

THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA LIBRARIES
MANUSCRIPTS COLLECTION

Accession No. 848 Dates Covered 1858-1863
Date March, 1974 Number of Items 5 items (44 p.)
Name of Collection Gustavus Woodson Smith - Papers

Given by
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Purchased from: Bernard Quaritsh, Ltd.
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Date & method of arrival: Mail, February, 1974

DESCRIPTION:

A few papers of Major General Gustavus Smith; (1822-1896)
as follows:

1. ALS from James B. Clay and signed by 6 other members of Congress

To: President James Buchanan

Dated: January 18, 1858, Washington

Re: Recommending G. W. Smith for a "high position in one of the new Cavalry Regiments."

2. ALS from "G. W." [Gustavus Smith]

To: "My dear Lu" (his wife, Lucretia Bassett Smith)

Dated: May 14, 1862, Cross Roads, New Kent County, Va.

Re: Her safety in Richmond, blasts McClellan as bombastic refers to the "arrogant, insolent, over-bearing and presumptuous invaders "who will be sent howling out of Virginia...."

3. Telegram (copy) from Sam W. Melton

To: Major-General G. W. Smith

Dated: January 2, 1863, Goldsboro, N. C.

Re: An engagement with Union troops, loss of mortars and heavy guns, and probably destination of the enemy expedition.

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4. Official reports from Smith

ADS

To: Major T. L. Bluett

Dated: May 12, 1862

Re: Engagement with enemy on May 7th.
Reports are in pencil, with revisions and cover
the following engagements:

- a. The Affair at Eltham Landing. Head of the
York River. 2 p.
- b. Battle of Seven Pines. 16 pp.
- c. Operations of the Georgia Militia at and near
Atlanta, Ga. 1864. 20 pp.

5. Confederate Army Battle Map.

[1861]

Hand drawn, on both sides of glazed silk, ca 37 x 23 inches.
Scale in ca $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to the inch, includes details such as fallen
trees, abandoned ferries, taverns, impassable roads, mills,
prominent houses, even gates. Shows proposed route to be taken,
by a company under Major-General Smith's command.

Map is located in drawer with other Confederate battle maps.

Additional: 24 items, Smith - Jefferson Davis Correspondence.
Calendar in working folder.

Head Qrs 2^d Corps Army of the Potomac
Oct 8th 1861

To His Excellency
Jefferson Davis
President of the Confederate States
Richmond Va.

Mr. President

I avail myself of the opportunity offered by Major Genl. Lovell, of saying to you a few words, in regard to one or two nominations, & have made for appointments on my staff.

The first is Randall - In case he is not made Colonel of a Regiment, I hope you will send him to me at once as Inspector General with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. The radical difficulty in this Army is the want in many cases of good Colonels and Captains in consequence of which, orders are not properly obeyed if at all - With Randall's services in the position, I have asked for him, & feel confident, that best improvement could be made in a very short time - There is room for it certain -

The second is the nomination I made of Samuel W. Melvin as Asst. Adjt General under Major Whiting, with a request that he be appointed Major in the staff of the Provisional Army, and ordered to report to me for duty on my staff - He held this rank and served with troops whose time has expired - He was performing duty with me in that capacity, is highly deserving, and will soon be a first rate Officer, if appointed - In this connection allow me to refer to the fact, that, my particular friends, many of whom, able & competent men of the highest standing, offered to serve on my staff as volunteers without pay, and only

Accession No.

548

Box Number

Folder Heading

G. Smith

Gustavus W. Smith Papers

SPECIAL COPYING INSTRUCTIONS:

nominal rank are prevented from coming here by the condition of affairs in Kentucky, where they reside.

Col. Field assumes his proper duties as Colonel of Cavalry tomorrow - and Major Whiting takes charge of the Adjutant General's Office of this Corps. He will need Major Melton's assistance nearly as much as I need Randall's in another sphere of duties. These troops can't be governed from this office - I and my staff officers must be a good deal with them - But you understand all this better than anyone else - And I will only add that to make good Colonels Captains or Soldiers, it is necessary that Generals should have a good and sufficient staff for indoor and outdoor work.

Since the decision came to, during your visit I have endeavored to look all the present and coming difficulties squarely in the face; and shall do all in my power to obviate or correct them - If circumstances had permitted a different decision, the spirit and temper of our troops would have gone for rounds making up for all deficiencies - If Mr. Clellan don't give us a chance at him, on this side the river before winter weather; it will require a master hand and immense labor to keep the Army long even up to its present condition - A forward movement is almost a positive necessity to the existence of this Army - Every time the subject presents itself, and that is, every hour of the day and night, I am tempted to ask again - Is it not possible to put us in condition to take the offensive - At once comes the answer "want of arms" - "and the present impossibility of supplying them"

Can you not let General Beauregard try his plan now, of regulating under General Johnston's

as Lieutenant merely to qualify him for the station will be gladly accepted by me for him -

Very Respectfully
(Signed) G.W. Smith

13.
Maj. Gen. P.A.C.S.

To

His Excellency Jeff Davis
President of the Confederate States

Richmond Va.

Oct. 10. 1861

My dear Genl.

I had the pleasure to receive yours of the 8th Inst. last night. The matter of contracting R. R. transportation has frequently engaged my attention but was not presented in the form you offer, that of being under the charge of Genl. Beauregard. He could not do more than say one thought of in that connection, but how ^{can} he be spared from his present duties? The plan as I understood him which he had contemplated was to employ an agent, that would be less effective than the one existing viz. the appointment of a Quarter Master specially selected for the duty and he sustained by direct communications between the Executive and the R. R. Presidents on all questions which arose.

