. You may be certain I shall not dishonor myself by recommending any individual whatever, and so I have already replied to hundreds of applicants, most of them democrats.84

No matter what might be thought of Polk's personnel practices, it must have distressed the Commander-in-Chief to read such sentiments from his ranking, irremovable general.

By the time that the President read this letter, he had already grudgingly offered Scott the command in the field. But Scott did not depart immediately. Since there were no Democratic generals, the Administration proposed to increase the military establishment by getting Congressional approval for more general officers and then filling the slots with men who could be trusted to support the government's efforts.

Scott, on hearing this, immediately launched into the attack, but the enemy was Marcy, not the Mexicans. He informed the Secretary of War that the government's trick was transparent. The intention was:

...first to supersede me, and, at the end of the war, say in six or eight or twelve months, disband every general who would not place Democracy [the party] above God's country.\(^{85}\)

He further indicated that he had no intention of leaving Washington at such a time. In words almost calculated to inflame his civilian superiors, he refused to go out with "a fire upon my rear from Washington, and the fire in front from the Mexicans."\(^{86}\)

Nor did Scott stop with the letter attack. Both he and Adjutant General Jones immediately turned to their friends in Congress in an attempt to stop the legislation creating new generals. Polk was aware of these actions and identified Scott and Jones by name as "whigs and violent partisans" who "seemed disposed to throw every obstacle in the way of my prosecuting the Mexican War successfully."\(^{87}\)

\(^{85}\) Polk, Diary, Vol. I, p. 418 (May 23, 1846).

\(^{86}\) As quoted in White, Jacksonians, p. 54.

\(^{87}\) Polk, Diary, Vol. I, p. 417 (May 22, 1846).
Polk felt that in light of the opposition to the administration on the part of the staff, particularly the Adjutant General, he needed to warn the Secretaries of War and Navy of the need of "not confiding in their subordinates to act without their supervision."\(^88\)

Scott and Jones failed in their attempt to stop the creation of new generals, but even the appointment of several Democrats did not solve President Polk's problem. He needed someone he could trust politically at the head of the armies in the field, and he needed someone he could rely on for military advice in Washington. By the end of 1846, the President was turning to Senator Thomas Hart Benton to fill the latter need. But the chief executive soon found the Senator angling for the command in the field. That Polk would turn to such advisers indicated a complete breakdown in his confidence in Scott in Washington and Taylor in the field. By January of 1847, Polk came to feel that Taylor was "a vindictive and ignorant political partisan." The dilemma of the administration was becoming worse as the relations between the civil supervisors and the uninformed commanders worsened.\(^89\)

Writing in his diary, the President stated the problem in the War Department as follows:

The Secretary of War is overwhelmed with his labours and responsibilities, and is compelled to rely for the execution of many details of his Department to his subordinate officers, some of whom I fear do not feel that they have any responsibility, and others seem to act as

\(^{88}\) Ibid., Vol. I, p. 407 (May 19, 1846).

\(^{89}\) As quoted in Cunliffe, Soldiers, pp. 285, 307, 308.
though they were indifferent about the success of our military operations. Several of these officers are politically opposed to the administration and there is reason to apprehend that they would be willing to see the Government embarrassed. With these apprehensions I shall for the future give more attention than I have done to their conduct. 90

The politically motivated actions and obstructions of Scott and Taylor as commanders, and Jones and his fellow staff chiefs, caused President Polk no end of embarrassment. Their actions clearly went against the provisions and spirit of the Constitution when it provided for civilian control. There is no meaning in the Constitutional arrangement if it is not the right and responsibility of the elected civil authorities to determine the political direction of the military establishment.

When Scott was sent to the field finally, it was only with the realization that Scott would probably be less of a political danger than Taylor. 91 The President continued to lament the "Federalists" (as he termed them) that he was struck with back in the bureaus in Washington. 92

How very little control Secretary Marcy had over these bureau chiefs was revealed in an incident toward the end of 1847 when the President asked for budget estimates. The President put out the guidelines that the estimates were to be kept down to peacetime levels. 93 When Marcy

90 Polk, Diary, Vol. II, p. 150 (September 22, 1846).
93 Ibid., Vol. III, p. 178 (September 21, 1847).
turned in estimates that ranged considerably above what Polk expected (60 million total), the President was surprised. When Marcy admitted having made no attempt to revise the amounts submitted by the bureau chiefs, he was directed to do so at once. Finally Marcy came to the President and admitted that he had so little control over the bureaus that perhaps Polk himself should talk with each of them.

The comments that the President made in this connection about his Quartermaster General Jessup illustrate exactly the dilemma of the chief executive because it is not clouded with the political animosity he held for Jones: "I consider Gen'l Jessup a worthy man, but a visionary one and unfit for the important Bureau which he fills, but I must use the officers of the army which have been furnished by law."  

When in March of the next year Polk started preparations for a board of inquiry into General Scott's handling of the funds used in securing the peace in Mexico, he found this to be a delicate matter so he called on Assistant Adjutant General Cooper to prepare the papers on the case. Samuel Cooper was experienced in investigating Winfield Scott; President Jackson had already used him in this capacity during the Florida War investigation.  

If ever there was needed an example of exactly how not to run a War Department, Polk, Marcy, Scott, and Jones gave the perfect one during

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94 Ibid., Vol. III, p. 212 (November 6, 1847).  
95 Ibid., Vol. III, p. 220 (November 11, 1847).  
96 Ibid., Vol. III, p. 388 (March 16-17, 1848).
the Mexican War. Polk may justly be criticized for the appointment and continuance of such a Secretary as Marcy. Marcy can be criticized for being unable to control his department. But the greatest censure must fall on the Commanding General and the Bureau Chiefs who allowed themselves to oppose and, to a greater or lesser extent, confound the will of their constitutional superiors. No matter how much they disagreed with the personnel determinations of the administration, Jones and Scott should have left the political determination to their civilian directors.

When Scott took the field, he could not command the entire Army of the United States. When he resumed command of the entire Army it was with the personally unpleasant situation of having his former subordinate, General Taylor, as President. Scott then decided to establish his headquarters in New York City. This cut him off from the normal administration of the War Department. The Adjutant General of course remained in Washington, D. C., as a chief of a War Department Bureau. This meant that while Roger Jones was issuing orders in the name of the Commanding General, in fact communication was difficult between Scott and the Adjutant General, the direction came rather from the Secretary of War direct. This arrangement prefigured a more stormy absence of General Scott after Jones' death. 97

In fact, in 1852, the Adjutant General that Scott had relied on for so many years died in office. The passing of Roger Jones was to mark a true change in the role of the Adjutant General's Office.

The involvement of the Adjutant General's Office in the politics of the War Department was in the context of the very political role played by the leading military figures in the period of Roger Jones' term. Shortly after Jones took office there was a major struggle over the very continuance of the office of Commanding General. After Macomb rather than Scott was selected, the Adjutant General found himself on trial in part of an attempt by the Commanding General to clearly assert the power of the highest military position. However when Macomb had died, and Scott did become the Commanding General, the pattern emerged of the Adjutant General's working with the Commanding General in political opposition to the Secretary of War and President.

After the death of Roger Jones, the daily routine of personnel and administration was to continue along very similar lines, the relationship that existed between the Adjutant General and the Commanding General was about to change drastically. Jones had been somewhat subdued by Macomb and befriended by Scott; neither pattern was to characterize Scott's relations with Jones' successor. The person who succeeded Roger Jones as Adjutant General of the Army probably would not have been Jones' own choice. He was certainly one of the last people Scott would have desired. But the new appointee had made himself invaluable to Secretary after Secretary, and he was the next senior officer in the Adjutant General's Department: Samuel Cooper.
CHAPTER VI

THE ADMINISTRATION OF SAMUEL COOPER,
1853-1861

The period during which Samuel Cooper served as Adjutant General of the United States Army is one that is often not treated as a period in its own right but as part of the pre-Civil War era. The fact that the War Department was dominated by Secretaries who were later prominent in the Confederacy, tends to strengthen any tendency to consider the whole period precursory of the great war that was to follow. Yet, the eight years that Cooper served as Adjutant General clearly were ones that have their own dynamics. If, in fact, the War Department was preparing for anything, it was preparing for a series of reforms, many of which never occurred because of the intervention of the Civil War. However, the record of the direction that the War Department was heading did become clear; and the general outlines of the reforms that never were, can be traced in the words and actions of the Secretaries of War and of Samuel Cooper himself.

Usually the high point of any treatment of this period by historians of the Army is the colorful dispute between Secretary of War Jefferson Davis and Winfield Scott. It has been termed "extraordinary," and both participants are usually considered to have conducted themselves in an unseemly manner. Winfield Scott is often defended both because the
Commanding Generals usually could find defenders, and because he remained loyal to the Union. Davis, on the other hand, is usually defended by Confederate apologists who are not so concerned with his objectives as secretary but with his "good name." The point that is missed is that the differences involved go far deeper than the pettiness on both sides or the exact sums of money argued over. This was a battle as to whether the Secretary of War would run the Army through the agency of the Adjutant General and reduce the Commanding General to a decorative figurehead or whether Scott could himself govern the Army, thus reducing the Secretaries to simply messengers of the President. 1

The figure of Samuel Cooper was central in this controversy, and in the entire development of the Adjutant General's Office for the eight years. He succeeded in raising the position of Adjutant General from the central and respected status gained for it by Roger Jones to the position of de facto Chief of Staff of the Army. In the process he took over many of the traditional functions of the Commanding General.

