

TO ARMS! THE GPO MILITIA COMPANIES

GPO History Talk

January 15, 2014



GPO IN THE CIVIL WAR

Early in the Civil War, two companies of militia were formed of GPO employees, given time for drill and training, and set to guard the Office at night. They were Company F (printers) and Company G (bookbinders) of the so-called Interior Department Regiment

THE INTERIOR DEPARTMENT REGIMENT

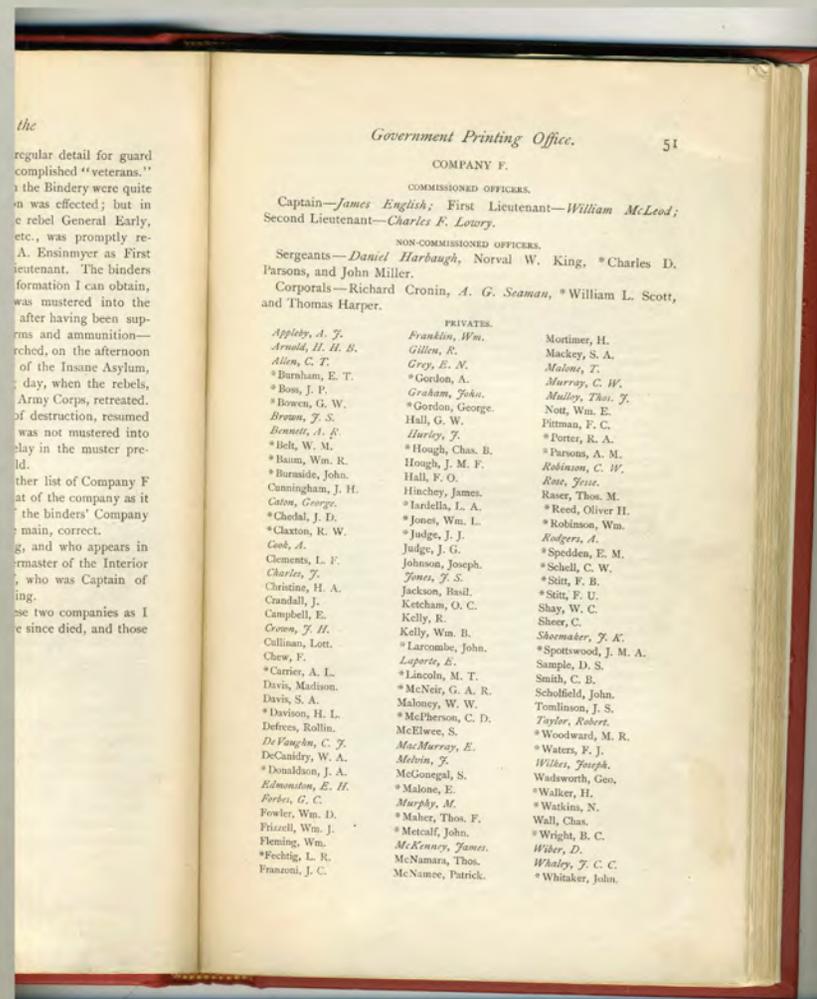


- Documentation is scant, but volunteer militia regiments were common throughout the war, in the interest of protecting the capital city.
- Pictured at left are Treasury Regiment officers

GPO'S OWN

The story of Company F and Company G comes from the first published history of the agency, by R.W. Kerr, 1881.

It lists the men who comprised both companies.



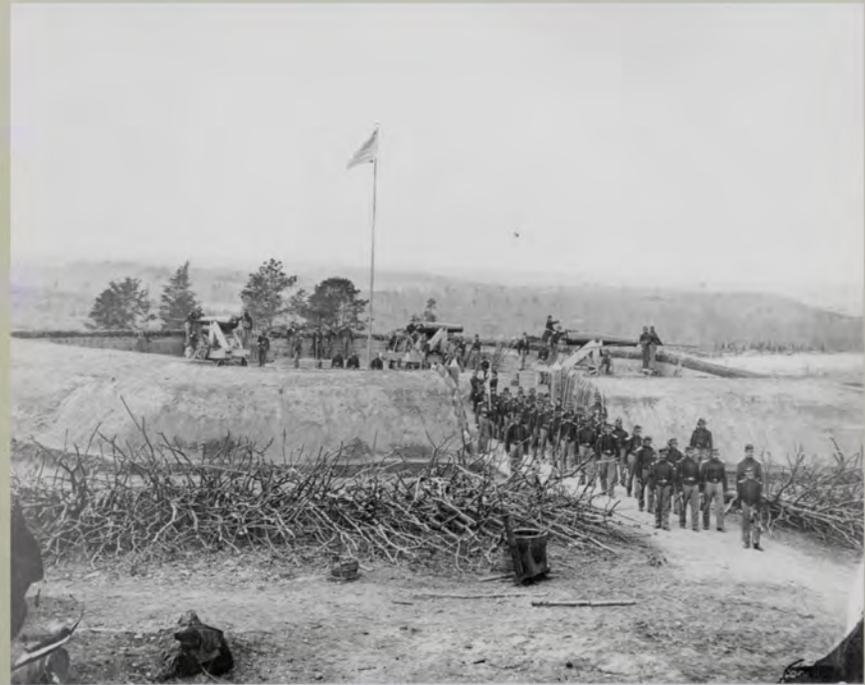
EARLY'S ATTEMPT



- In the summer of 1864, Confederate General Jubal A. Early made an approach on Washington from the northwest, first engaging Union forces just south of Frederick, Maryland at the Monocacy Junction. The small Union force, under General Lew Wallace, was defeated and Early's troops moved southeast on July 10.