The Generals in the field may do much by giving timely notice of irregularities and by seeing that trains at their depots are not detained improperly or permitted to leave the freight or passengers which the public service requires to be transported.

In relation to the list of Generals proposed I will now request you to divide the effective strength of your army by the number of Generals you would have if the addition was made. Would ^{not} the number more nearly correspond to the command of Colonels than Generals? For thirty ~~thirty~~ thousand men I still think four "divisions" enough and am still at a loss to perceive how the change of title would increase the efficiency of a Brigadier, but can conceive how a Brigadier would lose something of his value by being brought into immediate command and minute supervision of a Major General of a small division, say about equal to an efficient Brigade.

Your remarks about the moral
effect of refusing the help of the
Chalanters for an advance are
in accordance with the principal
impression made on me when
in our council it was revealed
to me that the Army of the Potomac
had been reduced to about half
the legalized strength, and that the
arms to restore the numbers were
not in depot. As I then suggested
though you may not be able to advance
into Manassas and expel the enemy
it may be possible to keep up the
spirits of your troops by expeditions
such as that particularly spoken of
against Dickles Brigade on the lower
Potomac or Banks above. By
destroying the canal and making
other rapid movements wherever op-
portunity presents to beat detach-
ments or to destroy ^{lines of} communica-
tion.

Let me insist that you raise
something of your early respect for
military grades, as your recommendations

since that you have adopted the
militia value for the Commission
of field officer. I have never
expected one entitled to expect of
the Confederacy the same grade he
may have held under a state.

How have you progressed in the
solution of the problem I left the
organization of the troops with refer-
ence to the states and term of ser-
vice? If the volunteers continue
their complaints that they are com-
manded by strangers and do not
get justice, and that they are kept
in camp to die, when reported for hos-
pital by the Surgeon, we shall soon
feel a reaction in the matter of vol-
unteering. Already I have been much
troubled on both subjects and have an-
swered by promising that the Genl. would
give due attention, and I hoped make
satisfactory changes. The authority to
organize Regts. into Brigades and the latter
into divisions is by law conferred only
on the President & I must be able to as-
sume responsibility of the action taken by

whomsoever acts for me in that regard. By reference to the law you will see that in surrendering the sole power to appoint General officers it was nevertheless designed as far as should be found consistent to keep up the state relations of troops and generals. Kentucky has a Brigadier but not a brigade, she has however a Regt. that Regt. & Brig. may be associated together. La. had Regts enough to form a Brigade but no Brigadier in either Corps all of the Regts. were sent to that commanded by a La. Genl. Georgia has Regts. now organized into two Brigades, she has an duty with that army two Brigadiers but one of them serves with other troops.

Missi. troops were scattered as if the state was unknown, ^{Brig. Genl.} Clark was sent to remove a growing dissatisfaction but though the state had nine Regts. there, he was put in command of a post & depot of supplies. These nine Regts. should form two Brigades Brigadiers Clark and (as native of Missi.) Whiting should

be placed in command of them
and the Rife for the War put in the
Army main Brigade. Both Brigades
should be put in the division Com-
manded by Genl. Van Doan, of Rife.
thus would the spirit and intent of
the law be complied with, disagree-
ble complaint be spared me and
more of content be secured under
the trials to which you look forward?

It is needless to specify further, ~~that~~
I have been able in writing to you
to speak freely and you have no
past appreciations to disturb the judge-
ment to be passed upon the views pre-
sented. I have made and am
making inquiries as to the practica-
bility of getting a corps of Negroes
for laborers, to aid in the construct-
ion of an entrenched line in rear
of your present position. Your remarks
on the want of efficient staff offi-
cers is realized in all their force
and I hope among the elements
which constitute a staff officer for
volunteers you have duly estimated

the qualities of forbearance and
urbanity. Many of the Privates
are men of high social position
of scholarship and fortune, their
pride furnishes the motive for good
conduct and if wounded is
turned from an instrument of
good to one of great power for
evil.

Genl. Lowell proposes to
leave in the morning for New Orleans.
Nothing has been heard of the armada
which sailed some time since for
the subjugation of the Southern sea port
inhabitants. Bragg made a descent
upon Santa Rosa of which you will
see in the journals the telegraphic re-
port. It will give me pleasure
to hear from you frequently and
fully — very truly yr friend
Jeff Davis

Major Genl. G. M. Smith.
Army of the Potomac

3. B.

Head Qr 2^d Corps
Army of the Potomac
Oct. 14th 1861

Mr. President

Your esteemed favor of the 10th Inst. is received. You did not allude to my application for an appointment for Homer Randall. I had previously learned through the Acting Secretary of War, that a statement of his case would have to be made by him to you, before he could receive an appointment. I understand that the statement has been made. Will you please inform me as soon as you can, whether he is now eligible to an appointment and if so, will you send him to me as Inspector General, with rank corresponding to the duties he will have to perform.

The R.R. from Richmond to Manassas does not work efficiently. Let Beauregard ~~be~~ apply the remedy. This need not interfere with your General Agent, nor the General Plan of the Executive. The subject is of vital importance to this Army. Beauregard guarantees to regulate it. Try him.

