

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

BOARD OF VISITORS

TO THE

UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY,

MADE TO

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

FOR

THE YEAR 1883.



WASHINGTON:  
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.  
1883.

## BOARD OF VISITORS, JUNE, 1883.

### APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

1. Rear-Admiral C. R. P. RODGERS (*President*)..... U. S. Navy.
2. Col. L. M. DAYTON (*Secretary*)..... Ohio.
3. Hon. ISAAC N. ARNOLD..... Illinois.
4. Hon. J. SCHUYLER CROSBY..... Montana.
5. Hon. B. C. WHITMAN..... Nevada.
6. Mr. HOWARD POTTER..... New York.
7. Hon. ASA FRENCH..... Massachusetts.

### APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE.

8. Hon. ANGUS CAMERON..... Wisconsin.
9. Hon. ISHAM G. HARRIS..... Tennessee.

### APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

10. Hon. GEORGE W. STEELE..... Indiana.
11. Hon. AMOS TOWNSEND..... Ohio.
12. Hon. WILLIAM A. J. SPARKS..... Illinois.

REPORT  
OF THE  
BOARD OF VISITORS OF THE MILITARY ACADEMY.

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WEST POINT, *June*, 1883.

SIR: The Board of Visitors appointed to attend the annual examinations of the Military Academy at West Point have attended to their duty, and submit the following report:

All the members of the Board were present with the exception of Senator Cameron, of Wisconsin, and the Board organized by the election of Rear-Admiral C. R. P. Rodgers as president of the Board, and of Col. L. M. Dayton as secretary.

At the first meeting of the Board the following committees were appointed, viz:

Committee on the state of discipline, including drill:

Hon. J. Schuyler Crosby.  
Hon. George W. Steele.  
Hon. B. C. Whitman.  
Col. L. M. Dayton.

On instruction:

Hon. Isaac N. Arnold.  
Hon. Asa French.  
Hon. Amos Townsend.

On police administration, including buildings and grounds:

Hon. William A. J. Sparks.  
Hon. J. Schuyler Crosby.  
Col. L. M. Dayton.  
Hon. Asa French.

On fiscal affairs and other concerns of the Military Academy not provided for in the other committees:

Hon. Isham G. Harris.  
Hon. Amos Townsend.  
Mr. Howard Potter.  
Hon. George W. Steele.

These several committees immediately proceeded to the work assigned them, making a careful examination of all the departments of the Academy, the results of which were reported to the full Board for its action.

It is proper to add that the conclusions of the Board now to be presented are based not alone upon the reports of these committees, but upon the personal inspection of each individual member of the Board so far as that was practicable in the time allotted to the work.

We desire to express our high appreciation of the uniform courtesy shown to us by the Superintendent, General Merritt, and by all the officers and professors of the Academy. Every possible facility was furnished by them to enable the Board to make a thorough investigation of all matters connected with the administration of the Academy down to the minutest detail. To General Merritt we are especially indebted for valuable suggestions made by him to the Board at its request.

#### DISCIPLINE AND DRILL.

The state of discipline is most excellent, and is characterized by great fairness and absolute impartiality. The fine military bearing of the cadets, their superb physical development and cheerful faces, show that the system pursued is wise and not unnecessarily severe. The precision with which the evolutions and movements were made by the corps of cadets in artillery, cavalry, and infantry gave evidence of most thorough training. And the same is true of the target practice with the large guns and mortars. The exercises, too, in ponton and spar-bridge building indicated great proficiency in that branch.

#### INSTRUCTION.

In the various departments constituting the academic course the cadets showed a degree of intelligence and efficiency reflecting the highest credit upon their instructors, as well as upon themselves. Something more than a familiar knowledge of text books is required. The cadet must understand the principles of the subject in hand. However correct the result at which he arrives may be, he is not suffered to go without giving the reason.

So far as we can judge the results of the course of instruction and training at the Academy are in the highest degree satisfactory.