Samuel Cooper had risen to the senior position in the Adjutant General's Department without having a career really linked to that corps at all. Rather, after he had left the line of the artillery wherein he was first commissioned, he had served as Macomb's aide. When he was named to the Adjutant General's Department, he was detailed repeatedly as chief clerk to the Secretary of War, and we have had occasion to note

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Roger Jones' complaints at having received orders from him while serving in this capacity. However, when he succeeded Jones in holding the chief position in the Adjutant General's Office, he was, from his great experience of the working of the War Department, eminently qualified to be Adjutant General.²

The political efforts of Winfield Scott in the early 1850s were to have a definite impact on all those with whom he worked. His desire for the Presidency carried him as far as the candidacy of the Whig party in 1852. Various reasons have been presented for the failure of his bid, but one of the more interesting, in light of the heavy element of foreign-born at this period in the ranks of the Army, was the dislike that he could not hide for foreigners in general and the Irish in particular. He was, in the course of the election, accused of expressing Know-nothing sentiments, and in fact, had uttered remarks with reference to a disturbance in Philadelphia. The General later recalled his remarks as having been: "It would be better if the native-born citizens would find some means to repress this kind of turbulence."³ The General should have been thankful that he did not depend for his command on an election held in his ranks.

Also, there was the entire problem of a general on active duty actively campaigning for political office. The practice of Scott's to use Army inspection trips as a means of political canvassing understandably


³As quoted in Erasmus Darwin Keyes, Fifty Years Observations of Men and Events, Civil and Military (New York, 1884), pp. 97, 143.
made his opponents scan his travel vouchers when submitted to them after the election was over. In the heat of the campaign things were said and feelings engendered that made the subordination of Scott to Pierce after the election very difficult. Scott's aide tells us that the General "could never find fit words to describe his loathing of Franklin Pierce, who he believed was the meanest creature that ever aspired to be President!" If Scott had set out deliberately to make himself, and the Commanding General's position that he held, unacceptable to the civilian heads of the government and War Department then his actions in the presidential race could not have been better contrived toward that end.

In fact, the conflict came after the new administration had been installed. Pierce, whom Scott could remember only as a subordinate in the Mexican War, chose as his Secretary of War an individual who was clearly one of the best possible for the position. Jefferson Davis was to prove one of the best and most energetic Secretaries the War Department ever had. In seeking other Secretaries to compare him with, one has to turn to John C. Calhoun or Elihu Root to find persons of similar quality. The depth of knowledge that Davis brought to his office was in marked contrast to the series of Secretaries that have filled that office through most of its history. But he was totally objectionable to Winfield Scott for just the way he had acquired much of this knowledge. He had gone through West Point, served in the Mexican War (junior to even Pierce, as well as Scott), and then headed the Senate's Committee on Military Affairs. In this last capacity he had opposed the naming of

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4 As quoted in Ibid., p. 11.
Scott to the brevet rank of Lieutenant General. Scott considered Davis a youngster and not fit to run the War Department. Yet Davis was the constitutionally appointed head of that office. It would seem though, that the differences Scott had had with Wilkinson, Gaines, Macomb, Marcy, Adams, Jackson, and Polk had just been preparing his acid pen for Davis.

The thought of remaining every day under the direct control of Davis was too much for Scott. He had gone to New York to be away from President Taylor during that chief executive's term, and he now requested of President Pierce if he could locate his headquarters in the Empire City. Scott assured the new President that he could be easily communicated with by mail or telegraph, and that he was willing to return to the capital whenever called for. Permission was granted to the personal relief of all parties who otherwise would have been faced with an uncomfortable closeness.  

The removal of Scott allowed Jefferson Davis the opportunity to get to work at the business of the department. Mrs. Davis would have occasion later to describe this period:

During his four years in the Cabinet he worked with an increasing ardor that tired out all his assistants—sometimes he came home to dinner at two o'clock in the morning, bringing with him his dear friend and co-adjutor Colonel Samuel Cooper, Adjutant General of the

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United States Army, who, being much older than my husband, looked ready to faint. Luncheon with wine was often sent from home to the War Department, but Mr. Davis forgot to eat or offer the repast to the Colonel.  

Davis and Cooper soon became close friends and worked in an effort not only to administer the entire Army in the absence of the Commanding General, but to conduct a number of reforms. The business of the War Department now became a routine of the secretary's conducting correspondence with or giving orders to the commanders in the field through the agency of Cooper's office with no reference to the absent Scott who was increasingly idle in New York City.  

Scott complained particularly of one project of the Adjutant General's at this period. When Samuel Cooper came out with a new set of tactics, the Commanding General felt they were simply his own which had been "abridged and emasculated down to utter uselessness." On occasion, the bad relations between the Commanding General and Adjutant General flared into the open. But usually it was Davis who Scott blamed for what he considered improper behavior by Cooper.  

When the clash between Davis and Scott came, it was over a series of questions relating to personnel. They differed as to the rights and prerogatives attached to Scott's brevet rank of Lieutenant General. Questions of brevet were hardly new ground to Scott. They also differed

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8 Samuel Cooper to Winfield Scott, June 1, 1855, Davis Letters, Vol. II, p. 470.
over the right of Scott to travel freely at his own discretion. Davis maintained that travel was only authorized on the express orders of a superior (i.e., Davis himself). Finally, there was the question of whether the Commanding General could issue leaves to officers independently of and in opposition to policies laid down by the Adjutant General (who, of course, was operating here again on the behalf of the Secretary of War). 9

The correspondence became most heated over this last issue. Scott gave brevet Brigadier General Ethan Allen Hitchcock leave in clear opposition to the policies of the War Department. Davis ordered him to revoke it. Scott in turn did not revoke but demanded whether Davis spoke in the name of the President. Scott pointed out that Davis had not used any such authority and that the Secretary was not empowered to give orders in his own right. This simply offended Davis, who considered Scott insubordinate.

To prove how long had been his forbearance, Scott then cataloged repeated instances whereby the Adjutant General had communicated with commanders in the field or given them orders without consulting the Commanding General. Indeed, Scott presented enough examples to clearly show the pattern of actions. Referring to Davis in the third person, Scott pointed out to him,

...forgetting that delegated authority cannot be delegated by the delegate, he [Davis] has capped the climax by usurpation and absurdity in causing the Adjutant General habitually to issue commands to the whole army (without

9 As quoted in White, Jacksonians, pp. 195-196.
the slightest allusion to the President), 'by order of the Secretary of War.' There is but one step more in the downhill career; let some sergeant major, under his signature, fulminate written mandates to a regiment in the name of its adjutant.

In fact, Scott correctly perceived that Davis had been using the agency of the Adjutant General in such a way as to eliminate the Commanding General from any role whatsoever in the control of the Army. Davis, in fact, had no use for Scott, and as long as he had direct access to the Army through the Adjutant General, he had no use for any Commanding General.\(^\text{10}\)

Secretary of War Davis was more than willing to admit this was his procedure. Wherein could Scott object, Davis asked. Surely the Secretary was empowered to communicate with the commanders in the field and to give them orders directly. Further, if the Secretary chose to use the Adjutant General to so communicate and order, that was his prerogative.\(^\text{11}\)

Jefferson Davis then chose to ask President Pierce to order Scott to return to Washington so as to eliminate the delays involved in trying to do business by way of New York. However, he felt the present circumstances demanded more:

In the case referred to within [Hitchcock's leave], the failure to execute an order given by the commanding general was not the result of his separation from the seat of government, but of his persistent disobedience, a recurrence of which might not be prevented by merely

\(^{10}\) Winfield Scott to Jefferson Davis, July 30, 1855, and July 31, 1855, Davis Letters, Vol. II, pp. 476, 482.

\(^{11}\) Jefferson Davis to Winfield Scott, September 7, 1855, ibid., p. 497.
changing the location of army headquarters; and, to secure the end proposed, it is therefore believed to be requisite that all orders affecting the army generally should be communicated only by the War Department, through the office of the Adjutant General of the Army.\footnote{\textsuperscript{12}}

The President wisely chose to keep the old general safely away from himself and his Secretary and left the Commanding General the right to commend in orders gallantry in the field, a purely honorary function.

Winfield Scott reminded Davis in an attempt to defend his New York residence that he was available by mail, telegraph, or on summons in person. "I have not, in more than two years, been once summoned, and I do not remember to have been consulted by mail or wires more than once or twice."\footnote{\textsuperscript{13}} This was a refutation of the need of the essential ranking officer that Senator Harrison had spoken so strongly for in the late 1820s.

The controversy clearly was not going to solve the basic differences between the two men. Nor was there any real way Scott had of preventing Davis and Cooper from effectively excluding him from any significant role in the Army administration. But the battle of letters continued. It is not necessary to recount all the invectives the two antagonists threw at one another, or relate the petty old issues that were dredged up. The extent that they went to could be indicated by Scott's sending the Assistant Adjutant General, Lorenzo Thomas, who was

\footnote{\textsuperscript{12}} Jefferson Davis to Franklin Pierce, September 25, 1855, ibid., p. 510.

\footnote{\textsuperscript{13}} Winfield Scott to Jefferson Davis, September 29, 1855, ibid., p. 515.
attached to his headquarters in New York, down to poke around Cooper's office in an attempt to find the unofficial copy of a 1810 court martial of Scott's that Davis had uncovered.\textsuperscript{14}

Scott provided a summary of both sides of the fight when he stated: "Compassion is always due to an enraged imbecile, who lays about him in blows which hurt only himself, or who, at the worst, seeks to stifle his opponent by dint of naughty words." This, Scott called "keeping clear of unnecessary invectives."\textsuperscript{15}

However, it would be unfair to leave the argument with the impression that it was simply an embittered personal quarrel. These were official letters between the chief military figure, who was not under normal circumstances removable, and his constitutional civil superior. The prestige and repeated services of General Scott prevented his being brought to a court martial for such behavior, but there was no further use that Davis or any Secretary of War so addressed could make of the Commanding General's services after those letters. Scott could only wait for another administration.

