

Senate Resolution #97

... also known as the Retaliatory Orders

http://www.plpow.com/Atrocities_SenateResolution97.htm

SR #97 can be found in the Congressional Records...old law books at universities or court houses. It is dated January 18, 1865, 38th Congress, 2nd Session.

<http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsr&fileName=038/llsr038.db&recNum=105>

The practices of retaliation was suggested by Indiana Sen. Henry Smith Lane, who proposed on Jan. 16, 1865 what became the **Lane Resolution** to the 38th Congress. He had received a request from citizens in Ft. Wayne, IN to retaliate "until the rebels exchanged all our men in their hands or treat them with that degree of humanity that the rules of war require." Of course the Confederacy was trying to comply. However, Lane wanted vengeance on the South, saying on the floor of Congress, "I would make the war still bloodier, I would make very rocky ravine in Southern GA and AL run red with the blood of traitors, and I would drive into the Gulf Stream the last rebel there before I would recognize their Independence." ...*Congressional Globe*, 38th Congress, 2nd session, 1/16/1865, 267-26.

Lincoln was notified by his own general, Dan Sickles, that retaliation was useless. Sickles wrote on 8/10/1864, "Apart from the objections which exist to the policy of retaliation, it is at least doubtful whether it would inure to the benefit of our men, for the reason that the enemy are reported to be without the means to supply clothing, medicines and other medical supplies even to their own troops."...*Official Records*, Ser. II, Vol. VII, 575.

Lane proposed to single out officers for mistreatment, stating that the private soldiers had no choice but to serve the rebellion, while the officers were actual instigators in secession who should be severely punished for their treason. He was joined vehemently in his enthusiasm for retaliation by Senators Benjamin Wade of OH and Morton Wilkinson of MN. The resolution, among other things, suggested that Confederate prisoners be at the mercy of jailors who had formerly been held in the South as prisoners of war, so they would tend to treat their captives as they had been treated.

The **preamble** to the resolution stated:

Rebel prisoners in our hands are to be subjected to a treatment finding its parallels only in the conduct of savage tribes and resulting in the death of multitudes by the slow but designed process of starvation and by mortal diseases occasioned by insufficient and unhealthy food and wanton exposure of their persons to the inclemency of the weather....Congressional Globe, 38th Congress, 2nd session, 1/24/1865, pg. 381

The more moderate senators preferred to reinstate the policy of exchange, not implement government sanctioned murder. Senator Hendricks suggested an investigation of the secretary of war, on the grounds that it had been proven Stanton was directly involved in the curtailment of exchange. Amendments were presented and voted on and the debate raged through January 1865, when it passed the Senate. Within months it was outdated by the reinstatement of the 1862 cartel. Despite the fact that it was never widely adopted, retaliation became Union policy, left up to the discretion of field commanders. It was implemented with a vengeance by Major. Gen. John Foster, the commander in the Dept. of the South, with support by Sec. of War Stanton, Generals Henry W. Halleck and Ulysses S. Grant.

The above was taken from *Immortal Captives: The Story of 600 Confederate Officers & The US POW Policy* by Mauriel P. Joslyn, pg.37, 39.

As stated, while Congress was still only debating it, retaliation was enforced by the North, at the discretion of commandants and field commanders. When a report was received that the only rations available at Andersonville and Salisbury were cornmeal and molasses, the Confederate soldiers in Northern prisons were denied available food and put on cornmeal and pickles. When it was heard that supplies of blankets and winter clothing could not be delivered to the prisons in the South because of military operations by the North, or destroyed rail lines, these same articles were taken away from Southerners - whose own families had sent them in many cases - purely as an act of retribution. The winter in the North without blankets was impossible to survive and many innocent men froze to death. Great Britain was aware of the treatment and a ship loaded with supplies for 8,000 Southern soldiers in Northern prisons was not allowed to be landed. Even though no good was gained by it, the deadly policy of retaliation continued to be enforced.

The **Retaliation Resolution** passed in Congress on 1/31/1865 by a vote of 24 to 16. The chivalry and civilized treatment of prisoners of war which originated in Christian Western Civilization during the 1400s became non-existent in the winter of 1864-1865. It was almost immediately made obsolete and dropped when prisoner of war exchange was resumed in late February. Only the collapse of the Confederacy and end of the war curtailed the Lane Resolution. Legal murder was accepted by the victors, while the defeated South was tried and convicted of mistreatment and scapegoat Captain Henry Wirz paid with his life for the crime of being on the losing side.

Edward Wellington Boate was a soldier in the 42nd NY Inf. and a prisoner at **Andersonville** in 1864. He wrote of his experiences in the *NY Times* shortly after the war and commented on whom he held responsible for Andersonville's legacy.

"You rulers who make the charge that the rebels intentionally killed off our men, when I can honestly swear they were doing everything in their power to sustain us, do not lay this flattering unction to your souls. You abandoned your brave men in the hour of their cruelest need. They fought for the Union and you reached no hand out to save the old

faithful, loyal and devoted servants of the country. You may try to shift the blame from your own shoulders, but posterity will saddle the responsibility where it justly belongs."

