

REPORT

OF THE

BOARD OF VISITORS

TO THE

UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY

FOR

THE YEAR 1898.



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OF THE  
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TO THE  
UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY  
FOR THE YEAR 1898.

*To the Secretary of War, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives:*

The following report of the Board of Visitors to the United States Military Academy at West Point for the year 1898 is respectfully submitted:

The Board of Visitors was appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Revised Statutes of the United States, sections 1327, 1328, and 1329. These statutes contain the authority for the appointment of the Board, the purpose for which it is appointed, and the nature and scope of its duties.

The persons constituting the Board are named below:

APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

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|---|-------------------|
| 1. Hon. WALTER L. BOUVÉ.....            | Hingham, Mass.    |
| 2. Gen. SIMON B. BUCKNER.....           | Rio, Ky.          |
| 3. Hon. ASHBEL P. FITCH.....            | New York, N. Y.   |
| 4. Hon. WILLIAM T. FAIRCLOTH.....       | Goldsboro, N. C.  |
| 5. Mr. ALEXANDER W. HOFFMAN.....        | Buffalo, N. Y.    |
| 6. Mr. WILLIAM P. WALTON.....           | Greensboro, Ala.  |
| 7. Gen. CHAUNCEY MCKEEVER, U. S. A..... | Washington, D. C. |

APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE.

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|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| 8. Hon. JOSEPH R. HAWLEY.....  | Hartford, Conn. |
| 9. Hon. RICHARD R. KENNEY..... | Dover, Del.     |

APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

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|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| 10. Hon. JOHN A. T. HULL.....  | Des Moines, Iowa. |
| 11. Hon. ROBERT ADAMS, JR..... | Philadelphia, Pa. |
| 12. Hon. FARISH C. TATE.....   | Jasper, Ga.       |

ROOMS OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS,  
West Point, N. Y., June 1, 1898.

The Board met at 10 a. m., June 1, 1898.

Present: Gen. Simon B. Buckner, Hon. William T. Faircloth, Mr. Alexander W. Hoffman, Mr. William P. Walton, and Hon. Robert Adams, jr.

There not being a full quorum, a temporary organization was effected by electing Gen. Simon B. Buckner, president.

At 4.20 p. m. the Board was officially visited by the Superintendent, Col. O. H. Ernst, Corps of Engineers, his staff, the Academic Board, and the officers of the post. The Board was then escorted to the parade ground, while a salute was fired in its honor. The appointed military exercises of the day, the escort of the colors, and the review, then took place.

Afterwards the Board was received most hospitably at the residence of Col. O. H. Ernst, and introduced to the officers and ladies of the post.

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ROOMS OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS,  
West Point, N. Y., June 2, 1898.

SECOND DAY.

The Board of Visitors to the United States Military Academy for the year 1898 assembled at 10 o'clock a. m. at the call of Gen. Simon B. Buckner, temporary president.

Present: Gen. Simon B. Buckner, Hon. William T. Faircloth, Mr. Alexander W. Hoffman, Mr. William P. Walton, Gen. Chauncey McKeever, and Hon. Robert Adams, jr.

Hon. Robert Adams, jr., was elected temporary secretary.

It was unanimously carried that the Board meet at 8.30 p. m. to-day, and also at 9 a. m. to-morrow.

The Board of Visitors attended the examinations in the Academic building.

ROBERT ADAMS, Jr.,  
*Secretary pro tem.*

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ROOMS OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS,  
West Point, N. Y., June 2, 1898.

SECOND DAY—SECOND SESSION.

The Board met pursuant to adjournment.

Present: The members who were present at the last meeting. No quorum being present, the Board adjourned.

The Board witnessed the exercises in the school of the troop on the cavalry plain at 5 p. m.

ROBERT ADAMS, Jr.,  
*Secretary pro tem.*

ROOMS OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS,  
West Point, N. Y., June 3, 1898.

THIRD DAY.

The Board met at 9 a. m.

Present: The members who were present at the last meeting. The minutes of previous meetings were read and adopted.

The Board, upon motion, adjourned subject to call of the president.

ROBERT ADAMS, Jr.,  
*Secretary pro tem.*

ROOMS OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS,  
West Point, N. Y., June 3, 1898.