The Enemy are still following us, with their fortifications. Our information is that they are largely increasing their numbers on this side the river. We are not in the best condition, but relying upon the Character of our troops, we expect to give a good account of the enemy if they venture out of reach of their fortifications, let them come in any numbers they may.

None of us as yet, exactly how we can divide our force, already so inferior in numbers to that of the enemy, and make a partial operation on the other side of the river. If opportunity offers

it could be attempted - but they are very cautious, and Circumspect.

The present is considered an inappropriate moment for reorganizing the Brigades - We have had several long discussions of the subject since you Enquired - Generals Johnston and Beauregard are entirely satisfied that at this time, it is inexpedient & might be dangerous to the Army - After we beat McClellan, and are not so closely pressed by superior numbers, they propose to carry out the plan as far as practicable - I must say that I entirely concur with them in this matter -

As to the number of Generals recommended by us - I think we were right - When a Regiment is reduced by sickness, the remedy is in recruiting the ranks - not in diminishing the number of Field Officers - If our troops were in good health, Companies or Regiments full - four Regiments are enough for a Brigade, and two or three Brigades with Artillery & Cavalry are enough for a Division - Now because our ranks & files have been so much weakened by disease, it is not to be supposed that this reduced force can be more easily made to beat the enemy than when it was at its full effective strength -

We believe that the enemy outnumber us more than two to one; and that they have a thoroughly appointed Army - Artillery, Cavalry, Engineers, Ordnance, Staff, Supplies and Transportation - We all thought that the proposed organization of the two Army Corps, forming this Army, into divisions of two Brigades each would be of great advantage - for reasons already stated - We think so still, notwithstanding the result of dividing the number of effective personnel by

Reply on Page 9

G. A.

Richmond Va.

Oct. 24. 1861

My dear genl.

I did not forget your request in relation to Lt. Randall. His case has been examined and it appeared that one case of which he and many others might justly complain does exist. It was an error, but how can it be remedied. More officers who ranked Lt. Randall by former commission are in our service than could be appointed to the grade of Captain, so that it is impossible to give him that grade and thus restore his relative position to blacks.

The other cases are those of Engineers a corps not having Sds. and the members of which were selected for their special qualifications. Before the case was reported back to me he had concluded it by agreement with the Secy of War, & I hope satisfactorily to him.

You ask for his appointment as Inspector Genl. by reference to the lack of organization you will see that no such office is provided for. My meaning in relation to the revival of your ideas of the value of rank, was that you should regard field officers as posts belonging to age or extraordinary merit: and that a soldier instead of securing the grade of Brig. Genl. might consider it high enough to repay the labor of a life. Your recommendations indicated

a disregard of the propriety of passing through the various steps, as they contemplated the long leaps known rather to militia than regular troops.

I will not argue further the question of the number of Generals required for an army as small as yours was stated to be, and see no relation to the matter in the following sentence used by you; "Now, because our rank & file have been so much weakened by disease, it is not to be supposed that the reduced force can be more easily made to beat the enemy than when it was at its full effective strength." The whole force for duty was a little larger than when the enemy was beaten, the number of Genls. ^{been} had, more than proportionately increased, and the

only supposition presented was that
a further and great augmentation of guns
was necessary. To assume that eight Regts.
are enough for a Major's guns command with
out regard being had to the number of men
in a Regt. you must have resorted to some
other reason than that of the length of the
line to be occupied, which was I thought
the strongest urged in our conversation.

The remedy of recruiting the ranks which
you propose when Regts. are reduced, is more
easily proposed than applied to the twelve
months vol. who compose the greater portion
of your army.

The recent victory at Leesburg must have
a powerful effect but can hardly change
the enemy's plan though it may postpone its
execution. We have reports of the embarkation
of a large force at Fort St. Moursa. Genl. Magruder
expects an immediate attack at York River.
There is reason to believe a descent will be made
on the coast of N. Va. and I am looking all round
to see where the three thousand troops we have here shall
be first and most needed. Oh that we had plenty of
arms & a short time to raise the men to use them.
Saml. S. M. Smith. Very truly yr. friend J. G. Davis

To His Excellency

Richard D. Davis -
Richmond Va.

Centerville Va. Oct. 25th 1861

Mr. President. your esteemed favor of yesterday by the hands of your Aid. de. Camp. Col. Davis is received - In regard to Mr. Randal there seems to be yet some misapprehension.

The Secretary of War under date of 19th Inst. writes to me that St. Randal has been allowed to withdraw his resignation on condition that he return to his post at Pensacola. The Condition was not acceptable to Mr. Randal and his resignation is therefore not withdrawn.

Mr. Randal resigned for reasons that he no doubt considered imperative - His resignation was accepted. I have nominated him for the position on my Staff made vacant by the transfer of Capt. Joseph Sovell and the fact has been announced to the troops under my Command. I beg you to cause his appointment to be made out as soon as practicable, and request that you will give him as high rank, as the Senior Aid. de. Camp of a Major General, may be entitled to.

The Order for reorganization was received here last night, and will I have no doubt be carried into effect immediately - As indicated in the Orders Circumstances will I suppose to some extent delay the transfer of Regiments until after the impending collision with the enemy.

We all have a good deal to think about here just now. The Army is in good spirits - The men thoroughly understand, that in retiring to this position, we were only endeavoring to get the enemy to come out of their fortifications and fight them on more advantageous ground with better chances of cutting them off from the Potomac. They say that they want to be behind them in the next battle & thus interfere with them when they commence running.

the proposed number of ~~officers~~.

