

The origins of the American militia system can be traced to the early history of England. Citizens were subject to periodic mustering and drilling, and could be called into active service to defend the nation. England's North American colonies established militias, and after the Revolution the independent states continued to maintain them. The United States Constitution designated the president as commander-in-chief of the state militias when they were called into federal service. A 1792 act of Congress required all able-bodied white males between the ages of eighteen and forty-five to be enrolled in the militias of the states and sought to impose uniform regulations for their organization and discipline. Another act of the same year authorized the president to call them into national service to repel invasion, suppress insurrection, and to enforce federal laws.



The Organic Act creating the Territory of Nevada (1861) named the Governor the commander-in-chief of the territorial militia. In accordance with federal law, the territorial Legislature, in 1861, defined the "enrolled" militia as "every free, able-bodied white male inhabitant...between the ages of eighteen and forty-five years" except those exempted by law. In addition to the enrolled militia, which was subject to being called into active service by the Governor, the law also recognized and encouraged the formation of volunteer or "organized" militia units, that is, local companies who took their duties as citizen-soldiers more seriously and who met regularly for drill, and were, presumably, better prepared to be called out for active duty.

The act (in most respects identical to a recently adopted California statute) empowered the Governor to appoint an Adjutant General, who was ex officio the Governor's chief of staff, quartermaster general, commissary general, inspector general, and chief of ordnance. His other duties included: making an annual report to the Governor; keeping and filing "all returns, reports, and military correspondence made by him;" and keeping an account of all moneys received and expended by him. Also, the Adjutant General had charge of state and federal military property, such as arms, ammunition, and ordnance stores. Other members of the Governor's military staff were the chief engineer, paymaster general, judge advocate general, surgeon general, and five aids-de-camp. The law further provided for the organization of divisions, regiments, battalions, and companies, and for the appointing and electing of officers. Divisional, brigade, regimental, and company commanders were required to compile and submit muster rolls. The Governor, Adjutant General, and Territorial Auditor constituted the Board of Military Auditors. County and district assessors were responsible for making annual rolls of persons subject to military duty.

The state constitution (1864) required the Legislature to provide for the "organizing and disciplining of the Militia" and for "the effectual encouragement of Volunteer Corps, and the safe keeping of public arms." Another provision empowered the Governor to call out the militia "to execute the laws of the State or to suppress insurrection or repel invasion."

In compliance with its constitutional mandate the Legislature, in 1865, passed a militia act similar in content to the territorial act of 1861. Legislation of the following year made the Secretary of State the Adjutant General ex officio. A statute of 1873 transferred the position to the Lieutenant Governor. Briefly, 1891-1893, the post was held by the Governor's private secretary. In 1893 the Legislature specified that the adjutant generalship be a gubernatorial appointment.

In the latter nineteenth century the organized militias of several states began styling themselves "national guards." The Adjutant General of Nevada was using the term by 1883. In 1893 the Legislature made it

official. The law also specified that the state's National Guard was to adopt the United States Army's drill regulations, and required the Governor to call out the guardsmen for annual encampments. In 1897 the Legislature obliged the counties to provide armories for "public arms, accouterments, or military stores" used by guard companies within their borders. Legislation of 1899 fixed peacetime National Guard strength at one battalion of no more than five companies and returned the adjutant generalship to the Lieutenant Governor.

Even though the legislation of the 1890s appeared to show a determination to build a stronger militia, there was in fact a decline of the institution in that decade. The state's economy had been stagnating for several years, with a resultant decrease in population and state funds. Also, the National Guard in other states was replacing the regular army for policing labor disputes, and organized labor in Nevada opposed employing the state's National Guard in this capacity. Throughout the decade of the 1890s several volunteer companies ceased to exist. By the turn of the century, the so-called National Guard of Nevada consisted of two poorly equipped companies, both in Virginia City.

