

INSPECTOR GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT.

Until the adoption by Congress of the Revised Statutes now in force, it was not understood that the Inspector Generals, authorized by existing laws from time to time, constituted, as a body, a legal department. They were viewed as individual Inspectors, assigned to the Headquarters of the Army for the Department of War for inspection service, and placed upon a footing similar to that of Senior Aids-de-Camp; but the number of officers was so limited, and their rank and standing so fixed, that the question had no significance. Up to the time of the War of the Rebellion, there was no Inspector General's Office in Washington. It has been insisted upon, however, that the Inspector Generals have constituted a Department in the view of the law. Scott's Military Digest also takes this view. The doubt is now, however, disposed of by legislation.

The following is a brief account of the Inspector General's Department of the service:

The Continental Congress, 16 June, 1775, created the offices of Adjutant General, Commissary General, Quartermaster General, Paymaster General, Chief Engineer and Commissary of Musters, but made no provision for any inspection service; but on 13 December, 1777, (more than two years after the other Staff Offices had been created,) it was resolved, as the opinion of Congress, that it was essential to the promotion of discipline, and to the reformation of the various abuses which prevailed in the different departments, that an appointment should be made of Inspector General, agreeable to the practice of the best disciplined European armies, and that two should be appointed. Brigadier General Conoway was appointed one of these Inspector Generals, but was immediately appointed a Major General, and nothing further appears to have been done till 5 May, 1778, when it was resolved that Congress approve *General Washington's plan for "a well organized Inspectorship,"* and Baron Steuben was appointed Inspector General, with the rank and pay of Major General. Inspectors were also appointed for every division, and an Assistant Inspector for each brigade.

In the Act of 30 April, 1790, the President was to appoint one or two Inspectors, with rank and pay of Captain.

In the Act of 5 March, 1792, the Adjutant was to do duty as Inspector also.

By the Act of 8 May, 1792, there was provided an Inspector, with rank of Major, for each brigade of Militia.

By the Act of 3 March, 1795, the Adjutant General was to do duty also of Inspector General; and Deputy Adjutants General to do duty also of Deputy Inspector Generals.

In the Act of 30 May, 1796, fixing the military peace establishment, one Inspector and Adjutant General was provided for, to be taken from the line, with \$25 per month additional pay.

By the Act of 3 March, 1797, the Brigadier General was to choose his own Inspector from Captains of the line.

In the Act of 28 May, 1798, providing for a provisional army, there was included an Inspector General, with the rank and pay of a Major General, and also an Inspector for each separate portion, brigade and corps of the army. There was also to be an Adjutant General, but with only the rank of a Brigadier.

In the Act of 16 July, 1798, to augment the army, it was provided that there should be an Inspector General, with the rank, pay and Aids-de-Camp of a Major General; two assistants, to be taken from the line, and an Inspector of Artillery.

In the Act of 3 March, 1799, for the better organizing of the troops of the United States, it was provided that officers detached from the line to act as Inspectors should be extra, and their vacancies in the line filled, (though the officer detached did not lose

his regimental position;) the Act also continued the Inspector General in the rank of Major General, allowing him a Secretary, with rank and pay of Captain; added for each army a Deputy Inspector General to be a field officer; also an Inspector for each brigade and division. It further provided, among other things, that the Adjutant General should be *ex-officio*, an Assistant Inspector General, and authorized the appointment of an Inspector of Fortifications.

In the Act of 16 March, 1802, fixing the peace establishment, provision was made for an Adjutant and Inspector of the army, to be taken from the line.

The Act of 12 April, 1808, provided for two additional Brigadier Generals, each of whom was to have a Brigade Inspector selected from the line.

In the Act of 11 January, 1812, to raise an additional military force, provision was made for one Inspector General, with rank and pay of Brigadier General, and two assistants, with the rank and pay of Lieutenant Colonel.

In the Act of 16 May, 1812, making further provision for the army, it was provided that there should be an Inspector for every brigade, to be detailed from the line.

In the Act of 6 July, 1812, it was provided that there should be a Deputy Inspector General, with three assistants, for each separate army, to be taken from the line.

In the Act of 3 March, 1813, for the better organization of the General Staff of the army, it was provided that there should be one Adjutant and Inspector General, with the rank of Brigadier General; eight Inspector Generals, with the rank of Colonel, and sixteen assistants, with the rank of Major.