I do not exactly understand your remarks
urging me to revise my former ideas of the value of work
of field officers - I write in haste, amidst constant
interruptions.

Very truly your friend
(Signed) Geo. Smith

To His Excellency
President Davis
in reply to his letter dated
Richmond Oct. 10th 1861.

I avail myself of this opportunity to ask that my nomination of Major Samuel W. Melton as Asst. Adjt. General be acted on as soon as possible - ~~He is on duty in that Capacity~~ He is on duty in that Capacity under and with Major Whiting; he is just the man for the place; has plenty to do, and is both able and willing to do it - I have heretofore as Second in Command in the Army of the Shenandoah; more recently styled 2^d Corps of the Army of the Potomac, been in immediate command of the six Brigades of that Corps, present with the Army - General Johnston the permanent Commander of the Corps, retaining control of the Advanced parts of the Army, under Brig Genl. Smith, and the Brigade of Brig Genl. Whiting detached towards Dumfries -

I shall regard in my new Command; the 2^d division of the Army of the Potomac consisting of five Brigades; the Census of two Adjutant Generals and two Aids - I have at present one regularly appointed Asst. General Major Whiting - and one Aid, 2^d Lt. John Lane, who resigned his appointment as Cadet at West Point, and joined the Confederate Army last Spring.

Major Melton has been from the first an able and constant Assistant to Major Whiting, and Randal for the last ten days has been with me. and proved of invaluable assistance, with out any appointment or assignment, until yesterday, when I appointed him Aid de Camp vice Lovell transferred.

I need a first rate Engineer Officer - Can you send me one - I want very many things - but most of all, desire to see McClellan thoroughly whipped or have a hand in doing it - There is this merit in my applications for Melton and Randal, besides their especial fitness for their

reputation please. Sir. They are Citizens who in all probability, would not now be in the Service at all but for my nomination & application. I am not interfering with the necessities of the Service in other places. A vote I ran upon, in the case of my very first application. That to you for Capt. Withers.

I hope that you will soon have the satisfaction of hearing that we have again met and beaten the enemy.

Very truly y^r friend
(Signed) G. W. Smith
Maj Genl.

Richmond, Va.,
Oct 29th 1861

Genl G. W. Smith,

My dear Sir,

Yours of the 25th Instant was received a few days since; by the same mail came letters in relation to matters of grave importance to the public welfare, and my reply to the personal considerations presented in yours has been delayed.

I was surprised to learn that B. Randall was with you, having been informed that he had withdrawn his resignation and had repaired to his proper station to resume his place under the Command of Genl Bragg. The question of his relative rank in the Confederate Army was by my direction examined and stated. It was hoped that upon a full view of his case wherein it appeared that he could not be further advanced without prejudice to others who ranked him by a grade in the Army of their former service, he would be satisfied that no injustice had been done or intended to him, and would cheerfully share the fate of his comrades at Pensacola, for many of whom I have hoped promotion by assignment to temporary rank in the provisional army. The hard fate of Genl Bragg's army has caused many to apply to be transferred to more inviting service. To comply with such requests would have been unjust to the

Commanding General and demoralizing to the army. The rule adopted was to require as a condition precedent that Genl Bragg should make or approve of the application. All this, I am informed, was explained to Lieut. Randall. To pursue a different course was to encourage the idea that an officer who from personal considerations and without the sanction of his commanding General should retire from the service at Pensacola might expect the premium of a higher appointment upon application being made at Richmond.

You inform me that Mr Randall has resigned, that his resignation has been accepted, that you have nominated him to be your Aide-de-Camp, that you have announced that fact to the troops under your command, that you wish his appointment made out as soon as practicable and that you desire me to give him as high rank as the Senior Aide de Camp of a Major General may be entitled to. By reference to the laws, of which I suppose you have a copy, you will perceive that the largest number of Aids allowed to any General is two and the highest rank is that of subaltern. Until recently they were required to be selected from the line of the army and now can only be taken from civil life at the discretion of the President. Had Mr Randall returned to his station at Pensacola, your application for his services as your Aide de Camp would properly have been referred by the Adjutant General to Genl Bragg, and the generosity and self-

abnegation which have on more important occasions been manifested by that officer leave little room to doubt that he would have recommended the transfer desired.

You have a right to recommend persons for appointment and your recommendations would receive from me a most respectful consideration in any comparison which it might be necessary to institute between applicants. The value of your recommendation could not however be enhanced by the announcement in orders of the fact that you had made it, nor would the power which the law vests in the President and the Congress be thereby diminished. I am therefore at a loss to perceive why the fact of your having made a nomination was announced in orders to the troops.

It is desirable that the relations of Generals to the Assistant Adjutant Generals serving with them should be such as to facilitate the transaction of public business, but the staff proper of Generals do not include the Adjutants General serving with the armies under their command. One officer of that corps has been appointed to serve with you. If in your temporary command another is needed one may be assigned to serve for the occasion with you, and I will call attention to your wish in that connection.

Very Respectfully & truly yours
Jeff Davis

T. A.
From President Davis
Oct. 29th /61 -
Recd. Nov. 1st.

Mem. Nov. 2nd. I have
determined not to answer
this letter. My ~~reasons~~ requests
and recommendations in
regard to this and pretty much
all other ~~particular~~ matters, affecting
the interests of the service and
of that portion of this army
which I command seem
to be entirely ignored; if
not systematically opposed.