Nevertheless, many Nevadans volunteered to serve in the Spanish-American War and the Philippine-American War. A battalion of infantry and two troops of cavalry were raised in the state.

In 1903 the Congress passed the Dick Act, which imposed stronger federal standards for the National Guards of the states. The military units of Nevada fell far short of the act's requirements and did not receive federal recognition. In 1906 Governor John Sparks ordered the disbanding of the organized militia. For several years Nevada was the only state lacking not only a federally recognized National Guard but an effective military force of any kind. Duties that would have been those of a state National Guard, such as maintaining order during strikes, were given to the Nevada State Police, established in 1908. Meanwhile, regular army troops were sent to deal with labor strife in Goldfield, 1907-1908.

Beginning in 1913 there were serious attempts to revive the organized militia and to have it conform to Dick Act standards. Newly formed units--a battalion of engineers, a troop of cavalry, and an ambulance company--still did not meet federal requirements. Nor was Nevada able to raise the two troops of cavalry requested by the War Department in response to the Pancho Villa raid into New Mexico.

When the United States entered World War I in 1917, there was no Nevada National Guard to be called into active duty. But once again Nevadans volunteered for service in the American forces. In Nevada, as elsewhere, the Adjutant General administered the Selective Service law.

Throughout the long period of the decline and disappearance of the militia/National Guard, the office of the Adjutant General continued to carry out significant duties. Among these were the support of civilian rifle clubs. Members of these organizations and militia marksmen competed at local, regional, and national small arms matches. In 1884 the Adjutant General compiled rosters of those who had served in Nevada's Civil War volunteer battalions. The same was done following the conflict with Spain and World War I. The information regarding World War I veterans included lists of casualties and recipients of decorations. The Adjutant General oversaw the compilation of an index of the military records of Nevadans who served the state or nation, 1862-1928. His office also provided aid to those seeking veterans' benefits. Following World War I, the War Department established the 40th Division, to be composed of National Guard units from California, Nevada, and Utah. Still lacking federal recognition of its state forces, Nevada was unable to accept the allocations of units offered to the state.

To expedite federal recognition, the Legislature, in 1923, authorized the Governor "to issue such regulations governing the appointments of officers in the national guard . . . and such other matters pertaining to the national guard as may be necessary in order to conform to the requirements made by Congress for participation in federal appropriations for the national guard."

A 1925 statute once again made the Governor's private secretary the Adjutant General. Governor Fred Balzar's private secretary, Jay H. White, mounted a determined drive to bring the state's military department up to the federal standards laid out by the National Defense acts of 1916 and 1920. His efforts paid off in 1927, when the War Department's Militia Bureau extended recognition to the Nevada

National Guard. In a thorough revamping of the state's military code, the Legislature, in 1929, required the state's National Guard to be governed by War Department regulations as well as state laws and the rules, regulations, and orders issued by the Governor. The statute prohibited the use of the National Guard in "disturbances arising from any labor trouble, strike or lockout." An act of 1931 permitted the Governor to appoint any "suitable and competent citizen" to the position of Adjutant General; nevertheless Jay H. White continued to serve for several more years as the Governor's private secretary as well as the eminently suitable and competent Adjutant General.

The first Nevada unit formed after federal recognition was a military police company for the 40th Division. Engineer, motor transport, wagon, and hospital companies, and a motor repair section were added later. In the 1930s the Nevada units participated in the division's annual training camps.

In January 1941 the War Department converted the Nevada units to the 121st Coast Artillery (Anti-Aircraft) Battalion; in June the unit was brought into federal service. Soon after the United States entered World War II the 121st lost its Nevada identity, and was later converted to a rocket battalion. Unlike most states, Nevada did not create a state guard to replace the absent National Guardsmen.

Beginning in 1940 the Adjutant General served as state director for Selective Service. During the war he furnished Nevada guardsmen with Certificates of Service, which provided information on their tours of duty prior to federalization, and kept records of their promotions and transfers following federalization. After the war he participated in the federal Veterans Assistance Program. White also wrote a history of the Nevada National Guard.