In the Act of 3 March, 1815, fixing the peace establishment, four Brigade Inspectors, to be taken from the line, were provided for.

In the Act of 24 April, 1816, organizing the General Staff, it was provided that there should be one Adjutant and Inspector General of the Army, with the rank of Brigadier General; one Inspector General for each division, with the rank of Colonel, and an assistant for each brigade, with the rank of Major, to be taken from the line.

In the Act of 2 March, 1821, fixing the peace establishment, provision was made for two Inspector Generals, with the rank of Colonel.

The Act of 5 July, 1838, fixed the number of Assistant Adjutant Generals at two Majors and four Captains, and required *them* to perform also the duties of Assistant Inspector Generals when the circumstances of the service required it.

On 23 August, 1842, an Act was passed abolishing the office of one of the Inspector Generals.

On 12 January, 1846, it was repealed, thus fixing them at two.

By the Act of 3 August, 1861, five Assistant Inspector Generals, with the rank of Major, were provided for.

By the Act of 6 August, 1861, two additional Inspector Generals, with the rank of Colonel, were provided for.

By the Act of 17 July, 1862, an Inspector General, with the rank and pay of Lieutenant Colonel, was provided for each army corps.

On 24 March, 1864, an appointment of Colonel Inspector General was made from another Department of the Staff, to fill a vacancy among one of the four Colonels authorized by existing laws. But by the Act of Congress of 8 June, 1872, the officer who would have succeeded, had it been interpreted that the law of promotion obtained to the vacancy in question, was promoted to be a Colonel, without disturbing the continuance in office of those already appointed; thus the number became five Colonels Inspector Generals.

On 16 June, 1874, an Act was passed authorizing the promotion of a Major to be Lieutenant Colonel, to fill the vacancy occasioned by the promotion of the Lieutenant Colonel to be Colonel.

By the Act of 28 July, 1866, fixing the military peace establishment, four Inspector Generals with rank and pay of Colonel; three assistants, with rank of Lieutenant Colonel; and two with rank of Major, were provided, making nine in all.

On 23 June, 1874, an Act was passed by Congress, that the Inspector General's Department should thereafter consist of one Colonel, two Lieutenant Colonels and two Majors; providing further, that no new appointments should be made until the number of Inspector Generals be reduced to five. The same Act provided that no officer now in service should be reduced in rank or mustered out of service by reason of any provision in this Act.

The Revised Statutes fix the status of the Department as follows: "Five Inspector Generals of the army, with the rank of Colonel of Cavalry; one Assistant Inspector General, with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel of Cavalry, and two Assistant Inspector Generals, with rank of Major of Cavalry."

The Corps stands to-day as follows: one Brigadier General, three Colonels and two Lieutenant Colonels.

In addition to the duties imposed by the Act of 13 December, 1777, the varying necessities of the service have imposed upon the Inspector General's Department additional duties; and more stress has been laid, from time to time, upon certain points of duty already indicated.

Under the provisions of General Orders, No. 28, Adjutant General's Office, 6 April, 1876, the Department was placed under the orders of the General of the army, and all the officers of it have been detailed by him to the posts they now occupy. In addition to the habitual duties of Inspector Generals, the subject of inspection of the National Cemeteries devolves upon the Department—a duty performed without inconvenience, since they are to be inspected while the officers are upon their ordinary tours.

A notable fact in connection with the subject of rank of Inspector Generals is, that in the earlier days of the history of the army, when the possession of rank was greatly appreciated, and, indeed, found essential to the promotion of the best interests of the service, the head of this branch of the staff had habitually the rank of a general officer; but of late years, the highest grade this Department has had is that of Colonel.

Nor, indeed, has there been in this Department any application for, or move in the direction of, securing the additional grade. The very highest authority has conferred a dignity upon this Department, and has pronounced upon its usefulness by proposing a plan for its establishment. (Reference is here made to General Washington.)

During the war there was an expansion of the organization of the corps; but this was spontaneous and demanded by the necessities of the occasion. Of course, at the close of the war, the surplus were mustered out, the regular organization alone remaining.