Jefferson Davis, after four years, left office. In addition to attempting to place the administration of the War Department into the channels of the Adjutant General, he had also attempted to bring about a major reform of the staff structure, which will be discussed later. There was a number of little reforms that the Secretary had carried through.

\textsuperscript{14} Winfield Scott to Jefferson Davis, January 31, 1856, \textit{ibid.}, p. 600.

\textsuperscript{15} Winfield Scott to Jefferson Davis, May 21, 1856, \textit{ibid.}, Vol. III, p. 36.
But his leaving occasioned a sign of relief, even in his trusted assistant Cooper. The Adjutant General confided in Mrs. Davis that he found consolation in the Secretary's departure in the fact that now he, Cooper, could rest, "for another four years would have killed me; Mr. Davis is never tired, he takes no account of time." 16

There was one parting shot of the Pierce-Davis administration. They published, in their last days in office (Scott was to claim after they were officially out of office), a new set of army regulations. These new regulations systematically eliminated reference to the duties or functions of the Commanding General, often replacing "the commanding general will direct" with "the Adjutant General will direct." Scott of course, protested these regulations, but the new Secretary of War Floyd upheld them. 17

Though relations were quieter between Winfield Scott and the new administration, there was no return of power to the Commanding General. He remained in New York in exile from the War Department. Information was fed to him only on an irregular basis. Orders continued to be issued by Cooper in Washington at the Secretary's direction. Finally, in 1859 and 1860, Cooper even wrote and signed the Annual Reports on the operations of the Army. This last prerogative of the old Commanding General's passed now to his administrative rival. 18

17 As quoted in Fry, Brevets, pp. 204-207; John B. Floyd to Winfield Scott, September 24, 1857.
The Civil War intervened in 1861, what would have been the pattern if it had not? Clearly the office of Commanding General no longer had a function that could be defended in the United States Army. Upon Scott's death, any attempt to economize by abolishing the office would not only not find such opponents as Senator William Henry Harrison, but the efforts would be furthered by those within and out of the Army who saw no need for a figurehead headquarters in New York. Jefferson Davis, in the Senate, could have been counted on to seek the elimination of the Commanding General—after all, the Adjutant General had already taken over all his functions.

But Samuel Cooper still had all the functions of the Adjutant General's Office that he had inherited from Roger Jones. He had no more staff to fulfill the duties falling on him than did his predecessor. But at least the clerks were receiving a better and more stable work status by the time Cooper and Davis were in office. When the Pierce administration took over, the rush of office-seekers to Washington was so great that it prompted comments by the editor of the Harper's New Monthly Magazine. He lamented the plight of the old civil servants who had grown enfeebled in service only to be cast out with the arrival of an administration who wished to place one of its supporters. He credited the spoils system with creating destitution and deserted families. 19

In fact, public opinion had evolved to the point in 1953, 20 that Congress passed an act that provided for a real career service for the


20 As quoted in White, Jacksonians, p. 15.
clerks. Further protection was extended them by Jefferson Davis, who refused to allow the political committees of the Democratic Party to levy assessments on their salaries. Davis wrote to one staff officer:

It is my desire to keep the military branch of the government free from political influences—and your employees need have no apprehension that they will suffer in my estimation from unfriendly reports of their conduct in failing to comply with the requisitions of political committees.  

The physical condition of the War Department at this juncture left much to be desired. While there was enough space in the main building for both Davis' and Cooper's offices, at least half of the other bureaus had to find offices in rented space scattered around the capital. This not only made communication difficult, but the condition of the War Department records suffered. Particularly feared by Cooper was the danger of fire. Twice the War Department records had been destroyed by fire, and even the controversy with General Scott pointed up the need for the accounts of courts martial that had been previously lost. In 1853 Jefferson Davis was prompted to appeal to Congress: "I deem it necessary to invite attention to the condition of the public building occupied by this department, which contains accommodations for less than half its bureaus; and not being fire proof, but on the contrary especially defective in its construction, does not afford proper security for the numerous papers and records, the loss of which would be irreparable."  

This is the same structure that Secretary Calhoun had moved into with so

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22 Jefferson Davis, Annual Report, 1853, p. 34.
much pride over thirty years before.

Further, the need to maintain these records of the Army intact from those who would destroy them or carry them away, resulted in Congress, on presidential recommendations, placing penalties on anyone mutilating or stealing public papers.  

Most of the other administrative concerns of the Adjutant General's Office continued in the routine that had been established in the period of Jones' administration. The returns of the militia did not improve in their regularity or uniformity, and the training was impaired by a lack of provision for the issue of training manuals. Administration of the militia was so bad that during one of the infrequent stays of General Scott in the capital he received a summons to attend a training session of the ununiformed militia of Washington from a militia officer who was ignorant of his being the Commanding General.  

As regards the Adjutant General's concerns with the enlisted men of the regular army, this was a period of changing conditions in the recruiting effort. At the beginning of the period the effects of the gold rush and attendant demands for all kinds of labor was felt. This meant low enlistment rates and high desertion rates. The Army that resulted from the recruiting efforts was quite varied. There was a larger portion of foreigners who often had an education but had little command of the English language. The disturbances during the late 1840s

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23 As quoted in White, Jacksonians, pp. 418, 547.
inspired the movement of many such people to this country. 25

The payment of bounties for recruitment, particularly duplicating bounties, came under attack throughout the decade. For example, in 1852, Winfield Scott urged the elimination of that payment made to troops who enlisted in the more remote western stations. His argument was simple: new recruits seldom, if ever, were found to enlist on the frontier, while those troops who chose to reenlist were already covered by the reenlistment bonus of the 1838 laws. The added bounty had occurred in 1850 in alarm over the drain created by the gold rush and was to remain on the books until after Adjutant General Cooper reminded the Secretary of it on the eve of the Civil War. 26

Despite the efforts of the recruiters there was a drop in enlistments in 1853. Samuel Cooper moved the depots to more convenient locations and provided better facilities for the instruction of the recruits before they were shipped West to their regiments. The general service depot at Fort Wood on Bedlow's Island was moved to Fort Columbus on Governor's Island in New York harbor. At the same time the depot for the mounted service was moved from Carlisle Barracks in Pennsylvania to Jefferson Barracks, Missouri. The superintendent of the general recruiting service also took over responsibility for the recruiting of the mounted regiments as well as others. Cooper detailed more officers to the recruiting effort, and yet there was still a decrease in the numbers enlisted. 27

26 Winfield Scott, Annual Report, 1852, p. 34.
27 Samuel Cooper, Annual Report, 1853, p. 127.
Jefferson Davis attributed this failure not to lack of effort, but to "the demand for labor." The War Department was forced to take units that had been stationed in the coastal areas and move them to the frontier, just to keep up the Army strength in the critical areas. Davis predicted that to enlist enough recruits to satisfy the Army's needs without some change in the circumstances "can scarcely be expected."

In order to get the point across to Congress, the Secretary of War proceeded to cite some startling facts and statistics from the Adjutant General's files. He estimated that as the result of desertion, discharges, and deaths, so many men left the rolls of the Army each year that over one-third had to be replaced with recruits. This meant that each year the recruiting effort had to come up with one-third of an army, and that one-third, in turn, had to be trained and equipped before it could be made useful to the line units. Davis estimated that the cost for each soldier enlisted, trained, and equipped to the Army before he could join his unit and perform useful service was $121. This was a sizeable outlay in that period, particularly when the entire sum was lost if the soldier deserted or demonstrated that he was a minor and thereby gained a discharge. 28

Winfield Scott proposed a radical departure in the development of the recruiting service. He noted that the problems often stemmed from the fact that enlistments took place on the East coast but that service was often required in the far west. He pointed out the problems of discipline and desertion that frequently accompanied the movements of

these green recruits from the depots to the regiments often in detach-
ments that were not appropriately staffed with officers and non-
commissioned officers. The Commanding General suggested that the en-
tire recruiting service be removed from the Adjutant General's system
and a system of regimental recruiting replace it. However, he was not
simply advocating a return to the lack of system that preceded the
creation of the general recruiting service in the 1820s. Rather, he
had in mind the regiments' maintaining companies in the depots in the
East that would then recruit and train the prospective troops for their
own regiments. Periodically, these companies would be switched for an-
other company of the same regiment that was serving out in the field.
This change however could have reversed the entire development of re-
cruiting and abandoned the system as it had been set up. Scott was not
to get a satisfactory response from his suggestion.29

In the course of the next year, 1854, Samuel Cooper had diffi-
culties because several court actions were brought against the War De-
partment seeking the release of soldiers because they had not been
naturalized citizens at the time of their enlistment. When the Adjutant
General examined the laws, though he knew Congress had expressed an
aversion to foreign enlistments, there were not any statutory provisions
prohibiting it since 1802 in a law that had been superseded. He recom-
manded to Davis that if it was felt there was a need to allow by law the
recruiting of aliens such action should be taken up by the Congress.30

29 Winfield Scott, Annual Report, 1853, p. 96.
30 Samuel Cooper to Jefferson Davis, April 29, 1854, "Reports to
the Secretary of War," Record Group 94, National Archives, Vol. IV, p.
504.
The efforts that the Adjutant General made to get sufficient recruits were far more successful in 1854 than the year before. Both Cooper and Davis attributed this success to the act passed that year (August 4, 1854) to encourage enlistments. The main provision of this law was an increase in the enlisted pay to make it more competitive with civilian wages. The result was dramatic. During the months of September and October, 1853, only 309 recruits had enlisted; yet in 1854 in the same months some 1,005 joined the Army. However, the Secretary noted that the combination of low enlistments prior to the act, coupled with the large numbers being dropped from the rolls for desertion, death, or discharge, would force another year of great recruiting efforts. The pay raise that made this dramatic increase in enlistments was from six dollars a month to ten dollars a month. 31

Cooper had relieved the entire previous recruiting detail that was involved in recruiting and proceeded to rotate them with a new detail that was intended to serve for a two year period. This policy would provide some relief for the officers that otherwise would be stationed year after year out on the frontier. He used field grade officers and lieutenants for this duty, attempting to leave the captains with their companies. This policy, however, was not to be maintained in future years.