In the immediate post-war period the Legislature made no provision for a National Guard. Without undue exaggeration, a report of the Legislative Counsel Bureau of 1948 commented that "Nevada has had a turbulent military history dating back to territorial days, but almost as turbulent has been the existence of the Adjutant General's office, an agency that has been buffeted around like an old cavalry boot."

The rebirth of the Guard came in 1947, the year White retired. The principal units allocated to Nevada were the 421st Anti-Aircraft Battalion and the 192d Air Fighter Squadron. After the creation of the United States Air Force in 1947 the ground and air branches were known respectively as the Nevada Army National Guard and the Nevada Air National Guard.

In the decades that followed other ground and air units came into existence, including armored cavalry, armor, military police, heavy equipment maintenance, ordnance, chemical, medical, aviation, signal, band, public information, and, for the Air Guard, tactical reconnaissance and airlift groups.

Since the mid-1950s new armories, built mostly with federal funds, have appeared in several Nevada communities. The Nevada Military Academy, established in 1957, conducts an Officer Candidate School and trains noncommissioned officers.

During the Korean Conflict the 192d was taken into federal service for twenty-two months. Most of the Air Guard was activated during the Pueblo crisis, 1968-1969, and again for Operation Desert Storm in 1991. The Legislature enacted the most recent major revision of Nevada's military code in 1967. The statute also created the Department of the Military and a new Code of Military Justice. A 1993 statute changed the name of the agency to the Office of the Military.

Both branches of the post-war Nevada National Guard have frequently served in emergencies such as floods, fires, explosions, storms, and civil disturbances. Activities have included: photo reconnaissance; drug law enforcement; recovery of escaped prisoners; rescue of lost persons; and prevention of looting. The Nevada Division of Emergency Management, created in 1953, is a component of the state's Office of the Military. It is responsible for developing and carrying out "the state's plan for hazard mitigation, preparedness and response/recovery relating to natural and man-made disasters and emergencies."

Prior to 1997, a state Veterans Affairs agency operated as part of the Department of Motor Vehicles and Public Safety. That year the Legislature put it within the Office of the Military. While under Motor Vehicles,

a Commissioner of Veterans Affairs and a Deputy Commissioner administered the agency; as part of the Office of the Military the titles changed to Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director. The act of 1997 also created the Veterans' Services Commission to advise them. In 1998 the Office of the Military described its federal mission was "To organize, staff, train, sustain, and provide command and control of units assigned to the NVARNG in order to maintain combat ready units available to mobilize and deploy in support of the National Military Strategy and Military Support to Civil Authorities (MSCA) as directed by National Command Authority." Its mission in the state was to provide, "on order from the Governor . . . military forces for assistance to Civil Authorities in natural and technological disasters, civil disturbances, and civil defense."

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Adjutant General's Files 1868-1926, Bulk 1862-1912 6 cu. ft.

No apparent arrangement; some folders and the letterpress books are arranged chronologically. Finding aids: box lists; some folders have a typewritten "List of Papers."

The series is comprised primarily of incoming and outgoing correspondence, including correspondence of territorial governor James W. Nye. The records embrace subjects such as: electing, appointing, and commissioning of officers; resignations of commissions; the state's militia laws; rumored and actual Indian conflicts; certification of Civil War service; courts martial. In addition to records in folders there are two letterpress volumes of outgoing correspondence, 1875-1893 and 1881-1885, and five volumes of incoming correspondence, 1881-1898. Other correspondence includes: letters, 1897-1898, of Colonel F. C. Lord, commander of the First Regiment of the Nevada National Guard; directives and requests from the War Department; letters from business firms, 1897-1902; communications from adjutants general of other states; telegrams, 1898-1900; letters from business firms, 1897-1902.