I have asked for a
small staff, compared
with that of the Commander
of the 1st Corps - ~~the only~~
case in which what I
asked for has been granted
is that of Joseph Lovell;
to be Aide de Camp; and
he was transferred im-
mediately to the staff of
his brother at New Orleans.

It is clearly useless
for me to expect any aid
or consideration at the
hands of the Executive;

or War Department.
They may think this
the proper way to beat
such an enemy as we
have in our front; but
I don't think so.
Matters in this Corps however
are in pretty fair condition
thanks to others than the
Executive - or any one else
in Richmond - and we will
try to keep them so until
after we beat the enemy.

G. W. Smith

Ad. Qrtts. Richmond Oct. 2nd 1862
General.

On the 15th ins. I had the honor to address you a letter stating that I had been that day informed that six (6) Major Generals, my juniors, had been recently promoted to rank me in the army, and respectfully asking the reasons therefor.

To this letter I have received no written reply, but have been informed by you that His excellency the President in explanation states that Senator Wigfall did not consider that my present command came within the intention of the law authorizing the appointment of Lieutenant Generals.

On the 19th of September 1861 I was appointed Major General and was at once assigned to command the 2nd Corps of the Army of the Potomac. From the time General Beauregard left that Army in January last, until the 3rd of May, I was the second officer in rank in the field this side of the Alleghany Mountains, and commanded during most of that time one or the other Wings of the Army. When General E. F. Johnston was wounded at the battle of Seven Pines, or Fair Oaks, the command of the army devolved upon me. I was

However superseded, during the battle by General M. C. Lee, by order of the President on the 1st of Aug. On the 2nd of Aug I retired from the field on account of ill health and was unable to return until about the 10th of August.

On reporting to General Lee for duty I asked to be assigned to my own division. This was refused. I was assigned to another division and in a few days was placed in command of the right wing of General Lee's army. About the time of the commencement of General Lee's operations on the Appomattox I was ordered to remain in Richmond, and without being formally separated from Lee's Army was instructed to communicate direct with the War Department and to command in place of General Lee from the mouth of the Cape Fear river, north to the line of Lee's active operations.

I objected to remaining here and claimed to be allowed to go with the division to which I had been recently assigned. I was overruled in this matter and, given to understand that the government considered my services more necessary in my present position. It is not for me to say how the duty imposed upon me has been performed. I will say however that I have found it to be a position of vital importance, vast in extent, complicated and annoying. The difficulties and responsibilities have been great, the enemy threatening collisions taking place along the line from the upper Appomattox to Wilson.

My command of troops in the field operating against the enemy being made all the more difficult by the vexatious interferences and details connected with command in this city. I may have made mistakes, but if General Lee, to whom I report all matters of interest by letter, yourself, or the President are not satisfied with what I have done I am not aware of that fact.

I am not acting under a General but have absolutely relieved General Lee of a large portion of his command and am in direct communication with the government. and if numbers are to be taken into consideration as an element in estimating the importance of a command I venture the opinion that not one of the six Major Generals promoted to rank and having as many enlisted men under them as are within the limits of my command and under my orders. My position and duties here are more assimilated to those properly pertaining to the rank of General than to that of Lieutenant General.

In addition to the above statement in regard to the nature of my present command; and of that previously exercised by me, I beg leave to refer to the subject of the command broken up at Vicksburg, which in an army organization ^{like} ours, is a division. When the two Corps of which the Army of the Potomac was composed was broken up, I was willingly associated the command of a division instead of a corps. It was the broken command for my rank.

And I should most gladly have retained the command of the old 1st Division of the Army of the Potomac, to the end of the war. Shared its fate and united my destiny with that of the gallant officers and men who composed it. But the Division was broken up and I was ordered to another command without my consent, against my wishes, and without being consulted. I submitted without complaint. Had we been engaged in anything than a war for existence I would have ~~preferred~~ rather than by thus separating from my division. But the command to which I was assigned contained two brigades which had formerly belonged to the 2nd Corps: that of Whiting and that of Hood. This division was also broken up and distributed amongst my juniors. I objected to this, but to no purpose. I was then assigned to another division which was ordered off, and I ordered to remain here.

I have heretofore made no complaint, I make none now. I have applied for nothing, and apply for nothing now. I have not been consulted by the government in regards to the duties and positions assigned me since receiving a commission, unless this may be called an exception. viz. The President informed me that he had told a distinguished gentleman from South Carolina that he would order me to Charleston to command the Department of South Carolina and Georgia in July last if my health would permit. I was consulted on the state of my health alone. That subject was referred to the Medical Director of my command. He decided

On this, viz. When most of the troops of my command were ordered forward to the Rapidan, the Secretary of War told me that it was desirable for me to remain here. I expressed an unqualified preference to go with my troops. But told him that if in his judgement it was to the interest of the service and the cause for me to remain that I would obey his order to do so, in a willing spirit and be none the less useful here because of my decided and clearly expressed desire to go with my troops. The Secretary then gave the order for me to remain. But I had reason to believe afterwards that the President had previously determined to keep me here.

that the state of my health would not justify
my attempting to take that command, at that
time. ~~I have not asked to be promoted.~~

My sole desire is to aid in resisting
Northern despotism; to drive back the invaders,
and establish our independence as a nation.
But the recent action of the government in
putting over me six of my juniors diminished
my usefulness in the position I now occupy,
to ^{such} extent which makes it incumbent upon me
to give place to some one, who is not laboring
under the great disadvantages of condemnation
in advance. I know that the President has
the right to select General officers. and I
would under other circumstances say nothing.
But I maintain that I was selected to per-
form duties clearly pertaining to the rank of
Lieutenant General, that I commanded a corps,
when most if not all of those who have been
promoted over me were Commanding Brigades.
That I have had a Lieutenant General's
command nearly all the time I have been
in service, that I commanded the right
wing of General Lee's army, and was by him
ordered to the front with my command, and
was selected and ordered by the Secretary of
War to remain here, in a position which

be considered, that I could render more important services to the country than by going to General Lee's army with the three divisions ^{then} under my command.

