

1-17-1860

Letter from Capt. J. Myers 17 January 1864

J. Myers

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but would be the same as those forwarded. How this order
has been executed in other commands, ~~as other commands has been executed,~~ I am unable to
state. It may be true, as stated in this letter, that it
has been disregarded or evaded in nine cases out of ten. The
Confederate army might probably be greatly increased,
in its effective strength, by the due & proper enforce-
ment of this order. All Depot establishments, have
a great many hangers on about them. An enquiry
as to the manner of executing this order in
every command might result in great good.
There are some positions, however, in the Quarter
Master Commissary & other Departments which require
men of education, business qualifications and
physical ability to fill them. The loss of an arm
or leg in battle, is not the only qualification
for some of these positions. This may not be known
to some Senators, but is well understood by
men of experience in the army. The order of
the Adjutant General, does not require men to be
sent to the field from these Departments, unless
disabled soldiers can be found capable of filling
the positions thus vacated. The order was not
designed to abolish the Quarter Master & Commis-
sary Departments, or to render them less efficient
than ^{they} now are. Two men capable of ^{doing field duty} ~~filling their~~
are still retained by my Brigade Commissary, because
disabled soldiers have not ^{been} found, capable of filling
their places. It would be impossible to comply with
orders, for prompt & speedy movements of the Brigade
without competent men in this Department.

Orders come some times, late at night to the Brigade to cook three days rations & be on the march at an early hour the next day. Such orders could not be complied with, unless the men in this Department, were prompt & efficient. The order of the Adjutant General on this subject, is a wise one, & should be enforced in all cases in which it is practicable to do so. But the dissatisfaction among the rank & file now in the army does not arise from the non enforcement of this order, as stated by Senator Phelan in this letter. They are satisfied when ^{all} the men in the Army serving their country in some capacity, although it may be in purchasing provisions. The dissatisfaction arises from the army, seeing so many thousands of citizens out of the service, who should be in it. This is the dodging of field service which, gives rise to the discontent, demoralization & desertion in the army. The Army wish to see all the able bodied men through out the length & breadth of the Confederacy, between the ages of eighteen & forty five, in the field. They wish to see them drawn from their homes, from state Legislatures from Congress, from civil offices, and all other places made to fight for their country. When this shall be done, contentment & good feeling, will be restored in the army & our Independance will soon be acknowledged.

Very respectfully, Your
Obedt Servant

W. S. Featherston.

Brig Genl, Comdg

Report of Brig Genl Featherston
in answer to Senator Phelans
letter of Dec 17th 1863 to the
Secy of war.

Head Quarters, near Canton, Miss.

Jan 8th 1864

Col Tho's W Jack

A. A. G.

Sir

In obedience to the order of Lt Genl Polk of Jan 1st 1864. I submit the following report, in answer to the letter of Senator Phelan of Dec 1st 1863 herewith enclosed. The allegation contained in this letter, that the order of the Adjutant & Inspector General, requiring certain soldiers employed in the Quartermaster, Commissary & other Departments, to be sent to the field, had not been complied with in my Brigade, is false in every particular. The order was promptly executed as soon as it was received in my Brigade. I had adopted the principle set forth in the order of General Cooper, as far as it was practicable to do so, before the order was received. I have turned men out of these Departments, who were capable of performing duty in the field, not embraced in the order where their places could be supplied by disabled soldiers. I have hired negroes for teamsters in all cases where they could be procured, & adopted all the means within my power of keeping all men capable of doing duty in the field, in the ranks. I enclose herewith reports made by the Colonels of the Regiments composing my Brigade; also reports of the Brigade Quartermaster & Commissary showing how this order has been executed in my command. The Colonel of one of my Regiments, is now on detached duty, with his Regiment, some fifty miles distant, his report has not been obtained,

Johnson

Gen. W. S. Featherston,
Healy Springs,
Miss.