The atrocities committed by the North against prisoners of war fill the pages of the Official Records of the War of Rebellion, but are carefully left out of the most "unbiased" accounts.

...*Andersonville: The Southern Perspective* edited by J.H. Segars, pg. 144-145

For more reading on what really happened at Andersonville, you can read a book by a POW who was there, "The True Story of Andersonville Prison" by Lt. James Madison Page, 6th MI Cav. Co. A.

Retaliation by the Union ~ You Be The Judge

Retaliation was in full swing, long before the Lane Resolution. Senator Lane was just trying to get a legal license to murder POWs with the US government's stamp of approval. Below are some examples of this before, during and after the Preamble to SR #97.

Rock Island POW Camp: The following was written by a Union Guard, John A. Bateson, 115th E.V.R.C. 2nd Batt'n. He was vouched for by a district judge and prominent lawyer of Pioche, NV, as a gentleman of "perfect truthfulness and reliability" and he refers to a number of leading Republicans in the NW, with whom he has always been politically associated, "for an endorsement of his character as a staunch Republican and honorable man."

PIOCHE, February 19, 1876.

During a period of ten months I was a member of the garrison of the Rock Island Military Prison. There were confined there about ten thousand men. **Those men were retained in a famishing condition by order of Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War. That order was approved by Abraham Lincoln.** It was read before the inside garrison of the prison sometime in January, 1864. It was read at assembly for duty on the 2d, in front of the prison. It went into effect on the following day. It continued in force until the expiration of my term of service, and, I have understood, until the close of the war.

When it was read, Colonel Shaffner, of the Eighth Veteran Reserves, was acting Provost Marshal of Prisoners. I think that it was Captain Robinson who read the order. It reduced the daily allowance of the captives to about ten ounces of bread and four ounces of meat per man.

Some time in January a batch of prisoners arrived. They were captured at Knoxville. Sixty of them were consigned to barracks under my charge. They were received by me at

about 3 in the afternoon. One of the prisoners inquired of me when they would draw rations. I told him not until the following day. He said that in that case some of his comrades must die, as they had eaten nothing since their capture several days before - the exact period I cannot state. That evening at roll call one of the prisoners exhibited symptoms of delirium. He moved from the ranks, and seemed to grasp for something, which I understood to be a table loaded with delicacies. I returned him to the ranks, where he remained until roll call was over, when I left. On the following morning he and two others were dead.

The mortality report among the new Rebs was extraordinarily large. I think it amounted to about ten per cent of the entire number. It created an interest among the company commandant, and was the subject of many expressions. From the rebel orderlies I learned that the symptoms in each case were the same. There was no complaint; no manifestation of illness. Some dropped while standing on the floor; others fell from a sitting posture. All swooned and died without a struggle.

Some of the prisoners had money sent them. It was deposited with the Provost Marshal, and their orders on the sutler were at first honored, but supplies from this direction were soon prohibited; the sutler's wagon was excluded from the prison.. Supplies from relatives of prisoners, consisting of clothes, food and stationery came for some. The parcels containing them were distributed from "Barrack Thirty." The boxes were examined, everything in the shape of subsistence was removed, and the box and its contents delivered to the prisoner; the food it contained was destroyed before the face of the tantalized captive.

Small tufts of a weed, called parsley, grew under the sides of the prison. It was over the dead-line, where prisoners dare not go. At their earnest entreaty I have sometimes plucked and handed it to some of them. They told me it was a feast. Squads of prisoners under guard were sent to work in different parts of the Island. They sometimes purchased raw potatoes and onions for their comrades suffering with scurvy. They were searched at the prison gate, and those articles taken from them.

I am ready to swear that in my opinion the Knoxville prisoners were starved to death.

As to the torture endured by the scurvy patients, the shooting of prisoners by the guards on the parapets, the smashing of their skulls with revolvers by officers of the prison, such misfortunes are incident to prison life, and neither the Government nor the Republican party can be held responsible for them.

The weather on January 1st was the most intensely cold I ever experienced; and from all parts of the prison came intelligence of prisoners frozen to death. One died in one of my companies. He was reported to me, and I placed my hand on the corpse; it was frozen. This is the first time I have mentioned it. I cannot say that he froze to death.

... *Southern Historical Society Papers*, Vol. I, March 1876, #4, pgs. 293-294

"At the end of the war Hoffman proudly returned over \$1.8 million to the government, representing what he had saved from his budget and accumulated in the prison funds by reducing prisoner rations. In other prisons this accumulation of money often led to graft and corruption among prison officials. As Union authorities received reports of hunger and suffering among their men in Confederate hands*, they instituted a policy of retaliation. From mid 1864-1865, Hoffman, backed by Meigs and Edwin M. Stanton, intended to treat Confederate prisoners of war as they believed the Confederate government was treating Union captives. Hoffman ordered a further reduction of rations, restricted sutlers' access to the prisoners and eliminated the prisoners' receipt of food packages from home. The result was an increase in disease from malnutrition, as well as starvation." ...*Portals of Hell* by Lonnie Speer, pg. 14-15.

