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**Summary Statements of Quarterly  
Returns of Ordnance and Ordnance  
Stores on Hand in Regular and  
Volunteer Army Organizations  
1862-1867, 1870-1876**



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*Chief of Ordnance*

*Record Group 156*

and

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*Record Group 159*

SUMMARY STATEMENTS OF QUARTERLY RETURNS OF  
ORDNANCE AND ORDNANCE STORES ON HAND IN  
REGULAR AND VOLUNTEER ARMY ORGANIZATIONS  
1862-1867, 1870-1876

On the 8 rolls of this microfilm publication are reproduced 37 volumes of summary statements of quarterly returns of ordnance and ordnance stores on hand in Regular and Volunteer Army artillery, cavalry, and infantry regiments and in miscellaneous units, 1862-67 and 1870-76. The summary statements provide a unique source for statistical data on both the types and numbers of weapons and related equipment issued to individual military units during the Civil War and the Indian wars of that period. Information is most complete for the period from late 1862 to early 1864. Thereafter, some volumes are incomplete, and no records exist for 1868 or 1869. The statements are part of Records of the Office of the Chief of Ordnance, Record Group (RG) 156.

#### Background

The Ordnance "Department" was established as a bureau-level office of the War Department by an act of Congress dated May 14, 1812 (2 Stat. 732). The senior ordnance officer headed the Department, but had no formal title until an act of August 3, 1861 (12 Stat. 287), provided for a Chief of Ordnance. The Department was abolished and its functions transferred to the U.S. Army Materiel Command during a 1962 Department of the Army reorganization. Throughout its existence, the Ordnance Department was responsible for procuring and distributing ordnance and ordnance stores to the Army, maintaining and repairing such equipment, and developing and testing new types of ordnance. As defined in an 1861 Army regulation, the term "ordnance and ordnance stores" included "all cannon and artillery carriages and equipments; all apparatus and machines for the service and manoeuvres of artillery; all small arms and accoutrements and horse equipments; all ammunition; all tools and materials for the ordnance service; horse medicines, materials for shoeing, and all horse equipments whatever for the light artillery."

Army regulations dating from the early 19th century specified that commanders of regiments and companies were to be held accountable for all ordnance and ordnance stores issued to their commands. To ensure accountability, Army regulations required that persons responsible for ordnance and ordnance stores make quarterly inventories and transmit the results on prescribed Forms (Ordnance Form 1) to the Ordnance Department within 20 days after the close of a calendar-year quarter. Upon submission, these "quarterly returns" were examined in the Ordnance Department and then transmitted to the Department of the Treasury. Ordnance Office Circular 4 of January 20, 1863, required that officers submitting quarterly returns also forward duplicate copies for retention by the Ordnance Department. Eventually, however, the

duplicate returns were also transferred to the Treasury Department where they and the original returns were destroyed by 1896.

The forms (returns) were designed in accordance with the Ordnance Department's classification system as follows:

- Part I: Artillery, small arms, ammunition, and other ordnance stores.
  - Class I: Cannon.
  - Class II: Artillery carriages.
  - Class III: Artillery implements and equipments.
  - Class IV: Artillery projectiles unprepared for service.
  - Class V: Artillery projectiles prepared for service.
  - VI: Small arms.
  - Class VII: Accouterments, implements, and equipments for small arms, and horse equipments for cavalry.
  - Class VIII: Powder, ammunition for small arms, and materials.
  - Class IX: Parts or incomplete sets of any articles in classes I-VIII.
  - Class X: Miscellaneous.
- Part II: Tools and Materials. (Many categories)

The summary statements were copied from the quarterly returns submitted by ordnance officers into the volumes reproduced in this microfilm publication. No information has been found explaining why this compilation was made. The backstrips of some volumes, however, identify them as belonging to a statistical Division of the Ordnance Department. Probably the creation of the records was dictated by the Ordnance Department's increased need for more systematic, statistical information concerning the distribution of ordnance materials. The Civil War resulted in a great increase in both the amount of ordnance and ordnance stores distributed and in the number of Volunteer and Regular Army regiments which possessed such supplies. After the Civil War, the decrease in the Army's size lessened the need for such a compilation, and the records were maintained only sporadically until discontinued in 1876.

#### Records Description

The summary statements are arranged in the first instance by arm of service--artillery, cavalry, and infantry. For the years 1862 through 1871, there are three subseries of volumes, one for each arm of service, with the last (infantry) also containing summary statements for "miscellaneous" units, a general category for all other units issued ordnance and ordnance stores. From 1872 through the 1876 termination date, a single subseries contains statements for all arms of service and for

miscellaneous units. Within a service arm, the first level of arrangement is by calendar quarters. The table of contents shows the arrangement order to this point.

Within each quarter, statements for Regular Army organizations generally precede those for Volunteer Army organizations, but in a few cases, the order is reversed. The Regular Army statements are arranged numerically by unit number designation. Statements for State Volunteer organizations (State units mustered into Federal service in times of emergency) are arranged for the most part alphabetically by State and thereunder numerically by unit number designation. Units not assigned numerical designations follow the numbered organizations for each State. Statements for U.S. Volunteer organizations (Veteran Reserve Corps and U.S. Colored Troops) follow the returns for State units. In the fourth subseries, statements within a volume are arranged by arm of service and thereunder similarly to the other three subseries.

Within each of the three types of Army organizations just mentioned, the summary statements are arranged in accordance with the Ordnance Department's classification system. For artillery regiments, statements cover most of the ordnance classifications. For cavalry and infantry regiments, information is recorded for weapons and equipment in classes VI-VIII only. Within each general class of ordnance, weapons or equipment are further broken down by general type, and finally by specific type; for example, Class VI, Small Arms-- breechloading carbines-- Merrill's rifles, caliber .54.

Within a volume, information is formatted across two facing pages, with the organizations listed at the left margin of the left-hand page and the ordnance and ordnance stores reported by them to the right. Information for each organizational unit is as follows: the date its quarterly return was received by the Ordnance Department; the unit's numerical designation, if assigned; the unit's station; and, for the Civil War period, the file number assigned to the return upon its receipt. The file numbers do not correspond to those of any extant records of the Ordnance Department. If the description of weapons and equipment exceeds the space available on the first double page, the rest of the enumeration is completed on succeeding double pages. Because each line is numbered when enumerations are continued, it is easy to match each unit with its ordnance and ordnance stores. No further organizational units are listed until the inventory for those entered on the first page is complete.

Some of the volumes in the artillery and cavalry subseries begin with tables of contents. The staff of the National Archives and Records service has prepared typescript tables of contents to all the remaining volumes and has filmed each of them preceding the volume itself.

## Related Records

Other than the summary statements reproduced on this micro-film publication, there is no source of comprehensive information concerning weapons and ordnance equipment possessed by military units. References to such data, however, can occasionally be found in other records, namely: letters sent or received by the Chief of Ordnance, part of RG 156; regimental letterbooks and other records of volunteer units, part of Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, RG 94; and Regular Army unit records, Records of the U.S. Regular Army Mobile Units, 1821-1942, RG 391. Inspection reports for military units, which frequently contain information about weapons, are part of Records of the Office of the Inspector General, RG 159. Also in RG 156 are summary statements of ordnance and ordnance stores at ordnance installations, depots, forts, and batteries, but these records contain no references to military units.

Robert H. Gruber wrote these introductory remarks and prepared the records for filming. The editor was Kathleen S. Quigley.

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