A graduate of West Point is, almost of necessity, a gentleman in the best sense of the word—a man of intelligence, integrity, and truth—the very best material for a brave and efficient soldier and a useful citizen. A system of instruction producing these results is entitled to the support of the Government and the respect of the people.

The great wonder is that in the short period of four years such a wide field of study can be covered, and at the same time the work can be done so well. Nothing but the utmost fidelity on the part of the officers and professors in steadily upholding and enforcing the requirements of the course can account for it.

#### POLICE ADMINISTRATION, INCLUDING BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS.

A careful inspection of the buildings showed the necessity of some general repairs to the cavalry stable, which, in the opinion of the Superintendent, can be made out of the general appropriation under that head. It would be easy to suggest other changes and alterations for which no specific appropriations have been made, and which would materially add to the convenience of the buildings and be of permanent benefit to the Academy.

We confine ourselves, however, to recommending such improvements only as we deem absolutely essential to the efficiency of the Institution and the comfort and well-being of those for whose education and training it is maintained.

There is pressing and immediate necessity for new floors in the cadet barracks and in the academic building, at an estimated cost of \$5,000.

The present bathing accommodations for the cadets are insufficient and wholly inadequate to the requirements of cleanliness and good health. Only thirteen bath-tubs are now provided, and these need thorough repair. This limited number makes it necessary for many of the cadets to bathe at unseasonable hours, and should be increased to at least fifty in number, which can be done at an expense of not exceeding \$3,000.

The sum of \$5,000 is necessary for the completion of the new hospital building and for grading the grounds around it.

It is important that the main pipe for the supply of water should be extended from its present terminus to the cadet barracks, which will cost \$3,000.

There are several old and dilapidated wooden buildings located near the artillery and cavalry barracks and used for work-shops and store-houses. They are in the last stages of decay and crowded closely together, and are wholly unsuited to the uses to which they are put. Should a fire break out among them (an event very likely to happen) it would cause the loss of much valuable property stored in them and greatly endanger the safety of neighboring buildings. We recommend their removal, and the erection of a suitable building or buildings of substantial materials in their place. The cost of this will be \$6,000.

The foregoing estimates were furnished to the Board by the Superintendent, and may be relied upon as approximately correct.

#### GYMNASIUM.

During the past two years regular instruction has been given in gymnastic exercises, the results of which have been most satisfactory.

There is but one opinion on the part of the Board as to the importance of continuing this branch of instruction, and of making it more efficient by providing adequate accommodations for its development. The room now used for that purpose in the academic building falls far short of the requirements of a modern gymnasium, and is utterly unsuited for the purpose to which it is applied.

In the opinion of the Board a plain and substantial building should be erected and furnished with such apparatus as may be needed for a thorough physical training. No estimate has been made of the cost of such a structure, and our purpose is accomplished by calling attention to its necessity.

#### FISCAL AFFAIRS.

A careful investigation was made into the manner of conducting the financial affairs of the Institution, the result of which was in all respects satisfactory. The books are carefully and methodically kept, and the whole system is conducted upon sound business principles.

The duties of the quartermaster and commissary of cadets are now well discharged, and the cadets are furnished at all times with suitable, well prepared, and abundant food.

Very great credit is due to the officers in charge of this department.

In conclusion, it gives the Board great pleasure to report that in all the departments of the Academy they have found nothing to censure, but everything to commend. It has been especially impressed with the

high moral tone, the military style, and soldierly bearing both of the officers and cadets of the Academy.

Very respectfully submitted.

C. R. P. RODGERS,  
*President of the Board.*

L. M. DAYTON,  
*Secretary of the Board.*

ISAAC N. ARNOLD.

J. SCHUYLER CROSBY.

B. C. WHITMAN.

HOWARD POTTER.

ASA FRENCH.

GEO. W. STEELE.

AMOS TOWNSEND.

W. A. J. SPARKS.

Hon. ROBERT T. LINCOLN,  
*Secretary of War.*

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