This can also be found in the Official Records Viii, pg. 768

* The South had run out of food. The Union army had burned the homes, torched the crops, shot the livestock and no medicine could be obtained due to the blockades. However, the North was rich in food and medical supplies, yet both were withheld from a starving Southern Army of Prisoners.

"While in prison, I went through some of the hardest experiences I had during the entire war. We were half fed, had bad water, treated cruelly by negro guards and exposed to bad weather. We had only a little fly tent and had to lay on the hard ground. On the 12th of May I was lined up with others, marched to headquarters, where I had to draw for my life. They wanted 20 men to face the firing squad in retaliation for some yankee prisoners they claimed our men killed in NC. I drew blank, for which I have always felt thankful, but was scared almost to death." ...John Oliver Andrews, Co. I, 14th GA Inf.

Gratiot Street Prison, St. Louis: ... the prison was often the scene of **Union retaliation executions**. One of the most controversial occurred on 10/29/1864, when six Confederate prisoners were randomly chosen and led out to be shot by a firing squad. *Portals of Hell* by Lonnie Speers, pg. 179

Camp Douglas: About the time Col. Sweet took command, a reduction in rations took place **by orders from Washington**. "The prisoners' ration," declared one captive, "was to each man one half loaf of baker's bread daily, together with about four ounces of meat and a gill of beans or potatoes...When **retaliatory** measures were adopted, the stoves were taken away." Another captive added, "Our sutler was restricted to the sale of tobacco, stamps and paper. All vegetables were cut off, and tea, coffee and sugar became things of the past. One third of our bread was cut off and two thirds of our meat.

With the elimination of vegetables, scurvy soon occurred in epidemic numbers. "Lips were eaten away, jaws became diseased and teeth fell out," recalled Bean. "If leprosy is any worse than scurvy, may God have mercy upon the victim." *Portals of Hell* by Lonnie Speers, pg. 182

Johnson's Island: The conditions of the sinks bred rats by the score and provided the inmates with a hunting ground for extra food. Prisoner Joseph Ripley of TN became well known among the inmates as one of the best at catching rats. He would often treat his fellow captives to mighty feasts. The prisoners at Johnson's Island and at about seven other Union prisons as well, resorted to eating rats for a variety of reasons. Foremost, of course, was the actual reduction of rations that took place in all the Union prisons, combined with the abundance of rats in the enclosures. But, an additional cause here, and in several other prisons, was the post's method of distributing rations. In the beginning, regular rations were issued every day except Sunday. Other items, such as sugar, coffee, beans and rice or hominy, were given out in quantities to be consumed over a six to ten day period. Beef was issued three or four days a week and pickled pork the other two or three days. Bread was baked on the island in large ovens and was distributed each day, one loaf to every four men. Then came the **reduction**, followed by another. "We are now beginning to feel to some extent the vengeance of the Government of the United States," complained one prisoner. "They have stopped our rations of sugar, coffee and candles..." *Portals of Hell* by Lonnie Speers, pg. 185

Pt. Lookout: Nearly all contemporary accounts agree that the amount of rations issued there was never enough, especially after the last **officially mandated reduction**...It was later determined that there had been discrepancies in some of his (Major Brady) acquisitions. For instance.... \$500.00 worth of mackerel was purchased and charged to the prison fund as vegetables during a time when the prisoners were suffering from scurvy and needed vegetables badly. It was later found that the mackerel was sold to the prisoners by the sutler, which, of course, was illegal. Some prisoners were under the impression that the sutler was Major Brady's brother-in-law and that they made thousands of dollars manipulating records and siphoning off cash from purchases of rations, clothing and medicines intended for the prisoners....*Portals of Hell* by Lonnie Speers, pg. 190.

Charleston, SC: Within days Union officials came to believe that Federal prisoners were being held in the various sections of Charleston to prevent further bombardment. They soon **retaliated** by taking 600 Confederate officer prisoners from Ft. DE and putting them into an open stockade on Morris Island within range of Confederate shore batteries....*Portals of Hell* by Lonnie Spears, pg. 214

Dr. John A. Wyeth in his book, "With Saber and Scalpel" gives an account of the suffering of Confederate prisoners under the **retaliatory orders**. The Confederate government, having no medicines for the sick, offered as a free gift 15,000 of the emaciated federal soldiers in Andersonville Prison as an act of charity, to save life, not to destroy it. Federal ships in November, 1864, came to Ft. Pulaski and took away the 15,000 federal prisoners, bringing, however, not a single old Reb to his home. The rations, already limited, were cut to starving proportions.

O those hard **retaliatory** measures ordered by popular demand, under misapprehension, how many fell victims to those measures! What a fatal gift was our 15,000 emaciated! We did it to save life. Fifteen thousand Confederates fell victims to this fatal gift. We did it to

save life; the retaliatory orders were issued to destroy life.*Confederate Veteran*, Dec. 1916.

