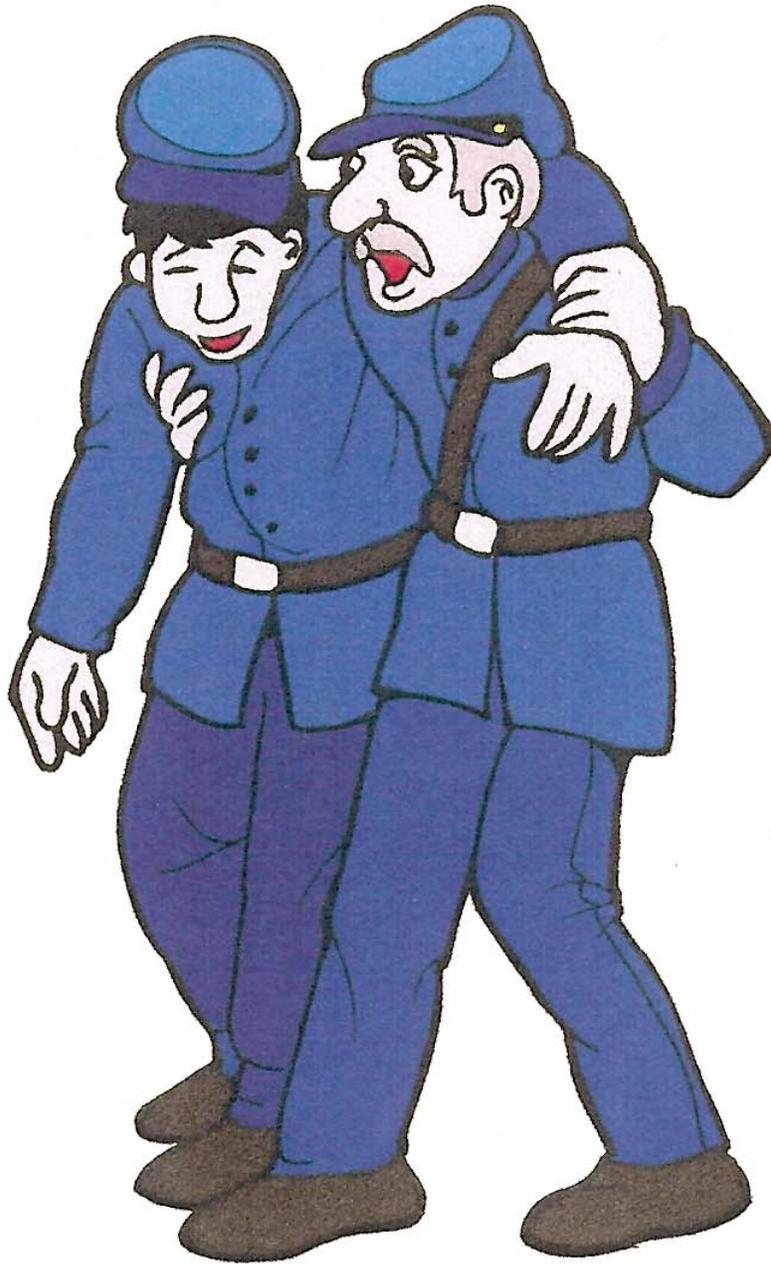


# IOWA INVALID CORPS



*Army of the Southwest*

# **Iowa Invalid Corps**

**By order of**  
*Major Cedric Ruby*

**Company A**  
**Iowa Invalid Corps**  
**A.S.W.**

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## **Origin of the Invalid Corps**

A great number of Civil War soldiers were disabled by weapons, disease, and accidents. Initially, the permanently disabled received medical discharges from the army, but later they remained in the service and performed noncombat duties, relieving other soldiers to fight.

In 1862, the Union army allowed chief medical officers to employ “convalescent wounded and feeble men” as nurses, cooks, and hospital attendants and subsequently to organize them into detachments. Unfortunately, these methods were inefficient, and many convalescents did not return to their combat units when well.