EARLY'S ATTEMPT

- On July 11, 1864 Early's forces reached the vicinity of Fort Stevens, one of the 67 forts surrounding Washington, near the present-day site of Walter Reed Medical Center.



JULY 11, 1864



- The news that Early had defeated Wallace's forces at Monocacy caused panic in Washington, and every available person, including the many ad hoc militia regiments, was called to the defense of Washington.

GPO'S OWN

- GPO Company F was mustered into service, given weapons, and marched across the Anacostia (probably across the Eastern Branch Bridge, at right) to “the vicinity of the insane asylum, ” St. Elizabeth’s Hospital in Southeast.



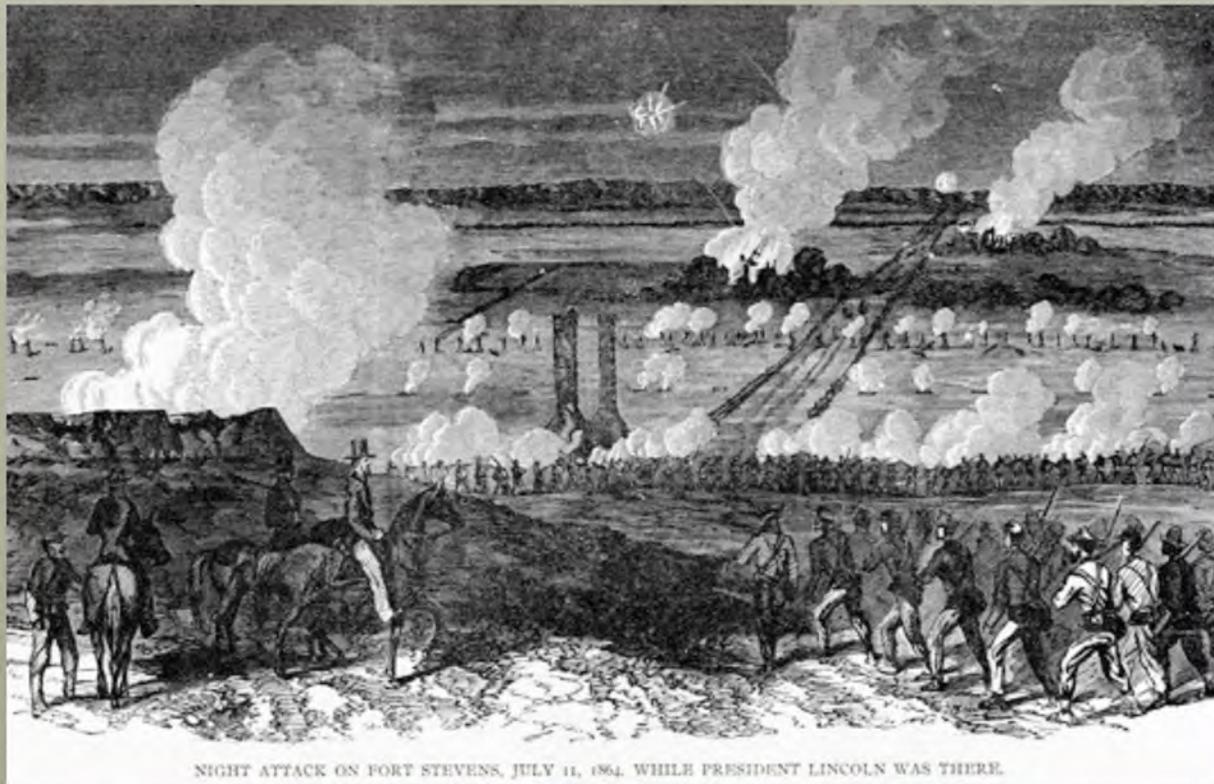
JULY 11, 1864

They were probably at Fort Stanton, which overlooks the confluence of the Anacostia and Potomac, on the heights of Anacostia just west of St. Elizabeth's



JULY 12, 1863

By July 12, Grant's 6th Corps had arrived in Washington by boat and marched immediately to Ft. Stevens. Skirmishing continued through the heat of the day, but when night fell Early's forces retreated, crossing the Potomac at White's Ferry near Leesburg, VA.



GPO'S FIRST VETERANS

Following the Confederate retreat, life in wartime Washington returned to normal. After being encamped at Ft. Stanton for one night, GPO Company F, our first veterans, returned to their work in Swampoodle.