"I would like", said Senator Lane, "to live long enough to see every white man in South Carolina in hell, and the negroes inheriting their territory. (Loud applause) It would not any day wound my feelings to find the dead bodies of every rebel sympathizer pierced with bullet holes, in every street and alley in Washington City. (Applause) Yes; I would regret the waste of powder and lead. I would rather have these Copperheads hung and the ropes saved for future use. (Loud Applause) I would like to see them dangle until their stinking bodies would rot and fall to the ground piece by piece."...(Applause with laughter)....1863, in a Washington speech by Jim Lane, Republican Senator from Kansas.

Pvt. Howard Malcolm Blewett was a prisoner at **Pt. Lookout Prison Camp** for Confederates from 1863 to 1865. After taking the Oath of Allegiance on April 14 th 1865, he was transported to Chimbrazo Hospital in Richmond, Virginia. There, it took him SIX months to recover from severe malnutrition.

Pvt. Robert George Smith, **Pt. Lookout Prisoner** stated: Run down and half starved as the prisoners were, scurvy set in and a squad of men was kept busy digging graves just outside the enclosure every day. Acres were covered with the graves of former prisoners.

A sick soldier who was suffering from extreme thirst crept out to a well near his tent. "Halt!" came a gruff command from a burly negro guard. The man pled pitifully, explaining that he was almost dying for water. "Damn you!" came the answer, "I told you to get back!" Instantly the report of a pistol shocked the listeners. The bullet missed its target but killed a sleeping man in a tent close by.

As early as Decoration Day 1868, the U.S. government, as caretaker of the nation's premier military cemetery, began turning away families and UDC members who tried to bring flowers to the graves of 377 Confederates who had died in Washington hospitals and were buried here. Major General John A. Logan, whose corps had burned Columbia, South Carolina, in 1865 and who was now commander of the leading Union Veterans Organization, the Grand Army of the Republic, specifically ordered that the ladies be turned away and the Confederate graves left bare. Angered Southern families began to remove their relatives from Arlington.

...*Civil War Times*, Arlington's Forgotten Monument by Clint Johnson

Three Hundred Days In A Yankee Prison by John H. King ...1904: In recounting the horrific details of his imprisonment at Camp Chase, OH in 1863, the author discloses the yankee policy of deliberate "**starve the Rebels into the submission of death.**" King also strips away the layers of propaganda surrounding the "horrors of Andersonville," and lays the blame for the many northern soldiers who died there at the feet of the northern army itself, whose "scorched earth" policy devastated the crops and other resources of the South.

Prison Life During the War of 1861 by Fritz Fuzzlebug ...1869: Learn of the suffering endured by the

Immortal Six Hundred captured Confederate officers as they were starved, beaten and used as human shields.

One Confederate prisoner told of an evening meal which was composed of a piece of sow belly and a pint of corn meal mush which had been made from spoiled cornmeal. The prisoner counted 365 worms and 14 bugs in the mush. He could have counted more but didn't want to lose more of his meal.

...*True Tales of the South at War* by Clarence Poe, pg. 144.

At **Pt. Lookout**...the soup was made of vegetables and if potatoes and onions were used, they were never peeled or sorted and sometimes they were spoiled...Many references are made to the fact that the bones were round, which meant that the meat was not beef but from mules...the coffee was made from anything they could find, such as used coffee grounds stolen from the garbage pile at the cookhouse, to parched hardtack crackers. No attention was given to separating the different diseases. Smallpox, scurvy and the itch was rampant. Chronic diarrhea was the most prevalent disease...Tents were without boards for a floor or even straw to protect them from the open ground, which was either hot in summer or cold in winter. the winter high tides inundated the ground, which froze and caused many to die outright...the majority of prisoners were ragged, dirty, thinly clad, in a miserable condition, destitute of everything and beyond belief..many of the tents were placed over old latrines which were lightly covered with a layer of soil...Sec. of War Stanton, in 1864, ordered rations cut, clothing and gifts received from relatives to not be distributed and to not build barracks or supply clothing....*Fresh Fish: A Civil War Prisoner's Story* by Lynn Miller, pg. 78-79, 81, 83

The negro guard would, almost without warning, fire among the prisoners, and this at last culminated in the murder of a poor, feeble old man named Potts, a prisoner, one of the most harmless creatures in the pen. He was hailed by one of the guard while approaching his ward, ordered to stop, and shot dead while standing still....*Southern Historical Society Papers*. Vol. XVIII. Richmond, Va., January-December. 1890. Prison-Pens North.

The affidavit of **Thomas E. Gilkerson** states: Negro soldiers were promoted to corporals for shooting white prisoners at Point Lookout, where he was a prisoner.