A position in which I am commanding more troops than are in ~~the~~ ^{the} three divisions that we have without us. ~~The position~~ ^{responsibilities and difficulties} connected with ^{my present duties} ~~which~~ are well known to the government. It has been selected to perform these duties, and when a law is passed authorizing the appointment of Lieutenant Generals, a rank corresponding to the position I have so long occupied, and held now, I am selected to be overlooked.

The Morale in war is an essential element of success and cannot with safety be ignored. Had I been allowed to command my own division I would have been not only satisfied to command it, and it along to the end of the war; but would have been proud and glad to remain with it, and share its fate. ~~For~~ And the government as far as concerned me, might have selected thirty hundred instead of thirty of my juniors and made them Lieutenant Generals. It would have been no affair of mine. But the old 1st Division was broken up and taken from me. The division to which I was next assigned was broken up and distributed amongst my juniors. The division to which I was afterwards assigned was ordered off and I ordered to remain here. I have no division now. And if one ^{should be} ~~was~~ given

I have no assurance, nor reason to believe that
I would be allowed to remain with it long enough
to become its real commander.

I have the honor sir to tender
my resignation as Major General of the Provisional
Army of the Confederate States, and ~~respectfully~~
request its immediate acceptance.

Very Respectfully

Your obedient servant

Sustanus W. Armitte

Major General

Hon. Geo. W. Randolph
Secretary of War.

The following is the "Statement" the President gave me, relative
to my resignation, Oct. 2nd 1862
Memo to be appended to letter of this date to Secy of War.
~~On Saturday last I had an interview with the~~ In
Secretary of War, and in that interview gave him
to understand that I was not satisfied with
what he then told me of the reasons for not
appointing me Lieutenant General. He requested
me to delay action in the matter until he could
have another interview with the President on
this subject. Believing that no satisfactory answer
would be given on the next day, I prepared
a letter to him on the subject, and called on
him this morning with the intention of delivering
this letter, a copy of which is on record. The
letter was not delivered but the substance of
it was talked over, and I stated freely, without
reserving all that I felt. I did not tell the
Secretary that I had the letter, because of his
remarks, when I told him that I intended
to resign. Which was to the effect that my place
could not now be filled, that my resignation
at this time would embarrass the business
of his office fearfully, and would certainly be
a great injury to the Confederate cause. He
said that there was no lack of confidence in
me on the part of the government, that
the lack of my being promoted was acci-
dental or incidental, that the nominations
were very hurriedly made, that the subject

had not been finally disposed of - that time
and a revision of work that had been too
much hurried would set all things right.
The Gov. services here as an administrative officer
in addition to commanding troops in the
field had been of the greatest benefit to the
President, to himself and the whole War Department.
That if I left now, ~~that~~ the confusion and
disorder would be more than ever. (And
urged me to defer action, until some one
who now ranked me came to take command,
or until the whole matter was satisfactorily
arranged. At least wait until Richmond
was in less danger than it is now and had
been during the time I have been in command.
I told him that I would rather have been
shot dead than to have had my usefulness
in so important ~~and vital~~ a command im-
paired if not destroyed by the recent wholesale
overslaughting to which I had been subjected.

And told him it had unfitted me for the
command. and that I would not for any
consideration on earth retain rank at the
hazard and risk of the vital interests of the
country. He said that I ought to allow the
government to judge of my fitness for the
position and again urged and advised me
to wait for a time.

I told him ~~at the end~~ of an hour

course that I would stand by him in defense
of the city and see him through it. With the
understanding between us, that if one of my former
juniors now promoted over me, came here to
relieve me, or if after a reasonable time the
whole matter was not satisfactorily settled that
I would be entirely free to take the course
I proposed.

S. W. Smith
Maj. Gen.

[Extract.]

Adjutant and Inspector General's Office

Richmond, Feb 17th 1862.

SPECIAL ORDERS, }

No. 49 }

I. The Resignations of the following named Officers have been accepted by the President, to take effect to-day:

17 Major General G. W. Smith, P. A. C. S.

By command of the Secretary of War.

Geo. W. Nithers,

Assistant Adjutant General.

Major General G. W. Smith

Richmond

ya

Richmond Feb'y 23^d 1863

To His Excellency

Jefferson Davis

President of the Confederate States.

Sir,

In addressing a letter to the Secretary of War on the 7th inst, resigning my commission as Major General in the Provisional Army, I had supposed that my letter, and the accompanying papers, contained all that I would have to say upon the subject. But your endorsements thereon are of such a nature that I feel compelled to notice them.

The intimation conveyed in your first remark was uncalled for. I tendered my resignation, it has been accepted, there was no alternative in it. I have not directly or indirectly applied to you for promotion, and there was no proper occasion afforded for your saying that "If the alternative of resignation or appointment as Lieutenant General be presented the resignation must be accepted because my appointment as Lieut Genl would be in disregard of the "consideration due to services rendered in battle and campaign".

