



National Archives and Records Administration

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Military Service in the U.S. Volunteer Infantry, “Galvanized Yankees,” 1864–1866

Galvanized Yankees, Confederate prisoners of war who secured their release from prison by enlisting in the Union Army, were organized into six regiments of U. S. Volunteers between January 1864 and May 1865. The majority of prisoners who enlisted came from Rock Island, Alton, Camp Douglas, and Camp Morton prisons in Illinois; Columbus, Ohio; and Point Lookout in Maryland. The War Department sent Galvanized Yankee regiments west for frontier duty so they would not have to fight against their former comrades. They were mustered out of service in November 1866.

Compiled Military Service Records (CMSRs)

In the 1890s, the Department of War used numerous sources such as muster rolls, descriptive rolls, and pay rolls to create compiled military service records. These records generally show a soldier’s unit and rank, when he mustered in, and if he was present or absent during a muster. Additional information may include his place and date of capture, when and where he was mustered into Union service, and sometimes the date of release from prison, the date he took the oath of allegiance, date and place of birth, and a physical description.

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___M1290, *Alphabetical Card Name Indexes to the Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers who Served in Union Organizations not Raised by States or Territories, Excepting the Veterans Reserve Corps and the U.S. Colored Troops*. 36 rolls. DP. Arranged by organization and then alphabetically by the soldier’s surname. The Galvanized Yankees are indexed on rolls 23–26.

Service Records

___M1017, *Compiled Service Records of Former Confederate Soldiers Who Served in the 1st Through 6th U.S. Volunteer Infantry Regiments, 1864–1866*. 65 rolls. DP. Arranged numerically by regiment, and thereunder alphabetically by soldier’s last name.

Other Records

___M594, *Compiled Records Showing Service of Military Units in Volunteer Union Organizations*. 225 rolls. DP. Arranged alphabetically by state or territory; then by type of unit (cavalry, artillery, or infantry); followed by militia, reserves, sharpshooters, and other organizations. including units not limited to geographic location, such as the U.S. Colored Troops, U.S. Volunteers, and U.S. Veteran Reserve Corps.

For information on a Galvanized Yankee’s former Confederate service, see the following reference report: *Military Service in the Confederate Army, 1861–1865*.

Pensions

Pension applications and records of pension payments for veterans, their widows, and heirs are based on service in the armed forces of the United States. These files can contain supporting documents such as narratives of events during service, marriage certificates, birth records, death certificates, family letters, statements from witnesses, and affidavits.

Although Confederate soldiers did not qualify for pensions from the Federal Government, some Galvanized Yankees received them. For more information on researching Civil War pensions, see the reference report: *Pensions for Soldiers Who Served During the Civil War, 1861–1865*.

Confederate Prisoners of War

___M598, *Selected Records of the War Department Relating to Confederate Prisoners of War, 1861–1865*. 145 rolls. DP. Arranged in three sections: records relating to all prisoners; records relating to a specific prison or camp; and records relating to several prisons. There is no comprehensive name index. See the following rolls for the prisons where Galvanized Yankees were recruited: Alton, Illinois (rolls 13–20); Camp Douglas, Illinois (rolls 53–64); Camp Morton, Illinois (rolls 99–103); Point Lookout, Maryland (rolls 111–129); and Rock Island, Illinois (rolls 131–135).

For more information, see the following reference report: *Confederate Prisoners of War, 1861–1865*.

Regular Army Service of Former Confederates

The War Department did not create compiled military service records (CMSRs) for Regular Army enlisted soldiers. To piece together a soldier's military service, see the following microfilm publications:

___M233, *Registers of Enlistments in the United States Army, 1798–1914*. 81 rolls. DP. Arranged chronologically and then alphabetically by the first letter of the soldier's surname. These records were created from enlistment papers, muster rolls, and other sources. With the exception of pensions, these records may be the only source on enlisted men during the 19th century. The registers may show when and where the soldier enlisted, the period of enlistment, the place of birth, the age at enlistment, civilian occupation, a physical description, and the unit to which he was assigned.

Post Returns

Post returns identify the units stationed at a particular post and their strength. They provide the names and duties of officers, the number of officers present and absent, and a record of events.

___M617, *Returns from U.S. Military Posts, 1800–1916*. DP. 1,550 rolls. Arranged alphabetically by post and then chronologically by date.

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