That he was transferred to **Elmira, New York**, where prisoners were starved into skeletons; were reduced to the necessity of robbing the night stool of the meats which, being spoiled, could not be eaten by the sick, was thrown into the bucket of excrements, taken out and washed to satisfy their distressing hunger.

That for inquiring of Lieutenant Whitney, of Rochester, New York, for some clothes which the deponent believed were sent to him in a box, the deponent was confined three days in a dungeon and fed on bread and water.

That two men in Ward 22 were starved until they ate a dog, for which offence they were severely punished.

That negroes were placed on guard. That while on guard, a negro called a prisoner over the dead line, which the prisoner did not recognize as such, and the negro shot him dead, and went unpunished.

That shooting prisoners without cause or provocation, was of frequent occurrence by the negro guards.

....Mr. Waring was removed from Carroll prison to **Point Lookout**, where the prisoners were detailed to load and unload vessels; were robbed by negroes of the trinkets made in prison; some were shot by negroes, carpet sacks were robbed of clothing, and hospital stewards and sanitary commissions ate the provisions sent to prisoners and soldiers, or extorted exorbitant prices from the person to whom they had been sent.

The negroes offered every manner of indignity to the prisoners. Among other crimes they shot a dying man on his attempt to relieve nature. The conduct of the negroes at **Point Lookout** was incited by their white officers until it was frightful.

....Garland A. Snead, of Augusta, Georgia, said he was taken prisoner at Fisher's Hill, Virginia, September, 1864; sent to **Point Lookout**, which was in the care of one Brady, who had been an officer of negro cavalry.

He was starved for five days, had chronic diarrhea; was forced to use bad water, the good water being refused them. Men died frequently of sheer neglect. He was sent off to make room for other prisoners, because he was believed to be in a dying condition as it was manifestly the purpose to poison all that could be destroyed by deleterious food and water, or by neglect of their wants. He said that negroes fired into their beds at night; and one was promoted for killing a prisoner, from the ranks to sergeant.

.....*Southern Historical Society Papers*, Vol.I Richmond, Virginia, April, 1876. No. 4.
The Treatment Of Prisoners During The War Between The States

Elmira POW Camp: The following statement was written by JOHN J. VAN-ALLEN, who was with the Baltimore Relief Organization

...Late in the fall of 1864...I had the honor to be appointed by that organization to ascertain the needs of the prisoners, to distribute clothing, money, etc., as they might require. I had formerly lived at Elmira, where I studied my profession, but then (as now) I resided at this place, twenty miles distant from Elmira, where I have resided for nearly twenty-five years, and was well known at Elmira.

As soon as appointed I journeyed to that delightful paradise for Confederate prisoners (according to Walker, Tracy and Platt), and stated the object of my visit to the commanding officer, and asked to be permitted to go through the prison in order to

ascertain the wants of the prisoners, with the request that I might distribute necessary blankets, clothing, money, medicines, etc.

He treated me with consideration and kindness, and informed me that they were very destitute of clothing and blankets; that not one-half of them had even a single blanket; and that many were nearly naked, the most of them having been captured during the hot summer months with no other than thin cotton clothes, which in most instances were in tatters. Yet he stated that he could not allow me to enter the prison gate or administer relief, as an **order of the War Department** rendered him powerless.

...The nearest I could get to the poor skeletons confined in that prison, was a tower built by some speculator in an adjoining field across the way from the prison pen, for which privilege a money consideration was exacted and paid. On taking a position upon this tower what a sight of misery and squalor was presented! My heart was made sick, and I blushed for my country - more because of the inhumanity there depicted. Nearly all of the many thousands there were in dirty rags. The rain was pouring, and thousands were without shelter, standing in the mud in their bare feet, with clothes in tatters, of the most unsubstantial material, without blankets. I tell the truth, and Mr. Charles C. B. Watkins dare not deny it, when I say these men suffered bitterly for the want of clothing, blankets and other necessaries. I was denied the privilege of covering their nakedness.

...*Southern Historical Society Papers*, Vol. I, March 1876, #4, pages 294-295

Bushwackers: Gen. S.R. Curtis, Leavenworth, KS, on Oct. 15, 1864, replied to a letter from US Attorney SE Browne, Denver, CO Territory, "Your letter concerning the disposition of certain brigades calling themselves Confederate soldiers is received. I have not the least sympathy for such fiends; we are disposing of them very summarily everywhere...War is butchery on a grand scale...Our troops everywhere now consider it right to kill bushwhackers, **even after they surrender.**" ...*Official Records*, Vol. XLI pt. III: 523, pg. 596

The Uncivil War: Union Army & Navy Excesses in the Official Records: by Thomas Bland Keys is an excellent reference tool, relating to Union acts of atrocities.