The recruiting service turned away many more in 1854 than it accepted. While 14,439 applied in the year's period ending September 30,

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As quoted in Cunliffe, Soldiers, p. 112; Jefferson Davis, Annual Report, 1854, p. 7; Samuel Cooper, Annual Report, 1854; 10 Statutes at Large 575.
only 4,221 were enlisted. Cooper lists the causes of refusal as being "appearance of intemperance, ignorance of the English language, physical and mental disqualification, and minority." The Adjutant General boasted that as the result of interest in enlisting, his recruiting officers were far more selective and the entire quality of the Army had improved. One can only wonder what was enlisted when they were not being selective the year before.  

Winfield Scott again recommended to the Secretary and the Congress the proposal of regiments being split into service companies on the frontier and depot companies in the East in order to aid recruiting. Again he did not get an enthusiastic response.  

In 1855 Jefferson Davis sent to Cooper a request for the proportion of foreigners in the Army. The Adjutant General indicated the concept of sampling in his response:

It would be impossible to give a full and correct answer to the within inquiry without examining the enlistment of the soldier in each case. This would consume more time than the current business of the office will allow. In order, however to approximate the result, the enlistments during the first two months of the present year have been examined, from which it appears, that out of the whole number of recruits (1393) made in three months, 931 were foreign born, and 492 American, making an average of two-thirds of foreign enlistments for that period; and probably this would be a fair average for the whole Army.  

He neglected to consider that there might be a difference in the rate

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32 Samuel Cooper, Annual Report, 1854, p. 70.

33 Winfield Scott, Annual Report, 1854, p. 51.

34 Samuel Cooper to Jefferson Davis, October 26, 1855, "Reports to the Secretary of War," Vol. V, p. 76.
of desertion between the two groups. In fact, if the observation of
Roger Jones was correct, that the foreign element was less prone to
desertion, then their proportion would inevitably have been higher in
the Army than reflected only in the enlistments.

In 1855, four new regiments were raised, and as a result, Cooper
distributed throughout the country officers from these new regiments on
recruiting duty. This resulted in there being a marked increase in
the total numbers enlisted. Again the recruiting officers accepted
only about one-third of the applicants for service. The Adjutant Gen-
eral pointed to the improved quality of those enlisted as showing the
officers' selectivity. 35

Questions continued to come to Cooper's desk on the proportion of
foreigners. This was the period of the Know-Nothing movement, and there
was a sensitivity on the matter. Cooper informed the Secretary that the
work load of his office did not permit the breakdown by country of
birth, citizen status, or by religion of those killed, wounded, or de-
serting in the Mexican War.

The need for non-commissioned officers was felt throughout the Army
at this period. A captain in the recruiting service proposed a plan
that Cooper in turn advocated to remedy this need. It was already the
practice at each of the recruiting depots to select some of the better
recruits and after giving them the normal troop training to retain them
as "lance corporals" and "lance sergeants." They then served as the es-
sential drill sergeants for the depots until such time as they had to be

35 Samuel Cooper, Annual Report, 1855, p. 144.
moved out to other units. Then they were sent in a capacity of non-
commissioned officers supervising the party. But their rank stopped
when they reached their units. Cooper suggested that their new com-
mmanders be informed of their recognized potential and performance. 36

In 1856, the recruiting service ran into problems at Newport Bar-
racks, Kentucky, because the civil magistrates were issuing writs of
habeas corpus requiring soldiers to be discharged if they claimed they
had been recruited in violation of Army regulations, that is, under
false pretenses or while intoxicated. Cooper pointed out the possi-
bilities for an endless series of suits against the Army on false pre-
tenses. Cooper did feel the quality of the recruit to be "superior,"
and even commented "several reports of inspections show an unusually
large proportion of Americans among the detachments recently sent to
regiments." 37

General Scott's plan for a revised recruiting system received a
favorable comment from Davis' successor in office, Secretary of War
Floyd, in 1857. The Secretary also urged that the troops be allowed to
soldier rather than be used in place of laborers that could not be
hired. So that "the anomalous spectacle of having two-thirds of our
rank and file composed of foreigners would certainly not be witnessed." 38

36 Samuel Cooper to Jefferson Davis, May 3, 1856, "Reports to the

37 Samuel Cooper, Annual Report, 1856, p. 250.

In 1857 Cooper reported 5,509 enlistments and another 12,275 men refused service—again allowing the recruiting officers the possibility of selection. The next year he could report the inspection of the depots. Carlisle Barracks was again in use and all the depots showed good discipline as well as good training. Cooper responded finally to Scott's proposals for change. Several years of success allowed him to state flatly: "The recruiting service, as now conducted, requires but little modification to make the system complete, and fully equal to supply all the ordinary casualties of the service." It would only be a couple years before Cooper himself would come up with a plan to revise this nearly complete system. But meanwhile, the instruction the troops were getting at the depots was so good that Scott suggested that the time spent there be lengthened.

In 1859 the Army refused 13,196 men and recruited 4,074. When in March the muster rolls of the Army showed that it had reached the maximum number allowed by law, the recruiting service had to be suspended. As Cooper allowed the recruiting to be resumed, he recommended that only the superior class of enlistees be taken by his officers.

A last burst of anti-foreign sentiment before the Civil War was apparent in the reaction in the Army to the refusal of Colonel Michael Corcoran to march his 69th New York volunteer regiment in the reception

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for the Prince of Wales. Cooper now had to answer questions as to the priority of foreign born (particularly Irish) in the militia as well as in the regular army. 42

In 1860, on the eve of the Civil War, Cooper reported that the Army was about 2,000 men short of its maximum strength. The number of men who had been refused enlistment was 9,483 that year, with 4,735 being enrolled. He noted that there was an unusually large number of discharges that could be traced to the fact that the normal enlistments for the regiments raised in 1855 had expired. The Army consisted of nineteen regiments with between 600 and 800 in each. 43

It has been suggested that some of the officers that later went to the Confederacy used their offices in the United States Army to sabotage its efforts. This charge would find little support in Samuel Cooper's suggestion in November of 1860. He suggested that the system of recruiting be altered by a Congressional authorization of a thousand men above and beyond the established unit strength. This would allow troops to be recruited, trained, and kept in readiness to respond to needs from casualties in the units. The system required there be a vacancy in the unit before the Adjutant General was allowed to recruit. It meant that units served in the field shorthanded while new recruits were being outfitted, trained and shipped to them. This proposal would give the Adjutant General the manpower resources to respond more

42 As quoted in Cunliffe, Soldiers, p. 229.

43 Samuel Cooper, Annual Report, 1860, p. 189.
rapidly to the requirements of the Service. 44

Further changes that Cooper felt could be adopted with gain to the Army was the elimination of the three months' extra pay for reenlistment. Cooper considered it "useless" and "injurious," because it not only duplicated other bonuses, but because it was paid in a lump sum and tended to provoke desertion immediately after its receipt. The Adjutant General also drew Secretary Floyd's attention to the same bonus that Scott had complained of in 1853. There were no longer the conditions of the gold rush days that had existed when this bonus was inaugurated. To the Adjutant General, the best way to reduce expense was simply to reduce desertion because the biggest expense that he saw was in the recruiting on the east coast, outfitting, and transporting West of those enlisted. The cost of enlistments to the Army was a direct result of the desertions. 45

Recruiting had started in the beginning of Cooper's administration in the most difficult of circumstances. The job market offered young men many opportunities while the Army was below the point of being competitive. However, when Congress passed the act to improve the Army pay (an act that was motivated by a desire to increase enlistments), the Adjutant General found recruiting to be more of a problem of selection and training than the availability of potential troops.

44Ibid., p. 232.

Consistently, the most frustrating problem of the Adjutant General's Office was that of minors enlisting. The term minority had a different meaning than it has today. Then, minority recruiting meant the enlisting of those under the age of twenty-one.

The Congress had provided in law a requirement that the War Department discharge anyone who was under twenty-one at the time of enlistment who did not have his parents' or guardian's consent. Frequently the young men enlisting would lie about their age. Since the recruiting officers at that period did not have the records or means of verifying the exact ages, this often went undetected. This had been a problem under Roger Jones, but Cooper became increasingly conscious that not only did every minor discharged cost the government the amount to outfit, train, and transport him without rendering the government useful service, but there was reason to believe that several of the enlistments of minors had been made with the definite intention of defrauding the Army. Samuel Cooper and the Secretaries advocated for the entire period that some legislative remedy be applied to this area. Secretary Charles M. Conrad in 1852 recommended that minors who had misrepresented their ages be required to serve out their term of enlistment. General Winfield Scott recommended either that expedient, or having the minor be held punishable in civil court of falsely enlisting.