It is not the design or wish of the officers of this Department, that a large permanent staff for their branch shall be created, or that there should be a notable exaggeration of their rank. The Colonels, from length of service, have, from their dates, a high rank in their grade; but that fact is very important in securing the best results from the discharge of their duties. It is hardly necessary to expand this point. Mature advice works the correction and remedy of defects better than the formal reports of juniors; the harmony of the service is promoted, and the personal advantage and comfort of the officers and soldiers is advanced—this in addition to the greater value of the fund of information, to be submitted to the superior authorities, which large experience, long service and high rank ought to be expected to furnish.

To give symmetry to the organization of the Staff and Administrative Departments, to mark the significance of the Inspection Department as a branch in the service, and to accord to it its proper dignity and importance, it would seem that its head should be not inferior in grade to that of the heads of the other Departments. So long as several of them were Colonels the case was different, but as it is now, all being Brigadier Generals, except the head of the Inspection branch of the service, a distinction is made tending to depreciate the usefulness of that branch, and not calculated to exalt the pride of the officers connected with it.

Beyond the additional grade suggested for the head of the corps, its officers have no desire to magnify their permanent organization. Instead of that, the Department has sought to ally itself to the line, with the approval, it is believed, of all its officers.

A bill was prepared and introduced into the House of Representatives, through the Hon. Mr. Donnan of Iowa, on 25 January, 1875, which is as follows:

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That, in lieu of the organization established by section one of the Act approved twenty-third June, eighteen hundred and seventy-four, for the Inspector General's Department, entitled "An Act re-organizing the several staff corps of the army," the said Department shall consist of five officers, who shall have the rank, pay and emoluments of Colonels of Cavalry; and that no officer now holding a commission in said Department shall be disturbed in his office by reason of this enactment: *Provided*, That promotions may be made of the Lieutenant Colonels and Major now in the*

Department, as vacancies occur, to the grade of Colonel, and that whenever the said Lieutenant Colonels and Major shall have vacated their offices by promotion or otherwise, the offices of Lieutenant Colonel and Major in the Inspector General's Department shall become extinct, and that no new appointment to those grades shall hereafter be made: *And provided further*, That it shall be lawful for the Secretary of War to detail from the field officers of the line of the army, a sufficient number of officers, to be styled assistant Inspectors General, to perform the duties of inspection imposed upon the Department by law, regulation and the orders of superior authority; said details to be for a period of not more than four years.

The object of the Act was to have the permanent establishment consist of five Colonels, promoting the Lieutenant Colonels and Major as vacancies may occur among the five, till the permanent Staff of the Department shall consist of five Colonels only—the remaining officers to be taken from the field officers of the line. Thus the advantage of experience and uniformity, and the knowledge of the traditions and history of the Department will be perpetuated by a small body of seniors; and new force, and fresh vigor, and later experience in active service, and newer knowledge of the more remote frontier will be gathered to the inspection service by taking as assistants juniors from the line.

AN ACT establishing the rank of the Senior Inspector General

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That from and after the passage of this Act, the rank of the Senior Inspector General of the United States army shall be Brigadier General; but no pay or allowance shall be made to said officer other than from the date of appointment under this Act: *And provided*, That nothing herein enacted shall authorize any increase in the number or rank of the other officers of the Inspector General's Department as fixed by the first section of the Act of twenty-third June, eighteen hundred seventy-four.

Approved 12 December, 1873.

CORPS OF ENGINEERS.

Upon the breaking out of the War of the Revolution, the country was singularly deficient in persons acquainted with the duties of military engineers.

With the exception of the few who had seen service at Louisburg, Lake George, Ticonderoga, Crown Point and Quebec, and had thus gained some practical experience in the construction, attack, and defence of fortified places, there was scarcely any engineering skill or talents in the patriot service. Nevertheless it was important that such officers should be appointed for the Continental Army, and on 16 June, 1775, the Continental Congress—

“*Resolved*, That there be one Chief Engineer at the Grand Army, and that his pay be sixty dollars per month.

“That two assistants be employed under him, and that the pay of each of them be twenty dollars per month.

“That there be one Chief Engineer for the army in a separate department, and two assistants under him; that the pay of the Chief Engineer be sixty dollars per month, and the pay of his assistants, each twenty dollars per month.”

The pay given above to the office of Chief Engineer, and Assistant Engineers, was the compensation which attached at that time to the grades of Colonel and Captain respectively, and the officers appointed in the army under this resolution were commissioned with those ranks respectively, and this practice continued for the first year of