Lexington, KY: The rapid increase in this district of lawless bands of armed men engaged in interrupting railroad and telegraphic communications, plundering and murdering peaceful union citizens, destroying the mails, etc., calls for the adoption of stringent measures on the part of the military authorities for their suppression. Therefore, all guerrillas, armed prowlers, by whatever name they may be known, and rebel sympathizers are hereby admonished that in future, stern retaliatory measures will be adopted and strictly enforced, whenever the lives or property of peaceful citizens are jeopardized by the lawless acts of such men. Rebel sympathizers living within five miles of any scene of outrage committed by armed men, not recognized as public enemies by the rules and usages of war, will be arrested and sent beyond the limits of the U.S. in

accordance with instructions from the major general commanding the military district of the MS. So much of the property of rebel sympathizers as may be necessary to indemnify the government or loyal citizens for losses incurred by the acts of such lawless men will be seized and appropriated for this purpose. Whenever an unarmed union citizen is murdered four guerrillas will be selected from the prisoners in the hands of the military authorities and publicly shot to death in the most convenient place near the scene of the outrage.

...Gen. Orders No. 59 – HQ District of KY and 5th Div. 23rd Army Corps. Lexington, KY – July 16, 1864 – By Command of Bvt. Maj. Gen. S. G. Burbridge.

The following excerpts are from the "Report of the joint Select Committee appointed to investigate the Condition and Treatment of POWs" presented by Mr. Perkins before the House of Representatives. March 3, 1865. This also clarifies "Report No. 67" of the pictures that the Union was publicizing about their POW mistreatment.

The duties assigned to the committee under the several resolutions of Congress designating them, "to investigate and report upon the condition and treatment of the prisoners of war respectively held by the Confederate and United States governments; upon the causes of their detention, and the refusal to exchange; and also upon the violations by the enemy of the rules of civilized warfare in the conduct of the war." These subjects are broad in extent and importance; and in order fully to investigate and present them, the committee propose to continue their labors in obtaining evidence, and deducing from it a truthful report of facts illustrative of the spirit in which the war has been conducted.

Northern Publications:

One of these is the report of the joint select committee of the Northern Congress on the conduct of the war, known as "Report No. 67." The other purports to be a "Narrative of the privations and sufferings of United States officers and soldiers while prisoners of war," and is issued as a report of a commission of enquiry appointed by "The United States Sanitary Commission."

Photographs:

"Report No. 67," and its appendages. It is accompanied by eight pictures, or photographs, alleged to represent United States prisoners of war, returned from Richmond, in a sad state of emaciation and suffering. Concerning these cases, your committee will have other remarks, to be presently submitted. They are only alluded to now to show that this report does really belong to the "sensational" class of literature.

Truth to be Sought: First in order, your committee will notice the charge contained both in "Report No. 67," and in the "sanitary" publication, founded on the appearance and

condition of the sick prisoners sent from Richmond to Annapolis and Baltimore about the last of April 1864. These are the men, some of whom form the subjects of the photographs with which the United States congressional committee have adorned their report. The disingenuous attempt is made in both these publications to produce the impression that these sick and emaciated men were fair representatives of the general state of the prisoners held by the South, and that all their prisoners were being rapidly reduced to the same state, by starvation and cruelty, and by neglect, ill treatment and denial of proper food, stimulants and medicines, in the Confederate hospitals. Your committee take pleasure in saying that not only is this charge proved to be wholly false, but the evidence ascertains facts as to the Confederate hospitals, in which Northern prisoners of war are treated, highly creditable to the authorities which established them, and to the surgeons and their aids who have so humanely conducted them. The facts are simply these:

The Federal authorities, in violation of the cartel, having for a long time refused exchange of prisoners, finally consented to a partial exchange of the sick and wounded on both sides. Accordingly, a number of such prisoners were sent from the hospitals in Richmond. General directions had been given that none should be sent except those who might be expected to endure the removal and passage with safety to their lives; but in some cases the surgeons were induced to depart from this rule, by the entreaties of some officers and men in the last stages of emaciation, suffering not only with excessive debility, but with "nostalgia," or home sickness, whose cases were regarded as desperate, and who could not live if they remained, and might possibly improve if carried home. Thus it happened that some very sick and emaciated men were carried to Annapolis, but their illness was not the result of ill treatment or neglect. Such cases might be found in any large hospital, North or South. They might even be found in private families, where the sufferer would be surrounded by every comfort that love could bestow. Yet these are the cases which, with hideous violation of decency, the Northern committee have paraded in pictures and photographs. They have taken their own sick and enfeebled soldiers; have stripped them naked; have exposed them before a daguerreian apparatus; have pictured every shrunken limb and muscle--and all for the purpose, not of relieving their sufferings, but of bringing a false and slanderous charge against the South.

Confederate Sick and Wounded - their Condition when returned: In refuting this charge, your committee are compelled by the evidence to bring a counter charge against the Northern authorities, which they fear will not be so easily refuted. In exchange, a number of Confederate sick and wounded prisoners have been at various times delivered at Richmond and at Savannah. The mortality among these on the passage and their condition when delivered were so deplorable as to justify the charge that they had been treated with inhuman neglect by the Northern authorities.