THIRD DAY—SECOND SESSION.

The Board of Visitors to the United States Military Academy for the year 1898 assembled at 1.30 p. m. at the call of Gen. Simon B. Buckner, temporary president.

Present: Gen. Simon B. Buckner, Hon. William T. Faircloth, Mr. Alexander W. Hoffman, Mr. William P. Walton, Gen. Chauncey McKeever, Hon. John A. T. Hull, Hon. Robert Adams, jr.

Absent: Hon. Walter L. Bouvé, Hon. Ashbel P. Fitch, Hon. Joseph R. Hawley, Hon. Richard R. Kenney, Hon. Farish C. Tate.

Gen. Simon B. Buckner was nominated as permanent president, and elected.

Hon. William T. Faircloth was elected as vice-president.

Mr. Alexander W. Hoffman was elected as permanent secretary.

On motion it was voted that the president appoint the usual committees.

The chair therefore appointed the following committees:

*Appointments and examinations.*—Gen. Simon B. Buckner, chairman; Hon. William T. Faircloth.

*Discipline and instructions.*—Gen. Chauncey McKeever, chairman; Mr. William P. Walton, Hon. Robert Adams, jr.

*Armament and equipment.*—Gen. Chauncey McKeever, U. S. A., chairman; Hon. William T. Faircloth.

*Buildings, grounds, and lights.*—Hon. John A. T. Hull, chairman; Hon. Robert Adams, jr.

*Fiscal affairs, supplies and expenditures for cadets.*—Hon. Robert Adams, jr., chairman; Mr. Alexander W. Hoffman.

*Hygiene and athletics.*—Hon. William T. Faircloth, chairman; Gen. Simon B. Buckner.

On motion of General McKeever it was voted to adjourn until 9 a. m. to-morrow.

ALEX. W. HOFFMAN, *Secretary.*

ROOMS OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS,  
West Point N. Y., June 4, 1898.

## FOURTH DAY.

The Board met at 9 a. m.

Present: The members who were present at the last meeting.

The minutes of the preceding meeting were read and approved.  
The Board then adjourned to meet at 9 a. m. on Monday, June 6.

The Board visited the drawing academy.

The following communication was received, read, and filed:

HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY,  
West Point, N. Y., June 4, 1898.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of this date notifying me of the organization of the Board of Visitors.

I shall be happy to afford the Board every facility for a thorough inspection of the workings of all the departments of the institution, administrative as well as academic, and in general to do everything possible to assist the Board in its labors.

A programme of the examinations has already been furnished each member. Notice will be given from day to day of such military exercises as are ordered for the Board of Visitors.

Second Lieut. William M. Cruikshanks, First Artillery; Second Lieut. Charles W. Castle, Sixteenth Infantry; Second Lieut. Francis L. J. Parker, Fifth Cavalry, and Second Lieut. Charles H. Paine, Thirteenth Infantry, have been detailed to attend the Board of Visitors during their stay at the Academy.

I hope the Board will communicate with me freely, both personally and officially, upon any subject connected with the Military Academy which may be of interest to its members in connection with their official visit to West Point.

Being under orders to take the field, it is possible that I may be compelled to delegate some parts of this duty to the next in command, Lieutenant-Colonel Hein.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

O. H. ERNST,

*Brigadier-General of Volunteers, Superintendent.*

The SECRETARY OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS,  
West Point, N. Y.

ALEX. W. HOFFMAN, *Secretary.*

ROOMS OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS,  
West Point, N. Y., June 6, 1898.

## FIFTH DAY.

The Board met pursuant to adjournment.

Present: The members who were present at the last meeting.

The minutes of the preceding meeting were read and adopted.

On the invitation of the president of the Board, the Superintendent United States Military Academy, Gen. O. H. Ernst, appeared before the Board and gave an account of the improvements which have been effected for the Academy during recent years, and also stated further improvements which were necessary in the library and commissary

buildings. The suggestions of General Ernst were referred to the proper committees for investigation.

The Board adjourned until 9 a. m. to-morrow.

After adjournment the Board went to inspect the cadets' hospital.

ALEX. W. HOFFMAN, *Secretary*.

#### APPOINTMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS.

The committee on examinations and appointments reports that the individual members here attended the different examinations, and that they were impressed with the accuracy of knowledge which the cadets showed therein; the work done was strong testimony to the thoroughness of the instructors' work, as well as to the diligence of the students.

