

**BOUNTIES
(Land & Enlistment)**

A Working Bibliography of MHI Sources

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GENERAL/MISCELLANEOUS

Land bounties were once commonly used by the colonial, state and national governments for inducing enlistments and for rewarding service. The colony of Virginia was particularly generous in this early American practice. The Continental Congress authorized a bounty of 100 acres to recruits who would serve in the Continental Army for the duration of the Rev War. During the second war with Great Britain, Congress authorized 160 acres in 1813, then doubled the acreage in 1814. Beginning in 1838, Congress offered 160 acres of land to any enlisted soldier who would serve continuously for ten years. Honorable discharge after twelve months service in the War with Mexico (1846-48) entitled a soldier to 160 acres, or to 40 acres with less service.

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CIVIL WAR ENLISTMENT BOUNTIES

Enlistment bounties of 1861-65 evolved from practices of the Rev War. Their use depended upon two factors: 1) waning of the patriotic enthusiasm of the early stage of the war, and 2) implementing the unpopular conscription.

In the North, bounty systems operated at the federal, state, and local levels. Cash or property bounties served as inducements for enlistment in regular, volunteer, or militia forces. A federal bounty system began in May 1861, with the President's first call for volunteers, when the War Dept offered \$100 to three-year volunteers and regulars. Those who reenlisted two years later received \$300, a sum also given new recruits as of Oct 1863. In Apr 1864, the sum reverted to \$100 until the \$300 figure was restored in Jul 1864. Under the 19 Jul 1864 amendment to the Enrollment Act, \$100, \$200, and \$300 went to one-year, two-year, and three-year troops, respectively. Negroes received \$10.

In the South, the Confederate government had enacted early on a form of conscription, and the Federal government followed about a year later with the draft law of 17 July 1862. Despite its name, this federal law skirted universal conscription and reposed actual drafting powers in state governors, with the President calling for troop quotas from the states. The first call under this system for 300,000 troops came on 4 Aug 1862.

To ease the unpopularity of this system, a "drafted" man was permitted to hire a substitute if called for service by local or state authorities. Also, states offered or increased bounties to entice enlistments. However, by late 1862 and early 1863, Federal authorities established a more central system. The Enrollment Act of 3 Mar 1863 empowered the President to call up able-bodied citizens between the ages

of 20 and 45, with exemption and liability classes clearly prescribed. Drafted men now received the same pay and bounty as did volunteers and the substitute system received formal sanction.

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Meanwhile, some states provided lucrative enlistment bounties, while others offered nominal amounts. Funding of bounty programs varied from state to state, with some states and localities offering property in lieu of cash.

Most Northern states utilized bounties at some point during the war, Ohio and Iowa definitely did not (unknown: DE, MD, KS, MN, OR).

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CIVIL WAR & SINCE

During the Civil War, Congress did not provide land grants as recruitment bounties. However, veterans received preferred treatment under provisions of the Homestead Act of 1862. Although local and state governments raised substantial cash bonuses for enlistees, none seem to have used land bounties. In 1872, Congress entitled every officer and enlisted man who served in the Army for 90 days or more during the Civil War to enter and receive a patent for 160 acres of public land. Reference:

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NOTE: Veterans' claims for federal land bounties, 1775-1855, are on file at National Arch. State bounties information may be available at individual state archives or equivalent agency.