Assistant Surg. Tinsley testifies: "I have seen many of our prisoners returned from the North, who were nothing but skin and bones. They were as emaciated as a man could be to retain life, and the photographs (appended to 'Report No. 67,') would not be exaggerated representations of our returned prisoners to whom I thus allude. I saw 250 of our sick brought in on litters from the steamer at Rocketts. Thirteen dead bodies were

brought off the steamer the same night. At least thirty died in one night after they were received."

Surg. Spence testifies: "I was at Savannah, and saw rather over three thousand prisoners received. The list showed that a large number had died on the passage from Baltimore to Savannah. The number sent from the Federal prisons was 3,500, and out of that number they delivered only 3,028, to the best of my recollection. Capt. Hatch can give you the exact number. Thus, about 472 died on the passage. I was told that 67 dead bodies had been taken from one train of cars between Elmira and Baltimore. After being received at Savannah, they had the best attention possible, yet many died in a few days."--"In carrying out the exchange of disabled, sick and wounded men, we delivered at Savannah and Charleston about 11,000 Federal prisoners, and their physical condition compared most favorably with those we received in exchange, although of course the worst cases among the Confederates had been removed by death during the passage."

Richard H. Dibrell, a merchant of Richmond, and a member of the "ambulance committee," whose labors in mitigating the sufferings of the wounded have been acknowledged both by Confederate and Northern men, thus testifies concerning our sick and wounded soldiers at Savannah, returned from Northern Prisons and hospitals: "I have never seen a set of men in worse condition. They were so enfeebled and emaciated that we lifted them like little children. Many of them were like living skeletons. Indeed, there was one poor boy about 17 years old, who presented the most distressing and deplorable appearance I ever saw. He was nothing but skin and bone, and besides this, he was literally eaten up with vermin. He died in the hospital in a few days after being removed thither, notwithstanding the kindest treatment and the use of the most judicious nourishment. Our men were in so reduced a condition, that on more than one trip up on the short passage of ten miles from the transports to the city, as many as five died. The clothing of the privates was in a wretched state of tatters and filth."--"The mortality on the passage from Maryland was very great as well as that on the passage from the prisons to the port from which they started. I cannot state the exact number, but I think I heard that 3,500 were started, and we only received about 3,027."--"I have looked at the photographs appended to 'Report No. 67' of the committee of the Federal Congress, and do not hesitate to declare that several of our men were worse cases of emaciation and sickness than any represented in these photographs."

Cruelty to Confederate prisoners at the North:

The witnesses who were at Point Lookout, Fort Delaware, Camp Morton and Camp Douglas, testify that they have often seen our men picking up the scraps and refuse thrown out from the kitchens, with which to appease their hunger.

Capt. Wm. H. Sebring testifies: "Two of us, A. C. Grimes and myself, were carried out into the open air in the prison yard, on the 25th of December 1863, and handcuffed to a post. Here we were kept all night in sleet, snow and cold. We were relieved in the day time, but again brought to the post and handcuffed to it in the evening"and thus we were kept all night until the 2d of January 1864. I was badly frost-bitten, and my health was

much impaired. This cruel infliction was done by order of Capt. Byrnes, Commandant of Prisons in St. Louis. He was barbarous and insulting to the last degree."

Our Prisoners put into Camps Infected With Small Pox:

But even a greater inhumanity than any we have mentioned, was perpetrated upon our prisoners at Camp Douglas and Camp Chase. It is proved by the testimony of Thomas P. Holloway, John P. Fennell, H. H. Barlow, H. C. Barton, C. D. Bracken and J. S. Barlow, that our prisoners in large numbers were put into "condemned camps," where small-pox was prevailing, and speedily contracted this loathsome disease, and that as many as 40 new cases often appeared daily among them.

The insufficient rations at Camp Morton forced our men to appease their hunger by pounding up and boiling bones, picking up scraps of meat and cabbage from the hospital slop tubs, and even eating rats and dogs. The depositions of William Ayres and J. Chambers Brent prove these privations.

Barbarous Punishments:

The punishments often inflicted on our men for slight offences, have been shameful and barbarous. They have been compelled to ride a plank only four inches wide, called "Morgan's horse;" to sit down with their naked bodies in the snow for ten or fifteen minutes, and have been subjected to the ignominy of stripes from the belts of their guards. **The pretext has been used, that many of their acts of cruelty have been by way of retaliation.**

Why Have not Prisoners of War Been Exchanged:

They have blockaded our ports; have excluded from us food, clothing and medicines; have even declared medicines contraband of war, and have repeatedly destroyed the contents of drug stores and the supplies of private physicians in the country; have ravaged our country; burned our houses and destroyed growing crops and farming implements. One of their officers (General Sheridan) has boasted in his official report, that in the Shenandoah valley alone he burned two thousand barns filled with wheat and corn; that he burned all the mills in the whole tract of country; destroyed all the factories of cloth, and killed or drove off every animal, even to the poultry, that could contribute to human sustenance. These desolations have been repeated again and again in different parts of the South. Thousands of our families have been driven from their homes, as helpless and destitute refugees. Our enemies have destroyed the rail roads and other means of transportation, by which food could be supplied from abundant districts to those without it. While thus desolating our country, in violation of the usages of civilized warfare, they have refused to exchange prisoners; have forced us to keep fifty thousand of their men in captivity-- and yet have attempted to attribute to us the sufferings and privations caused by their own acts. We cannot doubt that in the view of civilization we shall stand acquitted, while they must be condemned.