SIMON B. BUCKNER, *Chairman*.

WILLIAM T. FAIRCLOTH.

The Board renews the recommendations of previous Boards, and urges upon Congress the passage of an act which will permit the appointment of the following number of cadets:

Twenty for the President, one for each Senator, one for each Representative or Delegate.

There is ample room in the cadet barracks for this increase. The plant is there, in full running order.

The average maximum attendance of cadets as now authorized by law is about 80 per cent. The additional number graduating each year from this increase would not be too large to fill up the vacancies yearly occurring in the Army.

#### DISCIPLINE AND INSTRUCTION.

Your committee has investigated the subject within its province, and is unable to suggest any improvement in the methods of discipline at the Military Academy.

The most able and intelligent administration of the affairs of the Military Academy by the superintendent and staff, the commandant of cadets and his assistants is worthy of the highest commendation. All infractions of the rules are certainly and promptly punished with absolute justice and impartiality.

The committee is pleased to observe that a very high degree of respect is entertained by the cadets toward the officers and professors, and also that these gentlemen fully reciprocate this feeling and use all proper effort to impress the cadets with their confidence in them, all of which tends to increase manliness and self-respect on the part of the cadets.

The methods of instruction as followed at the Academy are the result of many years of experience of accomplished and painstaking officers, and are as nearly perfect in their result as it seems possible to make them. The able, efficient, and satisfactory manner in which

Lieut. Col. Otto L. Hein, commandant of cadets, has discharged the duties of that position deserves special notice and commendation.

CHAUNCEY MCKEEVER,  
*Brigadier-General, U. S. A., Chairman.*

WILLIAM P. WALTON.

ROBT. ADAMS, Jr.

#### ARMAMENT AND EQUIPMENT.

##### SEACOAST BATTERY.

Your committee recommends that in this battery the five 8-inch converted rifles be replaced with guns of modern type, one of which should be a disappearing gun.

In addition to these five converted rifles this battery contains one 8-inch modern gun, which at present can not be used on account of danger to surrounding towns and railroads.

With the installation of modern high-power, long-range guns, some means must be employed to retain the projectile on firing to prevent danger. The longest range available here is now about 2,100 yards, and the projectiles are fired against the face of a rock in the adjoining mountain. These projectiles are liable to glance on striking and endanger the neighboring towns or the railroads. To prevent this a tunnel or butt should be constructed at the end of the range, which will retain them. Lieut. Col. O. L. Hein, commandant of cadets, has prepared an estimate of the cost of such tunnel or butt, and places the amount at \$1,398.

Your committee considers that the construction of this tunnel or butt is a necessity.

##### SIEGE AND MORTAR BATTERY.

The guns and howitzers of this battery, with the exception of two, are obsolete, and your committee recommends that these old guns and howitzers be replaced with those of a modern type.

The light battery used in the instruction of the fourth class consists of four guns. This number does not permit of the entire class being drilled together, which is a disadvantage causing much loss of time.

Your committee recommends an addition of two guns to this battery.

CHAUNCEY MCKEEVER,  
*Brigadier-General, U. S. A., Chairman.*

WILLIAM T. FAIRCLOTH.

#### BUILDINGS, GROUNDS, AND LIGHTS.

Your committee on buildings, grounds, and lights have the honor to report as follows:

Your committee made a general examination of all the buildings and grounds. We commend highly the care that is taken of the buildings and grounds of the reservation.

The committee find the cadets' barracks in good condition, and the cadets well quartered. The mess hall is adapted to its purpose, but

the officers' mess is somewhat cramped in space for the number stationed at the post.

The new academic building is probably as well fitted for its purpose and appropriate in design as could be well devised.

The gymnasium also meets with high commendation.

The riding hall and stables are in good condition. The latter would be improved by new feeding troughs and painting inside and outside.

The committee is impressed, as has been former committees, as to the desirability of refitting and remodeling the interior of the library building, so as to make it more suitable for the purposes of a library, and fireproof for the preservation of the valuable books and pamphlets therein contained.

We do not consider the estimates submitted of \$63,100 for said alteration, and of \$6,900 for removing and returning the books, and other contingencies as excessive. The great value of the collection makes their absolute preservation a work of necessity.