Other records are: muster rolls and rosters of militia companies and Civil War and Spanish-American volunteer troops; military assessment rolls (i.e., lists, prepared by county clerks, of persons in a county subject to military duty; officers' oaths; special and general orders; circulars; manuals and other printed matter; requisitions and receipts for ordnance and ordnance stores; rifle practice reports; drill and attendance reports.

Rosters of Officers 1863-1929 1 vol.

Arranged by rank and there under alphabetically. The volume contains the following rosters:

- "Roster of Officers, first Cavalry, Nevada Volunteers Mustered into the Service of the United States" (1863-1865), which gives information on: name, grade, company, date of commission, rank, when mustered, date of resignation, remarks (promotions, date of mustering out).
- "Roster [of officers] Nevada Militia" (1871-1883) lists name, rank, grade or designation of office (e.g., Chief Engineer), when commissioned, and remarks (dates when elected, qualified, assumed office, reappointed, resigned, removed from state). This roster covers only the staffs of the governor (commander-in-chief), adjutant general, and the commanders of the 1st Division and the 1st and 2d Brigades.
- "Roster [of officers] Nevada Militia" (1903-1926) lists name, rank, grade, date of commission, date of oath, residence, remarks. This too list only staff officers. Rosters of officers of the companies of the 1st and 2d brigades (1877-1884) list rank, name, elected, commissioned, remarks.
- Rosters of the staffs of governor, major general, 1st and 2d Brigades, and the companies composing the brigades (1886-1887) lists rank, office, date of commission, post office, remarks.
- "Roster of the Officers of the 1st Regiment[,] Infantry and Artillery, Nevada State Militia..." (1881-1883) lists rank, name, dates elected and commissioned, remarks. Rosters for the period of the federally recognized Nevada National Guard (1927-1931) include those for the staffs of the governor and adjutant general and of the officers of the 40th Military Police Company and a battalion of the 115th Combat Engineers Regiment.
- Rosters of officers and enlisted men of the Nevada National Guard Reserve" (1929-1931).

Rosters, Muster Rolls, and Muster Books 1863-1931, bulk dates: 1863-1918

11 vols., 3 oversize boxes

Entries arranged by military unit, thereunder by rank, and thereunder alphabetically by name of soldier. Some of these records have indexes.

This series consists of lists of officers and enlisted men of the territorial and state militias, from the Civil War up to the period of federal recognition of the Nevada National Guard. Generally, these are lists for units of the "organized" militia, as opposed to the "enrolled" militia, and for the volunteer companies raised during the Civil and Spanish-American wars. Some of the rosters are of officers only. There are

also rosters of Nevada men and women who served in the armed forces during World War I, along with the manuscript volume of biographical sketches of Nevada servicemen who died during the war.

The following information is found in these records: name; rank; number; dates of enlistment or commissioning; dates mustered in and mustered out; arm of service (e.g., infantry, cavalry); place of nativity; residence; physical description. Many of the rosters and muster rolls have space for "remarks", in which information about discharges, courts martial, deaths, desertions, promotions is noted.

Muster Book, Nevada Volunteers, Civil War and Spanish-American War Inclusive dates: 1863-1898, Bulk dates: 1863-1866, 1898 1 vol.
Entries arranged by alphabetically by company and there under alphabetically by name of soldier.

Title at top of pages: "Report of Names, with Number and Description, of [name of company and battalion] Nevada Volunteers, mustered into the United States Service." For the Civil War period the volume gives data on soldiers of Companies A, B, C, D, E, and F, 1st Battalion of Nevada Cavalry, and Companies A, B, and C, 1st Battalion of Nevada Infantry. For the Spanish-American War period there is data on soldiers of Troop M, 2d U. S. Volunteer Cavalry Regiment; Troop A, 1st Battalion of Nevada Cavalry (no other cavalry companies were mustered in) ; Companies A, B, C, and D, 1st Nevada Infantry. The following information is included: number; name; date of enlistment; arm of service (cavalry or infantry) and letter designation of company; place of nativity; localities with number (left blank for Civil War entries, and used to record rank in Spanish-American War entries); "mustered in for each, and to be credited thereto" (town or township, by whom mustered, when and where); term of service; description of soldier (age and height, complexion, eyes, hair, occupation); remarks (deserted, mustered out, discharged, died).