There was an actual increase in the number of cases of minors requesting discharge after falsely enlisting. This rise in the discharge

47 Winfield Scott, Annual Report, 1852, p. 34.
rates in 1855 prompted Secretary of War Davis to recommend the measures of his predecessor on Congress again, but to no avail. The very next year Davis had to inform the Congress that the cases of discharge for reason of being a minor were not only still rising in number but there were repeat cases of fraud. Davis mentioned that if the Congress removed the requirement to discharge all minors and allowed the Adjutant General some discretion the War Department would in fact attempt to see justice was done in each case, and there would remain the appeal to civil courts if the minor's family was not satisfied. Cooper noted the problem again in 1856 and recommended legislative relief.

Cooper continued his complaints up to the Civil War. He presented the legislators with the options of requiring the minor to serve out his full term, of having the minor remain in service until the cost of the government of his outfitting, training, and transportation were paid back, or finally, requiring recruits to swear an oath at enlistment as to their age so that those falsely swearing could be tried on charges of perjury. Cooper pointed out that often there was no intention on the part of the families requesting the minor's release to reunite with him. The cases rather showed that the minor would be discharged in the West many miles from his family with no intention of returning. In the Annual Reports of 1859 and 1860, Cooper renewed his suggestions and addressed the question to Secretary Floyd when Congress was asking for

48 Jefferson Davis, Annual Report, 1855, p. 3.

49 Jefferson Davis, Annual Report, 1856, p. 10; Samuel Cooper, Annual Report, 1856, p. 250.
economy measures on December 26, 1860.50

A series of topics that involved improving the quality of life of the enlisted man concerned the War Department and Adjutant General's Office. As might be expected, these often had their origin in a desire to attract recruits. There has already been mentioned the successful efforts to secure adequate pay so as to make the Army a competitive possibility for the troops. One of the aspects that Jefferson Davis felt was wrong with the old pay system was that the enlisted man received the same wages whether he was a recruit or veteran of thirty years unless he was selected to pass into the ranks of the non-commissioned officers. The Secretary felt that a system of pay that rewarded long service and experience would help the Army.51

Jefferson Davis also espoused the idea of providing systematically for the selection of non-commissioned officers to enter the officer corps. He established Army boards to examine eligible non-commissioned officers to determine whether they would qualify for commissioning. Those selected would be named to the rank of brevet to a unit. As vacancies occurred in the service these supernumerary brevet lieutenants would be integrated into the regular officer corps in much the same method as already provided for West Point cadets. The Army was not, however, to see any great numbers of non-commissioned officers who passed into the officer ranks at this period.52


52 Ibid., p. 10.
The Secretary realized that there were non-commissioned officers who would not be able to qualify for commissioned status. He felt, however, that some form of reward or advancement should be available to them. What he proposed was replacing the civilians who were used by quartermaster or engineer departments to take care of posts not currently occupied by troops. In their place, deserving non-commissioned officers could be put in with an increase in salary. The end result would be not only a further opportunity for the non-commissioned officers but a reduction in the costs of maintaining the permanent fortifications involved.  

Winfield Scott felt that both recruiting and morale would be improved by a system of rewards to parallel the systems of punishments that the Army had. However, the Commanding General was less than specific as to exactly what he had in mind as rewards.

When Secretary of War Floyd took office, he was horrified by the extent to which the soldiers were required to do labor other than their explicit military duties. The Secretary felt that the troops should not have to be constantly involved in fatigue duty such as construction work, and that Congress should provide civilian hired laborers for such tasks so as to free the military to perform its explicitly military role. Another effort of the Secretary of War to maintain the quality of life of the enlisted man was to preserve the military bands that had grown up.

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53 Ibid.


The regulations that had been issued in the last days of the Davis' administration provided that the "post funds" be given to the soldiers in the form of increased rations and particularly so to the sick or wounded. However, there were no provisions for the bands which had previously been supported by these funds. Floyd asked Cooper to report to him on the entire area. The Adjutant General traced the "post fund" back to 1821 when it consisted of monies collected from the post sutlers for the privilege of selling to the troops, and from any savings that would result by the individual field rations of flour for bread being combined at post bakeries. However, the 1857 regulation eliminated this support because it had no basis in law. Regiments were still authorized to have bands, but only on the condition that those in the band be detailed from the units (in other words, no added manpower was provided), and all costs were to be by private subscription. Three "chief musicians" for mounted regiments and two for infantry were provided to allow for the essential buglers. (Artillery had no provision, though Samuel Cooper could see no reason for the lack.) The Adjutant General recommended that special provisions be made for the pay and rank of the chief musicians and that the laws explicitly authorize bands and provide for their equipment needs. This he felt was needed if the regimental bands were not going to disappear from the service altogether.  

Desertion continued throughout the period of Cooper's tenure to be a problem without an adequate solution. In 1853, Jefferson Davis and

Samuel Cooper did a detailed analysis of the patterns of desertions. They noted that from the time that Roger Jones took office there was, on the whole, a drop in desertion rate until the time of the Mexican War. Davis noted that the period when pay was comparable saw the lowest desertion rates (7.5% and 4.5% of the Army's strength), and ranged during prosperity to rates of 21% of the Army. 57

His finding that the recruiting service had to enlist one-third of the entire army each year was linked to the desertion rate. The Secretary made the same observation that Roger Jones had made years earlier that the majority of desertions took place in the first year. Further, the largest number of deaths and disabilities he noted also occurred the first year of enlistment. 58

He went on to demonstrate that the number of desertions that had occurred since the Mexican War were on the average much higher, going from an average of 12.75% to 19%. He did note that his figures included the period of the gold rush when desertions were abnormally high. 59

Jefferson Davis had a three-point program for curbing desertions. It is significant that he dealt in terms of increasing the benefits of the service rather than about the nature of punishment. He recommended first an increase in pay. Second, the Secretary advocated the increases in pay be provided every five years. Finally, he proposed the idea of commissioning some of the non-commissioned officers. The Congress was

58 Ibid., p. 8.
59 Ibid., p. 7.
far more willing to listen to Davis on these matters than some of the other reforms the Secretary had in mind. 60

Samuel Cooper presented to Secretary of War Floyd some interesting ideas on the curbing of desertions. He advocated that the withheld pay be increased from one dollar a month to two or three dollars a month, thus increasing the stake that the troops would have in serving out their enlistment. He also had comments on the use of flogging. This had been reintroduced into the Army to act as a preventive against desertion. Cooper felt that it did not stop desertion, but merely prevented those who had deserted from ever returning voluntarily. The Adjutant General proposed that instead of flogging deserters be denied the franchise. He did note the Army was facing "the sympathy so universally felt for deserters among those of their own class, and which now not only facilitates their escape, but encourages to it." 61

The appointment of persons to the officer grades was, throughout the nineteenth century, a topic of some sentivity both within and without the Army. Realizing this Davis recommended that appointments from civil life be made only after an examination by an Army board, as in the case of both cadets and non-commissioned officers. It might be noted that after Davis had secured the appointment of some of the latter class, Winfield Scott, writing from New York, critically commented that the standards imposed by the War Department were "none too high." 62

60 Ibid., p. 8.
When he was authorized to raise four new regiments in 1855, Davis had the opportunity to appoint a great number of soldiers to fill the commissioned ranks. Acknowledging his reliance on the Adjutant General, he wrote:

In making the selection for the army I was continually indebted to the assistance of that pure-minded and accurately informed officer, Colonel Samuel Cooper, the Adjutant General, of whom it may be proper here to say that, although his life had been spent in the army, and he, of course, had the likes and dislikes inseparable from men who are brought into close contact and occasional rivalry, I never found, in his official recommendation any indication of partiality or prejudice toward anyone.63

The selections were made from both in the service and from civil life. Davis notes that he and Cooper drew up the list of army officers that would be transferred to the new regiments and thereby promoted solely on the basis of their military records. President Pierce rejected the list however because it contained a disproportionate number of officers from the South. There were already charges of sectional favoritism, and the President insisted that the list be balanced sectionally. Davis maintained that this is the only time while he was in office as Secretary that any decisions were made on the basis of either political or sectional grounds.

The appointments made were criticized within the Army for the large number of persons appointed from civil life. The bitterness that was invoked could still be seen years later in the writings of Army officers of this period. One officer complained that it was the belief of the civil population at the time "that he who was of good stature, well

proportioned figure and handsomely uniformed possessed all the requisites of a good officer." Another officer complained that: "It requires a professional man to conduct a law suit where a few thousand dollars are involved; but mere politicians can conduct armies where thousands of human lives, millions of money, and the safety of the Government itself are involved." 64

Secretary of War Floyd obviously agreed with Davis that non-commissioned officers should be considered for commissions; but he also felt that not enough had been done by his predecessor, because he suggested to Congress that commissions be more "readily and certainly attainable" by men in the ranks. Floyd also appointed persons from civil life, and did so in a way that was particularly resented by the cadets at West Point. He made his appointments to take effect before the graduation day at the Academy. As a result, the civilian appointments all had date of rank over the former cadets. It became the custom in this period to allow the cadets to choose their respective corps on the basis of their standing in the cadet class. The higher standing cadets were allowed to choose first. Often considerations as to what additional authorizations or benefits were attached to a particular corps influenced the decisions. 65


Though the Secretaries of War maintained that they had not let their Southern origins influence their judgments, and pointed to the original appointments to commission as a proof of this, yet many claimed that the Secretaries did, in fact, influence the policies of the Adjutant General particularly in the area of promotions. Erasmus Darwin Keyes, General Scott's aide, for example, pointed to the complete dominance of the Army by Southerners at the outbreak of the Civil War as an indication of how that section was favored.

