

NATIONAL ARCHIVES MICROFILM PUBLICATIONS

Pamphlet Accompanying
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COMPILED SERVICE RECORDS OF
VOLUNTEER UNION SOLDIERS WHO SERVED IN
ORGANIZATIONS FROM THE STATE OF
ALABAMA



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COMPILED SERVICE RECORDS OF
VOLUNTEER UNION SOLDIERS WHO SERVED IN
ORGANIZATIONS FROM THE STATE OF
ALABAMA

On the 10 rolls of this microfilm publication are reproduced the compiled service records of volunteer Union soldiers belonging to the First Regiment of Alabama, Cavalry. This regiment is the only organization of Union troops from Alabama for which the National Archives has separate compiled service records, except those organizations redesignated as U. S. Colored Troops. These records consist of a jacket-envelope for each soldier, labeled with his name, his rank, and the unit in which he served and typically containing (1) card abstracts of entries relating to the soldier as found in original muster rolls, returns, hospital rolls, and descriptive books; and (2) the originals of any papers relating solely to the particular soldier. There are cross-references for soldiers' names that appeared in the records under more than one spelling.

The compiled service records for the First Regiment of Alabama, Cavalry, contain information relating to soldiers belonging to the "old" and the "new" companies of the regiment. Originally the regiment was composed of Companies A - H and L, which were formed between December 1862 and September 1863 to serve for 1 year. In August 1862 two companies of 3-year men, I and K, were added to the regiment to complete its organization. These two companies formerly were Companies D and E of the First Middle Tennessee Cavalry. On May 15, 1863, The Adjutant General of the Army authorized the filling of the command at the expiration of the terms of the 1-year men; thus, as the "old" Companies A - H and L were discharged between December 1863 and September 1864, they were replaced by "new" companies that were formed to serve for 3 years. Because the "old" and the "new" companies served together under the same commanding officer and were entered on the same returns, the compiled service records for the two companies are filed together.

The compilation of service records of Union soldiers was begun in 1890 under the direction of Capt. Fred C. Ainsworth, head of the Record and Pension Division of the War Department. Abstracts were made from documents in the custody of the War Department and from muster, pay, and other rolls borrowed from the Second Auditor of the Treasury. The abstracts made from the original records were verified by a separate operation of comparison, and great care was taken to ensure that the abstracts were accurate.

The compiled service records of soldiers belonging to the First Regiment of Alabama, Cavalry, are arranged alphabetically by soldiers' surnames.

Preceding the jacket-envelopes for the individual soldiers there are some envelopes containing record-of-events cards giving the stations, movements, or activities of the regiment or a part of it, and sometimes information relating to its organization or composition. In addition, there is an envelope containing a general notation card giving information relating to the regiment that was not placed on the card abstracts. There also is a name index to certain original numbered documents filed with regimental papers that are among another series of records of The Adjutant General's Office in the National Archives. These numbered documents, which are not filmed in this microcopy, are similar to the original records (personal papers) filed in the jacket-envelopes of individual soldiers, except that each appears to contain information relating to two or more soldiers and therefore could not be filed with the records of any one soldier. A few of these documents, which were not indexed or numbered, are among the index cards.

Following the series of jacket-envelopes for the individual soldiers are separate series of card abstracts and personal papers that are not in jacket-envelopes. These series were accumulated by the War Department to be interfiled with the regular series of compiled service records but were not interfiled, for one reason or another. The usual reason was that the information was insufficient or contained discrepancies and could not be positively identified with any soldier for whom there was a compiled service record. Other reasons were that no compiled service record had been established on the basis of regular service records and that the item did not provide enough evidence to justify establishing one. The series of card abstracts and personal papers are arranged in alphabetical order.

There is a card index that may be used to locate the compiled service record of a Union soldier from Alabama. This index, reproduced as Microcopy 263, contains the names of Alabama soldiers for whom there are regular compiled service records. An index card gives the name of the soldier, his rank, and the unit in which he served; sometimes there is a cross-reference to his service in other units or organizations. The separate series of card abstracts and personal papers are not indexed.

The compiled service records reproduced in this microcopy and the index referred to above are part of a body of records in the National Archives designated as Record Group 94, Records of The Adjutant General's Office.

The compiled service record of a volunteer Union soldier from Alabama may not appear in this microcopy for several reasons. First, he may have served in a unit from another State or in the Regular Army. Second, he may have served under a different name or used a different spelling of his name. Third, proper records of his service may not have been made; or, if made, they may have been lost or destroyed in the confusion that often attended the initial mobilization, subsequent military operations, and disbandment of troops. Fourth, the references to the soldier in the original records may be so vague that it is not practicable to determine his correct name or the unit in which he served.

The National Archives has other records that may contain information relating to Union soldiers from Alabama. Other series of compiled service records for volunteer soldiers are (1) an alphabetical series of records of Union staff officers, (2) medical records for volunteer Union and Mexican War soldiers, and (3) records for non-State organizations, such as U. S. Sharp Shooters, Signal Corps, U.S. Colored Troops, and Veterans Reserve Corps. Information relating to soldiers who served in the Regular Army is recorded in Registers of Enlistments in the U. S. Army, 1798-1914 (reproduced as Microcopy 233), and in other records of The Adjutant General's Office. If an application for a pension was made, additional information about the soldier may be found among the pension application files of the Veterans Administration in Record Group 15. Sometimes supposed Union military service is shown by the records to have been civilian service as a scout, guide, or spy. Evidence of such service may be among the records of the Provost Marshal General in Record Group 110.

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