Therefore, in April 1863 the U.S. War Department created an Invalid Corps of worthy disabled officers and men who were or had been in the army. Ridicule influenced the corps to exchange its sky blue uniform for one similar to those worn by the other soldiers. The corps formed 2 “battalions,” the first for those who could bear arms and perform garrison duty and the second for the severely handicapped fit only for hospital service. Late in the war the surgeon general took command of the second battalion. Like the combat units, the Invalid Corps organized officers and men into companies and regiments.

Renamed the “Veteran Reserve Corps” 18 March 1864, it was abolished during summer 1866. Between 1863 and 1866 more than 60,000 individuals served in the organization and performed valuable services, including garrisoning fortifications and quelling an 1863 “Draft Riot” in New York City.

The Confederacy established an Invalid Corps in 1864, in which officers and men disabled in the line of duty had to serve if they wished to receive pay. Also, if their physical conditions improved sufficiently, they had to return to their combat unit. Unlike its Union counterpart, the Confederate Invalid Corps never organized companies and regiments, but a high percentage of its officers and men did perform worthwhile duties based on their disabilities and army requirements.

(Source: Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War)

## **Current Enlistment Qualifications**

### *Who is in the Iowa Invalid Corps?*

Enlistment into the Iowa Invalid Corps is open to all Army of the Southwest (ASW) as well as soldiers from other units. Those enlisting in this Corps must join the ASW. Any soldier that by age, disability or other circumstances that is not able to serve on the field in regular army duty is welcome to enlist.

### *What are the duties of the Iowa Invalid Corps?*

Duties may include, but not be limited to, functioning as guards, cook’s helper, message delivery, or other duties that fall within the soldier’s capacity. All Invalid Corps soldiers that fire a weapon in the performance of their duty will receive bounty contingent to the duties performed.

## **Current Dress Code**

The Iowa Invalid Corps is a small company within the ASW. The Invalid Corps has its own dress code and uniforms.

Dress Code: Sky blue sack coat with brass buttons or sky blue Calvary jacket with brass buttons, both with black or dark blue chevrons, if warranted. Trousers, shoes or boots that were issued by prior units (infantry, Calvary, and artillery) can be used.

## **Acts of Bravery and Service**

The Corps fought during the Confederate raid on Washington D.C. in June of 1864. The Sixth Regiment had one officer and four men wounded outside of Fort DeRussy, while the Ninth Regiment charged attackers at Fort Stevens, with five killed and seven wounded.

The 18<sup>th</sup> Regiment took part in the successful defense of the White House on June 28, 1864. Several times during the battle the regiment commander was asked, "Will your invalids stand?" The answer was, "Tell the General that men are cripples and they cannot run."

The 172<sup>nd</sup> had two bands stationed in Davenport, Iowa. Larger hospitals usually had a band. There were no special Veteran Reserve Corps Band uniforms, so each band looked different.

Private Alford Ballard of the First Veterans Reserve Corps wrote, "Our bands were getting all nicely and handsome with the uniforms of sky blue jackets, trimmed with black facing and three rows of brass buttons, shoko hats with plum and brass ornaments."

Veterans whose term of enlistment had expired were allowed to serve in the corps with or without disabilities. A veteran volunteer corps of men that had already served in action and volunteered to return to the front line was authorized for duty.

The only unique item was the chevrons worn on the lower forearm.

The Corps had 1,036 officers and 60,509 enlisted men by the time that the corps ended in September 30, 1865.

## **Master's Prayer**

Jesus had no servants,  
Yet they called him master,

Jesus had no degree,  
Yet they called him teacher,

Jesus had no medicines,  
Yet they called him healer,

Jesus had no army,  
Yet kings feared him.

He won no military battles,  
Yet he conquered the world,

He committed no crimes,  
Yet they crucified him.