At this time all the departments into which the United States and territories are divided are commanded by officers of Southern birth, saving only the Department of the East, which embraces the country east of the Mississippi River, where but a small number of troops are stationed. The great bulk of the army is in the Department of the Pacific, Utah, the West, New Mexico and Texas, and the applications, conduct and prospects of all Northern officers must pass under revision of Southern men before they reach the commanding general or the Secretary of War, who are both Southern men. The Surgeon General and Quartermaster General, the chief of the Topographical Bureau, the Chiefs of Commissary and Ordnance Bureaus are all Southerners. During the past twelve years, Messrs. Conrad, Davis, and Floyd, all Southern men, and of extreme Southern views, have been charged with the patronage of the War Department, and they have taxed that patronage to the utmost to build up and fit for command the young officers of Southern birth, while those from the North have been treated with neglect and contempt.66

This letter was written amidst the passions that accompanied the outbreak of war. The author later had this letter printed up in what must be considered an example of "bloody shirt waving." From the letters of Secretary of War Davis it is clear that he did not intentionally engage in favoritism but attempted to avoid it as a policy.

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66 Erasmus Darwin Keyes to Abraham Lincoln, November 26, 1860, Fifty Years, p. 429.
Though often such charges were levied, recent studies indicate rather that there was a remarkable balance between North and South. One author notes that: "On December 31, 1860, the states of origin of the general officers, the colonels heading staff departments, and the colonels commanding the 19 regiments were 16 Southern and 15 Northern—hardly ' predominance.'" Yet Keyes and other critics can point to cases of Northern officers in this period who were not recognized for service and were not advanced. Further, the statements of Secretary Floyd shortly after going to the Confederacy belie attempts to maintain impartiality. Yet even Floyd must be defended from the worst accusations by the diligence with which his office continued to work for the improvement of the Army up to the very point he left office.

One of the difficulties is that this period was not markedly different in the politics that influenced military decisions than the period before. The sinister motives that can be attributed to different actions took on a different light when examined in terms of the conflict that was to follow. In fact, promotion was agonizingly slow and the resulting scrutiny both at the time and after was quick to pick out any real or supposed discrepancies.

Colonel Hunt made a study in 1853 of the promotion picture facing the officers in the Army. He took the entire group of officers that

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graduated from West Point prior to 1821 who had remained continuously on active service for their entire lives.

The average of their service after graduation was twenty-six years and some two or three months, whilst the average time required for promotion to the grade of major was twenty-six years, nine or ten months, showing that in any given case, an officer who enters at the bottom of the list cannot expect to attain the rank of major. The highest probable grade he can attain is that of captain. 69

The Secretaries of War and Samuel Cooper realized that this was indeed a bleak prospect for able young officers, and the thought inevitably occurred to more rapidly promote those officers that showed merit despite the clamors that would arise of favoritism. Davis, though considering promotion by merit, was reluctant to recommend it. "But in no military service has it been thought safe to adopt this rule to such an extent, and in our army the difficulty of its application is vastly increased by the usually scattered condition of the forces, as well as by other considerations." The last he had the discretion not to name. 70

Secretary of War Floyd was not deterred by the considerations that stopped Davis, and the new Secretary strongly advocated that Congress authorize promotion by merit. The alternative, he pointed out, was a continuation of the seniority system with all its defects.

If in fact promotion on the basis of some selection principle was not a guarantee that the best man in every case would rise to the top, the seniority system, Floyd pointed out, would elevate eventually the worst to the top of the army and at a time in life when the worst was


70 Jefferson Davis, Annual Report, 1854, p. 17.
old and less than at his full capacity. Since the promotion by seniority existed up to the rank of colonel, this would mean that only those who lived the longest would command regiments. Floyd belittled the "danger of political or personal favor governing a selection" and proceeded to propose that promotion be by seniority to the rank of captain, major, lieutenant colonel, and colonel were to be by selection from the next lower grade in each arm of the service. Generals' promotions were (under the principle reestablished by President Adams) the prerogative of the President. 71

Floyd weakened his argument that selection would not involve favoritism when he passed over the quartermaster officers upon General Jessup's death and named lieutenant colonel Joseph E. Johnston from the line of the cavalry to be the new quartermaster general. But the secretary was acting in accordance with his views on the relation of staff and line, and further would have found a very ancient officer indeed if he had proceeded on seniority within the bureau. 72

If promotions were slow at this time, the institution of brevets afforded little relief and continued headaches. The brevet enters into the personnel controversies less in this period than it had earlier, but the fact that General Scott had gotten the promotion to the rank of lieutenant general by brevet kept the problem alive.

Scott maintained that the difficulties with brevets resulted from the departures from the British models that occurred in the first decade


of the nineteenth century. In 1852 he asked that the entire area be reviewed and new regulations submitted. Though Davis differed radically from Scott on how the issues of brevet should be resolved, he completely agreed that new and clearer provisions should be made. He noted the efforts of the Adjutant General by separate assignments, to avoid the clashes that would have occurred when two officers with conflicting claims were stationed together. The Secretary noted the long list of conflicting precedents and decisions involving every level of the executive. Only legislative action would definitely determine the nature of the rank and its prerogatives conferred by brevet.

Noting that some critics wanted to abolish brevet rank altogether, Davis maintained that it did have use and merit. In addition to brevets providing "an honorable incentive and reward to distinguish conduct," Davis maintained that it should, if properly administered, allow the War Department a greater range in the selection of commanders when special details arose. However, as long as the senior officer by brevet was entitled to command on one of these joint details from the regiment then the Adjutant General gained no flexibility from that sort of rank. The solution was clear to Davis, the President ("either direct or delegated") should have the power to give effect to brevet rank. The right of command would be at the discretion of the War Department not automatic.73

The practice of providing for the needs of the service for general officers by use of the brevets was not felt to be satisfactory. Even Winfield Scott, who was one of the staunchest of all defenders of the

73 Jefferson Davis, Annual Report, 1854, pp. 9-10; Winfield Scott, Annual Report, 1852, p. 35.
brevet rank, advocated that authorization be given for more general officers. In 1855, he sought five general officers for the line of the Army and six (all brigadiers) to head the staff bureaus of the Adjutant Generals', Engineers, Topographical Engineers, the Ordnance, Commissariat of Subsistence, and Paymasters. 74

But the problems of brevets and their "uncertain and ill defined rights" continued to plague the Army in Floyd's administration. That Secretary was no more successful than his predecessor in getting legislation to settle the claims one way or the other. He did, however, make some sound suggestions to handle the problem. He advocated the measure that Scott had earlier suggested of filling the Army's need for generals by valid Congressional authorizations. The Secretary felt as the resulting promotions would in fact take up most of the existing elevations that depended on brevets. Then he suggested that while there was less to be lost to the individual officers, that the brevet be rendered ineffectual. Brevet would then become purely honorary except in special cases at the discretion of the President. But even so equitable a solution was not to pass Congress. 75

One of the major efforts of the Secretaries of War during the Cooper period was an attempt to revise the entire relationship between the staff and the line of the Army. Both Davis and Floyd devoted great attention to this area and the entire personnel picture and staff development of the Army would have been drastically altered if they had succeeded.

74 Winfield Scott, Annual Report, 1855, p. 123.
As Roger Jones predicted when the separate staff corps were created in the 1830s, there grew up an alienation between the staff and the line of the Army. The staff officers spent their entire careers in the context of their staff function, and came to respond more to the requirements of the Congress and budget than to the needs of the line. This was not always wrong, and in fact, given the attitude of Congress, almost inevitable. But the line officers felt neglected and looked upon the staff officers as favored and living in the luxury of civilization while the line was confined to the frontier. Even the device that Roger Jones insisted on of having the Adjutant General's Department officers detailed from the line and only breveted in the staff did not fully prevent this alienation from growing.

One can imagine the reactions of the frontier officer who had most of his social relationships with hostile Indians when he read the autobiography of a staff officer describing his life in New York:

While I confess to my former extraordinary fondness for rich soups and juicy meats, and my appreciation for the vivifying influence of dry wines, I often realized how extensively I indulged in those luxuries at the expense of others. I once dined out by invitation in the city of New York twenty-one days in succession. Notwithstanding I proclaimed myself a poor officer of the army, living on his meager pay, my conscience was occasionally smitten with qualms, and I would soothe myself with the hope that I should some time be rich and able to pay my debts of hospitality. That hope was a vague and fruitless impulsion of gratitude, and death or insensibility to enjoyments of most of those who entertained me has rendered its accomplishment impossible.76

Secretary of War Davis and Samuel Cooper attempted to overcome the inequities of the service with what they termed "the four year rule."

76 Keyes, Fifty Years, p. 322.
This meant that, except for the very highest ranking officers, the individual would not be kept on remote stations or in the capital for a period longer than four years. We have already had occasion to note Cooper's use of recruiting details to attempt some rotation, but the Secretary determined on a far larger and more systematic procedure. His decision provoked an outcry from those officers who had made Washington, D. C., a sinecure. There were many resignations and protests. Davis had to back down on several cases, but the attempt was made. 77

Another aspect of the staff and line relationship that disturbed Davis was the question as to whether staff officers had any right to command. He noted that the weight of opinion was to bar them from the command (as the Corpus Christi Memorial petitioned). But this elimination was not universally accepted by all the officers in the staff. Particularly Adjutant General Department officers who alone among their fellow officers retained their linear rank had legitimate claims to take command when emergency made them the senior officer present.