My gratification on account of your handsome allusion to the distinguished services of my esteemed friends Generals Longstreet and Jackson, is, I regret to say, diminished by the painful necessity thus imposed ^{upon} me, of asking you what "consideration was due" at that time.

to Generals Holmes & Pemberton for "services rendered in battle and Campaign". I stated that I was over-
-laughed by wholesale. It is not an answer for you
to say that Generals Longstreet and Jackson while I was
absent sick were winning fresh laurels on fields
which a grateful Country can never forget. There are
four more names on the list, can the same be said
of all of them.

In stating my own case I refrained from
alluding to individuals; delicacy, good taste and proper
regard for the six Lieut Generals, all forbade an irrele-
-vant discussion on my part of their real or relative
merits. Besides, I had to take my place below all
or none of them. But your allusion by name to Generals
Longstreet and Jackson, gives me the opportunity, and
makes it necessary for me to say, even at the risk of
drawing comparisons which I had hoped to avoid,
that I told the Secty of War and many others at the
time, and now say again, that I was glad these two
Generals had been promoted over me. Although not
conceding that either of them had fairly won that
advantage over me, whilst we were all in the field,
it had been my misfortune to be absent sick at a
time when they more favored than I, had rendered
the most important services to their Country, and won
for themselves on many hard fought fields the right
to Command.

You state that they were Brigadiers when
I joined our cause; and as I was appointed Major General

over them, you commend their example to my imitation and read me a lecture because I made a plain statement of facts. I preceded my own State in joining our cause. Did they? Did they come so early, and did I come so late, and without reason for delay, that you now find it necessary to draw comparisons as to order of time in coming? Had I ever served under them? Had their brigades been taken from them again and again? When I was appointed to rank them had they been for nearly a year Commanding as Major Generals?

They continued to command their own proper ~~commands~~ brigades long after I was appointed Major General, and when promoted retained their brigades as a part of their new commands, which was proper and right.

I do not know whether General Longstreet was satisfied with your action in appointing me over him or not. That is for you and himself to settle. But I do know that General Jackson was. At any rate it was not the first time I had ranked both of them. But in commending their example to my imitation, you should not have ignored my statement, then before you, to the effect that if I had been allowed to retain my own proper command, the old 1st Division of the Army of the Potomac, you might have promoted six hundred instead of six of my juniors to rank me, it would have been no concern of mine. I would not only have been content, but proud to have commanded.

the old 1st Division, and it alone, to the end of the war.

But ^{you} transferred to my division Brig Genl D. R. Jones, whose brigade was soon to go out of service. My division was composed almost entirely of war men. You then ordered me away from the division and left Genl Jones in command of it. You say that "when a General of Division for an uncertain and probably a long period leaves his command, it being in the presence of the enemy, he should expect another officer to be selected to succeed him, the public interest rather than personal wishes, being the proper rule of conduct?" This is all well enough in the abstract, but I do not see what it has to do with the case in point.

And I consider it equally inapplicable to the second case in which my division was broken up. There is nothing in my letter about another officer being appointed to command my division whilst I was absent sick.

Before the battle of Seven Pines I commanded the left wing of the army. My division was commanded before, during and after that battle by the Senior Brig Genl W.H.C. Whiting. The division was decimated and when I objected, General Lee assured me that this was only temporary, and promised that the division should be reformed - this has not been done.

The third division to which I was assigned, was

ordered off, and I ordered to remain here. You say that if you had known Genl Smith's earnest desire to take the field you would have been pleased to gratify it. My answer is that you decided this, as you have done nearly all other matters concerning myself without regard to my wishes. I have reason to believe that at the time I was ordered to remain here, you did know that I desired to go with my division. You had no reason to think otherwise, and you might have easily informed yourself had you desired to do so.

In imposing upon yourself the task of correcting "a few" of my "errors", you begin by stating that "all that is said of his (my) position as the Commander of a Corps is valueless, because there was no such organization then sanctioned by law or recognized by the Department", and you add - "If there had been properly two Corps then in the Army of the Potomac, Generals Johnston and Beauregard were there, and for a part of the time Genl Van Dorn, all of whom ranked General Smith". Whether sanctioned by law and recognized by the Department or not, there were two separate Generals' Commands in the Army of the Potomac at that time. And they were called and known as Corps. General Johnston commanded the one, General Beauregard the other. It was at your suggestion that I visited the Army of the Potomac almost immediately after my ^{first} arrival in Richmond from the State of Kentucky.

* See Genl Van Dorn's letter as foot note

Within twenty four hours after my arrival at Fairfax Court House, Generals J. E. Johnston and Beauregard, of their own accord, united in writing a letter to you, requesting you to appoint me a Major General and order me to the Army of the Potomac, that I might relieve General Johnston of the Command of his, the 2nd Corps of that Army, and thereby enable him to give his whole time to the general Command of the Army.

I delivered the letter to you and was asked if this would be satisfactory to me. I answered that it would, and stated that I was only fearful I would not be fully equal to the task. You told me that you would give the necessary instructions in the case.

I arrived here in the early part of September 1861. For several years previous to the war I had been living in the City of New York, to which place I moved from New Orleans. Two weeks before the bombardment and capture of Fort Sumpter, I was suddenly stricken down in New York City by a fearful disease, which confined me to my room for several months. Immediately after my recovery I went to my own State, Kentucky, and before my strength was re-established, came here.