Printed information about Nevada Civil War military participants can be found in the Biennial Report of the Adjutant-General of the State of Nevada for the Years 1883 and 1884 in *Appendix to Journals of the Senate and Assembly of the Twelfth Session of the Legislature of the Sate of Nevada, 1885*.

Civil War Muster Rolls Index 1863-1866 1 box
Arranged alphabetically by surname of soldier.

The Nevada Adjutant General received a grant in 1937-1938 from the Federal Works Progress Administration to survey and index the military records in that office dating from 1862-1928. The index to the Civil War Muster Rolls was created as part of that project. The information was compiled from the original Civil War Muster Rolls and typed on pre-printed cards. The information on each card includes muster roll number (by company); file number; name; nativity (state or country), date and place joined; age; date and place mustered in; place and date mustered out; rank; battalion; arm of service (infantry, cavalry); company; and remarks, e.g. mustered out, deserted, appointed bugler, relieved from duty, died, promoted, transferred. Some pieces of information may be missing from individual cards. Arranged alphabetically. Index also available online.

Daily Journals, Nevada National Guard, Office of the Adjutant General 1888-1900 (no vols. for 1896 and 1899) 11 vols.

Entries covering, among others, the following topics: receipt of bills; armory rent; transmittal of bills to the Board of Military Auditors; meetings and actions of the Board of Military Auditors; armory rents; requisitioning and receipt of ordnance and quartermaster stores from federal arsenals and depots; appointing, electing, and commissioning of officers; submission of muster rolls; issuing of general and special orders; receipt and acceptance of resignations of officers; preparation and submission of the adjutant general's biennial reports; issuing of certificates of service for former militiamen; inspections; "anticipated trouble with Indians"; annual encampments; funerals of governors; parades; courts martial; raising and equipping of troops for the Spanish-American War.

Inaugural Ceremonies 1971-1995 1 Vol. and 1 letter-size Hollinger box
Arranged chronologically.

This series consists of material relating to governors' inaugurals and the Nevada National Guard's participation in the ceremonies. The materials include programs for the inaugurals, invitations to the inaugural balls, newspaper clippings, drafts of speeches, diagrams for seating and processions, and memorandums.

Service Cards, World War I, Marines 1917-1919 1 box
Arranged alphabetically by surname of marine.

Information on cards for Marines includes: name; serial number; race; residence; where enlisted; date; place of birth; date of birth; organizations served in, with dates of assignments and transfers; grades, with dates of appointment; engagements; wounds or other injuries received in action; served overseas from/to dates; exit from service date, with indication of the character of the marine ("excellent," "very good," "bad"); remarks (e.g., awards, prior and later service).

Service Cards, World War I Nurses 1917-1919 10 cards
Arranged alphabetically by surname of nurse.

This card file index was compiled by the Adjutant General's Office from information supplied by the U.S. Army. Information on the cards includes name, race, residence, place and date of birth, date called into active duty as a nurse, training camp location, organizations and staff assignments, principal duty stations, military engagements, injuries received in action, dates of overseas service, date of discharge, disabilities, and remarks. Many cards were stamped "Reserve nurse relieved from active duty; not discharged."

Service Cards, World War I, Army 1917-1919 7 boxes
Arranged alphabetically by surname of soldier.