Davis agreed there was merit in some of the staff officers' requests for consideration. He commented that:

It is clearly improper to exclude from command according to their rank, the officers of the military staff, whose duties are as important to the service as any other class of military duties below the chief command, and require equal general capacity, professional skill, and experience. This would be in effect, convert the military Staff so essential to an army into a quasi civil corps.

But the Secretary went on to note that the early separation of staff officers and their complete confinement to staff duties prevented them

from developing the experience which would suit them for command. He
did realize that officers who had entered the staff before the reforms
in the 1830s had, in fact, served previously in the line and therefore
had the experience. The Secretary felt that both the line of the Army
and the staff would be better served by eliminating the permanent staff
corps.

Secretary of War Davis considered the military staff of the Army
those officers serving in the departments of the Adjutant General, the
Quartermaster General, the Inspector General, and the Commissariat of
Subsistence. Davis felt that selection for these staff sections and
then rigid promotions only within the staff section resulted in the of-
icers being deprived of vital line experience. Further, he felt that
the initial selection was too binding on the government, preventing a
later elimination for reasons of unfitness or disability from the staff.

The proposal that Davis made was remarkably like what Roger Jones
had advocated years before. It was suggested that officers other than
the heads of the bureaus be only temporarily assigned to the staff after
a period of service in the line of the Army. These appointments to the
staff could be continued or terminated depending on the officers' per-
formance and the needs of the service. This system would eliminate
staff rank that created problems. All officers would retain their nor-
mal rank in the line of the Army and be paid for the next higher rank to
offset the service's cost of living requirement that attended service in
the capital.

His plan called for permanent rank for the Adjutant General of
brigadier general. As Davis put it:
The duties of the adjutant general of the army are those which in other services, belong to the chief of staff. It is obvious that he should have as high rank as any other member of the staff with him, and as the department commanders.

Davis also recommended an increase in the numbers authorized in the Adjutant General's Department. 78

All of these suggestions neglected the basic problem that had created the permanent staff corps in the 1830s. The loss of line units of officers on detail had to be faced. Davis did not state that he wanted the line supplied with enough officers to provide for the proper command of units at the same time that details were being provided to the staff. This was left as an unstated assumption. Further, the Secretary of War neglected the advances and increasing complexities in the duties of the staff. This was not an age where the concept of specialists was very popular, but it was in retrospect a period when the staff did develop as specialists, each corps in its own area. The idea though of completely restructuring the staff Davis could recommend, confident that he could get widespread support for it from the officers in the Army at the time.

Congress did not choose to respond to the Secretary's suggestion. The problems and frictions continued, with the line officers complaining of the size as well as the location of the staff corps. But Davis did not give up with one attempt. He reminded Congress that the problems of permanent staff corps excluded from command still existed and suggested they again consider his proposals. He himself was not allowed

78 Jefferson Davis, Annual Report, 1854, pp. 10-16.
to forget the problems, because Cooper was writing him letters posing them all over again. The Adjutant General wrote Davis:

...if the right to command be denied to officers of the Staff, what is to be their position when serving with troops commanded by an officer of the line junior, whether in the line of their particular duties or out of it, or are their commissions, which were conferred by the same authority, to be suspended for the time being? Whatever may be the arguments in favor of recognizing certain Staff Corps for purposes of command, to the exclusion of others, and however important such a distinction might prove to the best interests of the service, I do not see how this can be done consistently with our present organization and the laws relating to the Army.

The implications of Samuel Cooper to Davis was clear: change the organization and the laws. 79

When Davis left office the issue of staff reform was taken up by his successor John B. Floyd with only slightly more success. Floyd saw the problems in terms of the commanders in the field not having full control over their resources because the staff officers were maintained in a separate corps and were not fully answerable to the individual commanders. He also accepted Davis' argument that the staff officers would benefit from line experiences.

Secretary Floyd suggested that the staff be formed into one single staff corps for duties as assigned by the President (which meant the Secretary of War and the Adjutant General in practice). In particular the elimination of the bureau structure was desired in that it prevented the free assignment of officers. Floyd viewed the result of these

changes to be giving the President complete control over the President's own staff in Washington. There was an avoidance of the entire question of the respective roles of the Secretary of War and Commanding General. Floyd weakened his entire argument with a comment that in some cases there might be staff duties "requiring special instruction and long experience" and that as a result, some staff distinctions might have to be retained. His plan showed an awareness that staffs were developing and that bureau work required expertise.

The Secretary of War was successful enough in getting a bill before Congress which was more than Davis had been able to do. If passed Floyd maintained that his bill would have these effects: "to throw open the staff duties to the whole army, to bring the staff and line officers into more frequent and intimate connection, and to provide for returning to their regiments such officers as may be found to have no aptitude for staff duties." The Secretary advanced several arguments for the bill and outlined again his concept of how the personnel of the Army would be handled under the new system. The requirement for expertise would be provided by the very senior members of the staff being permanent. The officers serving below them would, in fact, be only provisionally assigned to the different departments. Further, no officer would be appointed to the staff even for temporary duty until they had spent time in the line of the army. When the appointments of permanent staff heads were made the field of selection would be wider than simply those in the corps at that time. The selection could be made on

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the basis of proven ability, and not simply seniority in a staff corps. 81

But 1859 was not an ideal time to approach Congress with suggestions to reform the Army. If the Army was pointing in the direction of reforms in the command structure, the promotion system, and the staff organization, the political world of the United States was pointing toward the war of sectional strife. The Army was an instrument of the nation, and its requirements for reform might have to wait. The reforms did wait for a half a century and in the meantime, the questions and proposals took on different meanings. Floyd's bill did not become law.

But Cooper, Davis, and Floyd were not only concerned with the major structural changes in the Army, they also were working to better the circumstances of the officers. Jefferson Davis had been successful in getting a pay raise for the enlisted men on the basis of need for recruiting more men. With regard to officers' pay this argument from expediency could not be used successfully, and he had to rely on appeals to justice and compassion.

Davis pointed out to the Congress that the level of pay for officers had been established more than forty years earlier, and then the Secretary demonstrated to the legislators just what the inflation had meant in terms of a rising cost of living. He used the soldiers' ration as an example. Since this had been established by Congress in kind, the Secretary could note the doubling of its cost to the War Department in just the previous ten years.

81 John B. Floyd, Annual Report, 1859, pp. 4-5.
Davis maintained that there was every reason for a man of talent to leave an occupation so underpaid and arduous. The only possible inducements to remain, as he saw it, were patriotism and professional duty. These qualities he suggested should be rewarded but the Secretary was not markedly successful with this approach.  

Jefferson Davis commented on the rough life led by the officers. It was a life of the sort that drove men out of the service, and dulled those who remained. As one officer who entered the Army during the Civil War commented about this period,

...at least fifteen years as a clerk in any army bureau or on duty at a frontier post as a lieutenant to a command of a dozen men, where there are no books, no drill, no military duty, nothing but a vast amount of whiskey drinking, card playing, and terrific, profane swearing; and where, as a consequence, men forget in a year or so all they could learn in four years, and acquire habits of the most indolent and unambitious and dissolute kind.  

That the inevitable result of low pay and undesirable duty was resignations surprised no one. The large numbers of officers who returned from civil life to fight in the Civil War attests to the fact that the service was unable to retain many of its best officers. Jefferson Davis pointed out to the Congress the high rate of resignations in 1856. He commented that the officers deserved better compensation and better organization of the Army. He asserted that "little does it accord with the spirit of generosity or justice to ask at their hands the sacrifice which so many of them make to professional pride and habitual love for their country's service and their country's flag. Year after year the

83 As quoted in Cunliffe, Soldiers, p. 279.
cost of living continued to rise and Davis continued to request a rise in officers' pay. Congress continued to refuse to act. 84

Linked to the lack of promotion and the stagnation that many officers felt was overtaking the Army was an issue on which Jefferson Davis and Winfield Scott could form an enthusiastic agreement. They both sought, in vain, for the creation of a retirement system. This was hardly a new proposal and Roger Jones had long been an advocate of a retired list. Congress had chosen not to act despite yearly appeals from all those who concerned themselves with personnel matters.

Davis and Scott both attempted to draw the legislators attention to the fact that need had grown much stronger for a retired list since the Mexican War. As a result of that conflict there were numerous officers in the upper ranks who had become so old as to no longer usefully perform their duties, and the lower ranks were now filled with the wounded and disabled who needed some form of medical retirement. The appeals to justice and humanity failed with the Congress, and men incapable of performing any duty were still retained on the Army's rolls rather than simply casting them out, disabled and penniless, to fend for themselves. 85

Jefferson Davis resorted to arguments of efficiency. It was clear that the Army was not going to be able to be run efficiently if there were a large number of officers incapable of performing their duties.