The lamented General A. S. Johnston arrived here a few days before me. Unsolicited by me, he urged you to appoint me to the highest military rank within your power, and order me to the West as second to him if possible. You appointed me Major General, I was ordered to

Army of the Potomac, was assigned to General J. E. Johnston's Corps, and placed in command of it. You knew that this was intended, and you knew that it was done, and I am satisfied that you know it now. For you can hardly have forgotten a conference which was held at Fairfax Court House, between yourself, General Johnston, General Beauregard and myself, soon after I took command of the 2nd Corps.

It is true that General Van Dorn received soon after an appointment as Major General and was ordered to the Army of the Potomac. His appointment was made to date the same day as mine, and he ranked me by virtue of having been a Brigadier General, whereas I was appointed from private life. But you knew then and you know now that General Van Dorn was assigned to the 1st Corps, which was commanded by Beauregard, and that I continued to command the 2^d Corps after General Van Dorn joined the Army of the Potomac. At any rate the facts are as stated, and no selected phrases or even great denial can alter them.

You say that I complained of being superseded by General Lee during the Battle of Seven Pines. I stated the fact, nothing more. Is it denied? As to your lengthy argument endeavoring to prove that because I "reported sick" the next day I "was not able and willing to command the Army in active operations" - paping

by the covert insinuations - I have only to say in answer to the plain substance of the remark, that no symptoms of the disease which commenced on the next day, the same by which I had been stricken down more than a year before, had shown themselves until the battle was over, and I had been actually superseded by General Lee for more than eighteen hours; of course a longer time had elapsed after your order was given to General Lee directing him to take command.

You speak of "conversations reported to have been held with the former Secretary of War," and then state that there was neither haste nor want of due consideration on your part in making the appointments of Lieut Generals.

You saw proper to place over me six of my juniors in one day, and that at a time when I was Commanding by your order more as a General than a Lieut General.

My division, the proper command of my rank had been taken from me. I asked you respectfully, through the Secretary of War, in writing, to give me the reasons for this. An answer in writing was refused, the official paper was returned to the Adj. & Insp Generals office endorsed "this will be answered orally". Had you given or allowed a straight forward answer to have been given me in writing

there would have been no 'converoation' on the subject. If in my recollection that night when I appended the substance of the 'oral answer' to the records of my office on which my letter of resignation of that date had been placed, I have in any manner misapprehended Mr. Randolph I am perfectly willing to accept and abide by any corrections or changes he may desire to make. You treated my respectful written request with contempt - and but for the consideration shown me by the Secretary of War my letter of resignation dated the 21st of October last would then have been forwarded - And I would have left the service, forced out, but not as you endeavor to make it appear, because Longstreet and Jackson were promoted over me. Nor yet because I was not appointed Lieut General. The appointment of some of the Lieut Generals over me, had a certain influence in producing the deep conviction forced upon my mind, that I was not respected, supported and conided in, by the Government to an extent sufficient to authorize my remaining in its service. But I have no disposition to repeat here my letters of resignation nor to give ^{now} a synopsis of them, I have only to add in comment upon your endorsements, that in giving up the rank of Major General, whatever "importance it might be supposed" I attached to "Provisional

rank" I attach much more to the Confederate cause. And you may rest assured that I was in earnest in saying to you, that no consideration on earth would induce me to hold rank and position at the hazard and risk of the vital interests of the Country.

Having disposed of your endorsements it remains for me to notice the endorsement of the Secretary of War upon my second letter of the 7th inst. That letter referred to two cases in which important orders had been given to my Command without even informing me. Mr. Seddon is entirely mistaken in supposing that these orders were given "whilst it was known Genl Smith was en route for Richmond." I have a copy of his telegraphic order in regard to the movement of troops within my Command dated Feb'y 3^d 1863. I had then been in Richmond at least five days. I heard of the order by telegram from Genls Whiting and Evans on the 6th, and it was only ~~on~~ ^{after} inquiry on the 7th, that I learned from the Adj. & Insp Generals office, that the order had been given. Mr. Seddon says nothing upon the second case alluded to in my letter. But that interference was as nothing compared with the order of the Secretary of War issued to me in writing on the 15th inst, two days before the acceptance of my resignation. By your direction, he gave me specific instructions, without either he or yourself consulting me, to change the position of nearly every Brigade in the State of North Carolina. The instructions spoke of the "disposition" of a General.

who never had but one Brigade. After disposing of two of the Brigades of the 'Division' it is grandly stated that they will afterwards perhaps be followed by another Brigade of the same 'Division'. And you order me through the Secretary of War to direct Genl French to dispose of the residu of his force as "he deems most judicious for the defence of Weldon, Goldsboro and the line of the Rail Road".

I have felt compelled to resign the Commission conferred upon me by you, and I will here say again what was stated in my letter of resignation, "I shall endeavor in another sphere to aid in securing the independence of the Confederate States"... "leaving to others equally capable, of higher rank, and better supported, the task of performing duties heretofore imposed upon me."

Very Respectfully
Your obt Servt.
Gustavus M. Smith

13.8
~~18~~
Gustavus W. Smith

Richmond Va

Feb'y 23. 1862

and
Van Dorn's letter
Oct. 20th 1861

Copy of letter addressed
to His Excellency Jefferson
Davis President of the Con-
federate States, and answers
to his endorsements on the
letter of writer resigning his
commission as Major General
in the Provisional Army.

~~18~~ ~~18~~

and Van Dorn's letter
Oct 20th 1861