The committee have examined with particular care the commissary storehouse. Its present location is too remote for convenience.

Your committee recommend an appropriation of \$8,000 to refit the old army service barracks into a commissary storehouse.

Your committee examined with especial care the new cavalry barracks, and recommend an appropriation of \$4,200 for a porch to be erected around said barracks.

The reservoir of the water supply next claimed the attention of your committee, and, upon completion of the present filter plant, for which appropriation has already been made, we consider the question of water supply for the post will be completed for many years to come.

The cemetery was found to be in good condition, but showed a want of proper attention to the grass, flowers, plants, and trees, the better care of which would show a patriotic reverence to this last resting place of so many heroic dead, and your committee recommend an appropriation of \$720 for a keeper to preserve the same in better repair.

The committee recommend that the usual appropriation of \$500 for the continued construction of the breast-high wall in dangerous places on the roadway be continued.

Other wants of the post have been called to our attention, but your committee have only recommended those which appear to be most urgent in consideration of the heavy expenditures imposed upon the Government by the existing war.

J. A. T. HULL, *Chairman.*

R. ADAMS, Jr.

#### FISCAL AFFAIRS, SUPPLIES, AND EXPENDITURES FOR CADETS.

The committee on fiscal affairs, supplies, and expenditures for cadets have completed their personal inspection of the affairs of Capt. Charles B. Hall, Nineteenth Infantry, treasurer of the Military Academy and quartermaster and commissary of cadets.

The methods and accounts were fully explained to them and they find them to be kept in so simple a manner that your committee could easily determine on their completeness. They especially commend the system of individual accounts kept with each cadet, by which he can learn at a glance what expenditures he has already made and what balance of his pay remains to his account.

The quartermaster and commissary storehouses were also inspected. The supplies contained in both departments were found to be ample in quantity and excellent in quality, with prices at retail in due proportion to the wholesale price.

Your committee commend in every way the efficient and economical administration of these two departments.

ROBT. ADAMS, Jr., *Chairman.*

ALEXANDER W. HOFFMAN.

#### HYGIENE AND ATHLETICS.

Your committee find that the sanitary condition of the Academy is excellent. A thorough examination of the cadets' hospital was made, and too much can not be said of the order, system, and neatness which we found, and due credit should be given to Maj. George H. Torney, surgeon in charge.

We find the condition of the gymnasium all that can be desired, and the careful training here given to the cadets most efficient.

WILLIAM T. FAIRCLOTH,

*Chairman.*

SIMON B. BUCKNER.

#### MASTER OF THE SWORD.

The sword master is also the instructor in gymnastics and swimming. He is a civilian appointed by the Secretary of War. The present incumbent has worked up an admirable course of gymnastics for the corps of cadets. His system of calisthenics has been adopted by the War Department for the use of the Army. He is required to preserve discipline and to exercise control of the cadets while under his instruction. It would greatly strengthen his hand if he should have military rank, and in view of the great and increasing importance of his department, the Board urges upon Congress the passage of an act giving the master of the sword the rank, pay, and emoluments of a first lieutenant of infantry.

The Board approves of and indorses the reports of the different committees, and urges upon Congress the appropriations suggested by the committee on buildings, grounds, and lights, and also of the amount mentioned by the committee on armament and equipment for the construction of a safe target in the mountain side for the use of the 8-inch modern gun in the seacoast battery.

The Board also urges upon the War Department a compliance with the recommendations made by the committee on armament and equipment in the changes and additions to the different batteries.

The Board is of the opinion that the cadets should receive instruction in the handling, and have imparted to them a thorough knowledge of modern high power, long range guns. As the batteries are at present constituted it is impossible that such instruction should be given them, and hence they are forced to enter the service upon graduation with little knowledge of the modern high-power gun.

Respectfully submitted.

SIMON B. BUCKNER,  
*President.*

WILLIAM T. FAIRCLOTH,  
*Vice-President.*

ALEXANDER W. HOFFMAN,  
*Secretary.*

WILLIAM P. WALTON.

CHAUNCEY MCKEEVER,  
*Brigadier-General, U. S. A.*

JOHN A. T. HULL.

ROBERT ADAMS, Jr.

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