

NATIONAL ARCHIVES MICROFILM PUBLICATIONS

PAMPHLET DESCRIBING M901

**General Orders
and Circulars
of the
Confederate War Department
1861-1865**



NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

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War Department Collection of Confederate Records

Record Group 109

GENERAL ORDERS AND CIRCULARS
OF THE CONFEDERATE WAR DEPARTMENT
1861-1865

On the single roll of this microfilm publication are reproduced four bound volumes of general orders and circulars issued by the Confederate War Department through the Office of the Confederate Adjutant and Inspector General, March 1861-March 1865, and one name and subject index volume compiled by the U.S. War Department after the Civil War for these orders, 1861-65. The records here reproduced are part of the War Department Collection of Confederate Records, Record Group 109.

An act approved February 26, 1861 (Prov. Cong. C.S.A. Stat. 38), established the Confederate Adjutant and Inspector General's Office. This Office was headed, with the exception of a brief period in March 1861, by Gen. Samuel Cooper, and it became the custodian of records concerning officer and enlisted personnel of the Army. Such records included orders for the assignment and transfer of officers, reports of deaths with inventories of personal effects, applications for leave, certificates of disability signed by surgeons, resignations of officers, copies of orders issued by Army commands, muster rolls and payrolls, returns of prisoners, and inspection reports.

AIGO Special Order 46 1/2 of February 26, 1864, authorized a number of subordinate offices. One of these was the Office of Orders, under Lt. Col. John Withers, which recorded general and special orders; actions on applications for leaves of absence, furloughs, transfers, details, discharges, and reports of soldiers; and the resignation and assignment of officers. The Adjutant General's Office acted upon matters that could not be handled by other offices and prepared general orders. The Secretary of War and other Government officials recommended the preparation of the orders, which were issued through the Adjutant and Inspector General's Department and signed by General Cooper.

General orders were intended to disseminate information of general applicability and to make known price schedules for impressment; lists of persons receiving honors, promotions, and appointments, and those resigning or dismissed; acts of Congress and Presidential proclamations; findings of military courts and courts of inquiry; changes in such areas as regulations and procedures; and notices regarding prisoner exchanges. The general orders were numbered consecutively for each year.

Another method of distributing information was the circular. A circular was used for announcements of a general but temporary nature. The circulars were unnumbered and interfiled chronologically with the general orders.

General orders and circulars were copied in manuscript during the war by the Adjutant and Inspector General's Office into bound volumes. They were also issued in printed form and distributed throughout the Military Establishment. The series of general orders and circulars reproduced in this microfilm publication are four bound volumes of printed orders (with a few exceptions), which extend from March 1861 to March 1865. The exceptions are the insertion of manuscript copies of orders for 1861 at the beginning of the first volume, i.e., orders issued in 1862, and the filling of gaps in the printed series by insertion of manuscript transcriptions and orders printed in newspapers.

This series includes such aids as insertions, corrections, and cross-references. For example, the amendment to section 6, paragraph 1 of General Order 44 for 1864, which appeared in paragraph 6 of General Order 67, 1864, is written in pencil next to the original order. In another instance, a penciled correction of the spelling of a surname may appear beside the printed name. Although some of the circulars and orders were obviously inserted after 1865, the cross-references and orders printed in newspapers appear to have been added by the Confederates. Usually, in the case of corrections, the approximate date cannot be determined. Primarily because of inserted orders printed in newspapers in 1865, this printed set of orders is more complete, if not more accurate, than the unfiled manuscript series.

The bases of the series are annual compilations of orders published in Charleston, S.C., and presumably Richmond, Va., in 1863-65. Accompanying the orders for 1862 and 1863 are printed name and subject indexes, which supplement the index volume filmed at the beginning of the series.

The volumes in this microfilm publication were designated chapter 1, volumes 1A, 1, 3, 4, and 5 of the War Department Collection of Confederate Records. Inscriptions in several of the volumes indicate that they were used by officers assigned to the Adjutant and Inspector General's Department in Richmond.

When the Confederate Government offices were evacuated from Richmond in April 1865, some of the records of the Office of the Adjutant and Inspector General were removed to Charlotte, N.C., where they were captured by Union forces. The records, which included this series of general orders and circulars, were shipped to the War Department in Washington and became part of the War Department collection. This collection was transferred to the National Archives in 1938.

Some of the general orders and circulars were considered but not necessarily selected for publication in The War of the Rebellion; A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (Washington, 1880-1901), a publication that has

also been reproduced on microfilm by the National Archives (M262). The documents bear the distinguishing circular stamp: "Copied, War Records, 1861-65."

Other records in the same record group that have been published on microfilm by the National Archives include Letters and Telegrams Sent by the Confederate Adjutant and Inspector General, 1861-65 (reproduced as M627), Index to Letters Received by the Confederate Adjutant and Inspector General and the Confederate Quartermaster General, 1861-65 (M410), Letters Received by the Confederate Adjutant and Inspector General, 1861-65 (M474), Letters Sent by the Confederate Secretary of War, 1861-65 (M522), Index to Letters Received by the Confederate Secretary of War, 1861-65 (M409), Letters Received by the Confederate Secretary of War, 1861-65 (M437), Telegrams Sent by the Confederate Secretary of War, 1861-65 (M524), and Telegrams Received by the Confederate Secretary of War, 1861-65 (M618).



General Services Administration