Yet even these mercenaries, when taken captive by us, have been treated with proper humanity.

A Bill In the Senate of the U.S.

For the relief of certain Confederate officers for improper and illegal injuries inflicted.

Whereas upon the 18th day of June, 1864, upon the demand of Major Gen. J.G. Foster, commanding the Union forces of the Dept. of the South, 50 Confederate officers were sent to him by the order of Major Gen. Halleck, US Army, for the purpose of retaliation, the said Major Gen. Foster, assuming from certain correspondence between him and Major Gen. Sam Jones, of the Confederate Army, that certain Union officers held as prisoners of war in the city of Charleston, SC, were so located in said city that they were in danger of being injured from the explosion of shells fired from Batteries Waggoner, Gregg, and other land batteries, and from the U.S. fleet shelling the aforesaid city; and

Whereas, after mutual explanation between the aforesaid U. S. and Confederate generals, the said misunderstanding resulted in the exchange of the 50 Confederate officers sent to Major Gen. Foster, as aforesaid, for an equal number of U.S. officers; and

Whereas, notwithstanding after said explanation and mutual exchange, together with evidence that the facts charged were false, the said Gen. Foster again called for 600 other Confederate officers of different ranks, who were being held as prisoners of war at Ft. DE, to be sent to Morris Island as subjects for special retaliation, notwithstanding no charges were made against them other than prisoners of war captured in battle. By order of Major Gen. Halleck, U. S. Army, on the 20th day of August, 1864, the said 600 Confederate officers were placed aboard the steamer Crescent at Ft. DE, to be transported to Morris Island, SC. The capacity of the steamer was inadequate for such a number; and all being required to remain below deck, the suffering from heat and filth and thirst for water was unbearable, and the voyage which should have been made in three days was lengthened out to eighteen days, so that upon arrival at Morris Island they were in a famished condition. Here they were confined from the 9th day of September, 1864, to the 20th day of November in a stockade built between Batteries Gregg and Waggoner of the Union forces on Morris Island, with no protection from the burning rays of the sun save small fly tents and within immediate range of the fire of the guns from the Confederate batteries replying to the bombarding of the city of Charlestown, whilst also endangered by the premature bursting of shells fired from the Union batteries immediately over their heads. The daily rations issued during this term of 42 days consisted of four hard tack Army crackers, frequently wormy; one ounce of fat pickled pork and half a pint of bean soup, alternated at times with half a pint of mush made from meal that was old and wormy; and the only drinking water was impure, being obtained from wells dug in the sand upon which the stockade was located; and

Whereas, also on the 20th day of November, 1864, the said 600 Confederate officers

were removed from the stockade and transported to Ft. Pulaski, GA, where they were assigned to quarter in the cold, damp casemates, without fire or blankets to protect them from the cold blasts of winter. After some weeks intervened, 200 of the number were sent to Hilton Head, SC, to relieve the crowded condition of the fort, which was telling upon their constitutions. Again the specious plea of retaliation was resorted to without any alleged grounds as before, and an order was given that each daily ration should be 10 ounces of rotten corn meal only, which, when baked in a cake, constituted the entire food for a day, and to this was added an ample supply of cucumber and onion pickle, which, if eaten, only increased the pangs of hunger. This was the sole and entire rations upon which those 600 officers were compelled to subsist for 65 consecutive days; and

Whereas this treatment of said Confederate officers, against whom no charges were made other than recognized prisoners of war, was unjustifiable and contrary to all the acknowledged rights of belligerency and without a precedent as an established principle in civilized warfare: therefore

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the U.S. in Congress assembled, That the Treasurer of the U.S. is hereby ordered and directed to pay to each survivor of the 600 aforesaid officers and to the legal heirs of the deceased officers the sum of \$5,000.00 each, as damages and reparation for the acts aforesaid.

S. 4652

62nd Congress, 2nd Session, 1/18/1912

By Mr. Swanson. Read twice & referred to the Committee on Claims.

Washington 8/10/1864 - To the Pres. of the U.S. from De.E. Sickles, Mjr. Gen. USV

"Pending the suspension of regular exchanges no effort should be spared to mitigate the sufferings of these gallant men, thrown by the fortunes of war into the hands of a cruel enemy. We must either remain inactive witnesses of their sufferings or retaliate upon the prisoners in our hands, or renew our efforts to afford succor to our men.

Apart from the objections which exist to the policy of retaliation, it is at least doubtful whether it would inure to the benefit of our men, for the reason that the enemy are reported to be without the means to supply clothing, medicines and other needful supplies even to their own troops."