Officers junior in rank had to perform their functions without any prospect of proportionate promotion and pay. Davis was convinced that if only given a trial operation of one year, the Congress would see proven the advantages of a retired list. Further, though he maintained that economy should not be a major consideration when the efficiency of the Army was at stake, Davis believed that the cost to the government would be minimal. Those put on retired status would actually be given less funds from the public treasury (half pay) and those who took their place could render actual service for the salaries paid to them. Both Scott and Davis pointed to bills that had been favorably reported out of committees on this area. One such bill succeeded in gaining the approval of one of the Congressional branches, the other branch chose not to approve.86

The next year, 1855, Jefferson Davis again returned to this theme. He again contended that the public service required the removal of the superannuated and disabled officers from the positions they occupied. Still one more argument was added for a retirement list by the Secretary. He reminded the Congress of the pay that had remained static for over forty years presupposed a lifetime employment, since accumulation of personal funds was impossible. Yet, once past the point of useful service the officer became a double drain on the Treasury and the War Department.87


87 Jefferson Davis, Annual Report, 1854, p. 17.
It was Winfield Scott who in the midst of his bitter fight with the younger Davis was able to paint the most heartrending picture of the human factor involved.

Some forty or fifty officers, mostly in the higher commissions rendered non-effective by the infirmities of age, by wounds or chronic diseases, now press downward into lethargy, and then despair, thrice the number of juniors, who are sighing for the increased rank which would, before they are too old, increase the field of distinguished usefulness. How soon the undersigned may himself be considered one of the superannuated, he knows not; but while any vigor remains, he will not cease to urge a remedy for the great evil in question. 88

In addition to the examples provided by Winfield Scott and of Roger Jones, who served twenty-seven years as head of the Adjutant General's Office, there is the case of General Thomas S. Jessup who functioned as head of the vital Quartermaster General's bureau for forty-two years before dying to give place to another. 89

But the need for a retired list was not met before the Civil War broke out. As far as the War Department and the Adjutant General's Office when war came in 1861, they were prepared for Indian fighting and preparing for major reforms. The Indian fighting continued though overshadowed by other events. The reforms for the most part were postponed, then forgotten, until another more peaceful date. When the Civil War ended, it was found to be an inconvenient time to raise proposals of radical reform that had been advocated by Davis and Floyd. So, the Army would continue with its Commanding General, its bureau chiefs, its

88 Winfield Scott, Annual Report, 1855, p. 123.
89 Risch, Quartermaster, p. 184.
permanent staff corps and its promotion by seniority. The cause of reform had to wait until a generation grew up that did not revere the way it was done in the Civil War armies, a generation that was also not frightened of the concept of reform, but exulted in it.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The Adjutant General's Office had grown in the years between the Calhoun Reforms and the Civil War. Not only had there been growth in numbers of personnel and an increased volume of business to conduct, but an increase and growth in the responsibilities assigned to the office.

But the gains in personnel were over a long period of time, and only at the repeated request of the Adjutant General himself. The pay of the clerical staff also rose, and again the rise was noticeably slow. Because the clerks served with the office for such a long period of time, a great deal of sympathy built up for them with Roger Jones and Samuel Cooper. After the inefficient clerks and drinking problems had been eliminated from the office, the Adjutant General felt that justice required that the full weight of the office be brought to bear to secure decent wages and, if possible, a retirement system better than the functional on-the-job retirement that the two senior clerks of the Jones' period were finally forced into.

At the start there was not even one officer successfully assigned to the office. When finally Roger Jones received appointment to the office, he had help only from junior officers detailed, but not assigned, to his supervision. The Adjutant General succeeded in augmenting his force of commissioned officers in connection with the creation in the
the 1830s of new permanent staff corps. But Roger Jones did properly fear that the very creation of permanent staff would end by straining the bonds of community of interest between the staff and line.

Aided by their increasing staff, Roger Jones and Samuel Cooper sought solutions and procedures for handling the personnel concerns of the Army. The Adjutant General was responsible for reporting the troop strength for the Army and increasingly during the period under discussion, the Adjutant General became responsible for maintaining as well as reporting. The creation of central recruiting centers and training depots constitutes a major improvement over the previous situation in which each regiment had been responsible for its own replacements. One major question that had to be faced on recruiting was the proportion of native versus foreign-born personnel who were enlisted. Another concern that troubled both Jones and Cooper was recruits lying about their ages, and then later revealing that they were minors and requesting to be released from service.

Not all the releases from service were with the consent of the Adjutant General and the Army. This period is characterized by extremely high desertion rates. Constantly the Adjutant Generals sought ways of curbing this practice. Devices like retained pay were tried. The punishment system was reexamined and the lash was reinstituted. But both Jones and Cooper revealed considerable insight in their concern for the quality of life of the troops. They correctly reasoned that if the conditions of the service, to include pay and promotion opportunities, were better then there would not only be less likelihood of great numbers of desertions, but a better quality of recruit could be attracted—ones less likely to
desert in the long run. The quality of life considerations that the Adjutant Generals became involved in ranged from the question of the whiskey ration, to the introduction of chaplains, to the maintenance of regimental bands.

Fluctuations occurred in the required strengths of the Army as the service went back and forth from a war footing to a peace footing. Further, as a result of the economy and job market, the success of the recruiters varied. The desertion rates also resulted in various needs placed upon the recruiting service. But the system of general recruiting and the training conducted at the depots formed a system that filled the Army's needs with reasonable satisfaction.

When the Adjutant General's Office dealt with the personnel concerns of the officers of the Army, it found itself often in a politically saturated environment. Officers could be appointed from civil life, the ranks, or the relatively new Military Academy at West Point. When new regiments were to be raised, particularly during the periods of war, there was the opportunity to name individuals to high rank either from the already existing officer corps or from civilian life. Roger Jones and Samuel Cooper both faced this problem and both sought, by system and restraint, to curb the political inclinations of their civilian superiors. But a question that resulted in a direct clash between Jones and President Polk, was to be resolved by Cooper and Secretary Davis in a far less politically-motivated manner.

Promotion and the honor of increased rank came very slowly throughout the period under consideration. As a result, every opportunity for advancement was bitterly contested and sought after. This explains the
less than edifying battles over brevet rank and the relative merits of one or another general's claim to seniority. The Adjutant General in attempting to run a promotion system, to regularize the different claims of brevets for gallantry, brevets for ten years' service and staff brevets, and even to perform so simple an act as to publish the Annual Register, found himself at the center of raging controversy that involved not only every one of the general officers but often the Secretaries of War and the President.

The Adjutants Generals were concerned about such things as the resignation rate of officers and the poor pay and quality of life that drove many officers out. Further, a constant concern of the personnel managers of the Army was the increasing numbers of officers who were incapacitated by either age or wounds. These could not be retired from active service because of the lack of a pension system. Yet their continuance prevented the younger officers from getting the promotions and pay that would otherwise be attached to the responsibilities that they had to take over.

Many of the matters involved in the officer personnel issues brought into clear focus the essential role of the Adjutant General as the issuer of orders. Secretary of War Calhoun saw in the Adjutant General's Office a position that required someone he could rely on politically, and chose to nominate James Gadsden. On this point the opposition to Calhoun and his conduct of the War Department rallied and blocked him.

Calhoun had instituted the Adjutant General's Office as distinct from the old Adjutant and Inspector General's Office so as to strengthen control
of his department. He also called General Jacob Brown to Washington to function as the Commanding General of the Army in another attempt to bolster the position of the central War Department as it administered the Army. Calhoun envisioned the Commanding General as one who could give advice and prestige to strengthen the position of the Secretary. Throughout their respective histories, until both were abolished in the Root Reforms of the Twentieth Century, the Commanding General's Office and the Adjutant General's Office were constantly to find their affairs linked. When Alexander Macomb sought to gain control of the Army and subordinate the previously independent Bureaus to himself he resorted to a court martial of his Adjutant General to accomplish his purpose. During the Mexican War, when President Polk complained that he was surrounded by "Federalist" generals, he had reference to Commanding General Winfield Scott and Adjutant General Roger Jones. Finally, when Secretary of War Jefferson Davis sought to take control of the Army away from Winfield Scott, he used the Adjutant General's Office under Samuel Cooper as his instrument.

It is in terms of the last situation that much of the potential of the Adjutant General's position is revealed. Also revealed is the inherent difficulty of having a general who is in any true sense "Commanding" when the American system places the ultimate responsibility in the hands of the civilian Secretary of War and President. Prompted by the flight with Scott, Secretary Davis and Adjutant General Cooper examined the possibilities for an entire restructuring of the War Department with regard both to command and staff. Secretary of War Floyd also sought a drastic revision. Since the question of abolishing the position of
Commanding General was raised on the deaths of both Generals Brown and Macomb, it is probable that upon Scott's death the reformers might have gotten their way. But the Civil War intervened and the Commanding General's Office was for years protected by the personal reputations of Generals Grant, Sherman, and Sheridan. Even though in the second half of the century the Commanding General's position was no more functional than during Scott's sojourn in New York City, it was to remain. The Army would have to wait until, as in the fifties, the situation emerged of a reforming Secretary of War assisted by the Adjutant General stood opposed to a Commanding General who was politically intragant, before the restructuring of the War Department would take place. When Elihu Root, Henry C. Corbin, and Nelson A. Miles acted out again the roles of Jefferson Davis, Samuel Cooper, and Winfield Scott, the Army was finally ready for the needed reforms of command and staff structure. Ironically, the struggle was acted out in the 1850s in every respect, except a successful conclusion.

When the Adjutant General's Office was created in 1821, it consisted of two clerks but not one officer. When the Civil War broke out, the Adjutant General headed the central bureau of the War Department and acted constantly as the spokesmen and chief adviser of the Secretaries of War. Between Roger Jones and Samuel Cooper, the Office of the Adjutant General had become a major factor in the developing institutionalization of the principal of civilian control as opposed to the separate military sphere represented by the Commanding Generals.
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