

# LINCOLN LORE

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## MOBILIZATION UNDER LINCOLN

One of the most remarkable achievements of the Lincoln Administration was the building of a great army for the purpose of preserving the Union. On January 1, 1861 two months previous to the inauguration of the President-elect, the armed forces of the United States numbered but 16,402 soldiers, including commissioned officers and enlisted men.

### Early Volunteers

On April 15, 1861, Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation calling for 75,000 men whose first duty would be "to repossess the forts, places, and property which have been seized from the Union." Nearly 100,000 responded to this first call for volunteers to serve for ninety days.

Two weeks later, on May 3, the President issued a proclamation containing three specific requests for additions to the force already in the field. Volunteers to the number of 42,034 for three years were solicited, "to be mustered into service as infantry and cavalry." The regular army was to be increased by "the addition of eight regiments of infantry, one regiment of cavalry, and one regiment of artillery," a maximum increase of 22,714 officers and men. The third request stated "the enlistment for not less than one nor more than three years of 18,000 seamen" for the naval service. The total number of men called on May 3 amounted to 82,748 and 91,816 responded to the proclamation.

The Battle of Bull Run awakened Congress to the needs of a larger army in the field, and on July 22 and July 25, 1861, successive acts were passed which invested the President with authority to raise an army of a million men. Great enthusiasm prevailed during the enlistments, and volunteers actually had to be rejected because of the inability to equip them and assimilate them into the service. By the Spring of 1862, there were 637,126 men available and enlistments were still continuing.

The governors of several loyal states took the initiative in the next enlistments and urged the President on June 28, 1862, to further increase the military forces. Subsequently on July 2 Lincoln called for 500,000 men to serve for a term of three years. On August 4 a supplemental draft was ordered for 300,000 men to serve nine months. By January 1, 1863, the volunteer forces had increased to the number of 892,728.

### The Draft

The most drastic step in the mobilization of the army took place on March 3, 1863, when the President signed a measure that declared "all able-bodied male citizens and persons of foreign birth who had declared their intentions to become citizens between the ages of 20 and 45 should constitute the national forces." The act further empowered the President to call them forth by draft and to appoint a provost marshal general and his assistants who were to make the enrolments immediately.

While the President was empowered to call out the entire force of eligible men, it was thought expedient to draft but one-fifth of them as the first instalment. The draft introduced what one laboring man called "the terrible wheel of fate upon whose capricious turning the happiness of thousands will be forever wrecked."

Lincoln made this comment on the draft. He said: "The principle of the draft, which simply is involuntary or enforced service, is not new. It has been practiced in all ages of the world. It was well known to the framers of our Constitution as one of the modes of raising armies

at the time they placed in that instrument the provision that 'the Congress shall have power to raise and support armies'."

Recruiting of volunteers did not cease with the draft in force; in fact the draft greatly stimulated enlistments. Upon the completion of the draft enrolment in the various states, the draft procedure was set in motion. No serious unfavorable reaction was noted until the first of July, 1863, when the order for the draft in New York state was issued. This brought about the New York City draft riots, one of the most disgraceful episodes in American history. In spite of the New York riots another call for 300,000 men was made on October 15.

### Last Year Enlistments

The last year of the war saw a new drive for recruits. On February 1, 1864, an order was issued to draft 500,000 men for three years service less those previously credited up to March 1, which really amounted to a call of 200,000 in addition to the 300,000 called for October 17, 1863. Another call for 200,000 troops was issued by the President on March 14, with the provision that April 15 be designated as the date on which the draft would go into effect.

A temporary emergency addition was made to the army in the Spring of 1864 when the governors of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin proposed to furnish 80,000 to serve one hundred days. They were known as the "Hundred-day Men."

The President seems to have made one other call for troops in the spring of 1864, which does not appear to be recorded in printed sources available to the editor of *Lincoln Lore*. The Lincoln National Life Foundation recently acquired an original document signed by Abraham Lincoln and dated May 17, 1864, calling for 300,000 men. Two interlineations in Stanton's hand imply Stanton may have held up this order which called for the draft to be put in motion on July 1. Possibly the offering of the "Hundred-Day Men" influenced its postponement, or perhaps the order for 500,000 troops issued on July 18 may have absorbed the May 17 call.

On July 20, 1864, Abraham Lincoln wrote a letter to General Grant which implies that Grant had heard of the unpublished 300,000 call. The reference follows: "Yours of yesterday, about a call for 300,000, is received. I suppose you had not seen the call for 500,000, made the day before, and which, I suppose, covers the case. Always glad to have your suggestions."

The last call in 1864, the final demand of the war, was issued on December 19. It called for men to serve one, two, three, or four year terms. The requirements in this draft were modified by enlistments subsequent to the request.

### Totals

Altogether the various calls for men during the war amounted to 2,950,000, of this number 2,653,549 responded. This does not mean that the number who responded represented different individuals, as some men re-enlisted several times. Enlistments were for 3 months, 100 days, 6 months, 9 months, 1 year, 2 years, 3 years, and 4 years.

It has been estimated that the volunteer Union army had reached the enormous total of 1,034,064 men by the close of the war. Abraham Lincoln was the Commander-in-Chief of the largest army ever mobilized up to that time.