This card index was compiled by the Adjutant General's Office from information supplied by the U.S. Army. Information on cards includes name, serial number, race, residence, branch in which enlisted (National Guard., Enlisted Reserve Corps), place and date of enlistment or induction, birthplace, age or date of birth; organizations served in, dates of assignments and transfers, grades and date(s) of appointment(s), military engagements, wounds or other injuries received in action, dates of overseas service, date of discharge or demobilization, percentage of disability (if any), and remarks. Attached to several of the cards are applications for the Victory Medal and clasps. Applicants were asked to check off the "major operations participated in," such as Chambray, St. Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne, or the defensive sector served in.

Service Cards, World War I, Navy 1917-1920 1 box
Arranged alphabetically by name of sailor.

This card index was compiled by the Adjutant General's Office from information provided by the U.S. Navy. Information on each card includes name, service number, place and date of enlistment, age at entrance, rate (of pay at entrance), U.S. Navy or U.S. Naval Reserve Force, home address, places served (training station, base, ship), dates of service, rank(s), length of service at each rank, remarks, date and place of discharge, period of inactive duty, and rating at discharge. Included are cards for at least two women.

Report of Home Address at Time of Last Entry into Service (NME Form 53) and Notification of Home Address at Time of Latest Entry into Active Service (DD Form 53, and DD Form 53N) 1948-1961 4 boxes
Arranged alphabetically by name of serviceman/woman

Information on NME Form 53 includes name; state; county; city or town; street or RFD numbers; grad, rank, or rating; serial or service number; race; branch of service; signature. "If you registered under the Selective Service Act of 1948, the following information will be supplied:" local board number; state; county; registrant's selective service number.

Information on DD Form 53 and DD Form 53N: name; state; county; city or town and postal zone; number and street or RFD number; grade, rank, or rating; service number; branch of service; date of entry into active service; date of birth; signature of responsible officer, and his grade or rank and title. "When the person named in item 1 above is registered under the Universal Military Training and Service Act, the following information will be furnished:" number and address or local board of jurisdiction; registrant's selective service number. Dates received by local boards and Nevada State Headquarters of the Selective Service System are stamped on the reverse.

Records of Death of Serviceman; Enlistment or Reenlistment Agreement - Armed Forces of the United States 1950-1973 1 box

Arranged by alphabetically by county and thereunder alphabetically by name of serviceman.

Information on cards includes name, Selective Service System number, serial number, date of birth, branch of service, county, home address, date and place of death, cause of death (e.g., vehicle accident, killed in action, missing in action, military aircraft accident, homicide, heart attack), source and date of information (e.g., Report of Casualty), and remarks (usually the date the casualty report was sent to local board).

Enlistment or Reenlistment Agreement - Armed Forces of the United States (DD Form 4) July 1975 - January 1976.

Arranged alphabetically by name.

Information on form: name; Social Security number; date of enlistment/reenlistment; grade; home of record; place of enlistment/reenlistment; date of birth; Selective Service numbers; previous service (active/inactive, years, months, days); status (enlisted, reenlisted, active, reserve, Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Delayed Enlistment Program); active duty commencement date; name, grade, and organization of enlisting officer; signature of enlisting officer. Dentists: arranged alphabetically by name; no dates.

Cards giving names and addresses of Nevada dentists.

Some are stamped "Special Registration No. 1; otherwise, no other further information.

Adjutant General Files, Correspondence 1868-1976; Bulk dates: 1918-1976. 8 cu. ft.

Arranged mostly chronologically.

This series consists largely of incoming and outgoing correspondence of the Adjutant General's Office. Among the principle senders and recipients are the National Guard Bureau, National Guard Association, Adjutant Generals' Association, Sixth Army, and adjutant generals of other states. Significant subjects include unit audit reports and unit inspection reports, civil disturbances, annual field training, induction into federal service, responses to emergencies, assistance to civil agencies such as police and fire departments, construction of armories, and ceremonies.

Other records include general and special orders, circulars, mobilization plans, reports of the U. S. Property and Fiscal Officer, and Vietnam casualty lists. Of special interest are correspondence files of individuals with Adjutant General Jay White during World War II.