

Joseph Jones Reynolds
Major General, United States Army

Born at Flemingsburg, Kentucky, January 4, 1822. When he was fifteen his parents moved across the Ohio River to Lafayette, Indiana. The next year entered Wabash College at Crawfordsville; a year later he was appointed to the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. He graduated in the class of 1843, which included U. S. Grant, with whom he remained on friendly terms.

After garrison duty and serving in the military occupation of Texas just prior to the war with Mexico, he was assigned as instructor at West Point, where he taught for 8 years. He then did frontier duty in the Indian Territory until he submitted his resignation as First Lieutenant, 3rd U.S. Artillery, in 1857.

In the next 4 years taught engineering at Washington University, St Louis, and engaged in the grocery business in Lafayette. On the outbreak of hostilities in 1861, he was appointed Colonel of the 10th Indiana Militia, then Brigadier General of Volunteers, and on June 14, 1861, to rank from May 17, Brigadier General, U. S. Volunteers. May 17, 1861 was earliest date of rank given any Brigadier General of US Volunteers; however, no less than 34 officers commissioned at various dates from May 17 to August 12, were accorded rank as of this date. He was 19th on list as finally arranged by War Department. Grant's name immediately preceded his. Curiously enough, with exception of William T. Sherman, who was ranked 7th, the others were either killed in action, cashiered (Fitz John Porter was 5th) or faded into obscurity).

He commanded at Cheat Mountain under William Starke Rosecrans in September, but resigned the following January because of death of his brother with whom he was in partnership. While out of the service he aided in organizing Indiana troops and again was appointed a Brigadier General, September 17, 1862, and Major General of Volunteers, November 29.

He commanded a Division of XIV Corps at Chickamauga, and on October 10, 1863, was made Chief of Staff of George H. Thomas' Army of the Cumberland, a position held until after battle of Chattanooga. In January 1864, he put in charge of the New Orleans defenses, and in July took command of XIX Corps and organized the campaign against Mobile. In November 1864 and until April 1866, commanded Department of Arkansas.

He became Colonel of the 26th U.S. Infantry upon reorganization of the army in July 1866, and was breveted Brigadier General and Major General, United States Army, March 2, 1867. He was transferred to the 3rd U.S. Cavalry, 1870, and commanded the occupation forces in southwest, including the Department of Texas, until relieved of command in 1872 and ordered to rejoin his regiment. In 1871 he was elected to the U.S. Senate by the carpetbag legislature in Texas, but the seat was successfully contested by the brother of General A. J. Hamilton.

He next commanded at various points in Nebraska and Wyoming. He was commanding the advance of George Crook's expedition when it attacked and captured the Sioux village on the Powder River, March 17, 1876. He prematurely ordered a retreat, leaving his dead and a wounded Private in the hands of Indians who "promptly cut the Private limb from limb." Sometime later his conduct, along with that of certain other officers, was subject of general court martial. Subsequently he resigned, his Army career wrecked.

After his retirement he established a residence in Washington, D. C., where he died February 25, 1899. He was buried in Section 1, Grave 82-C, Arlington National Cemetery.

His wife, Mary E. Bainbridge Reynolds (1827-1913), is buried with him.

Captain Robert M. Reynolds, First Iowa Cavalry (August 22, 1826-June 7, 1885) is buried adjacent to him. The Captain's wife, Orpha W. Richardson Reynolds (August 28, 1826-January 19, 1903) is buried with him as is his son, Lieutenant Lovell K. Reynolds, United States Navy (January 31, 1857-February 18, 1893).

Photo By Michael Robert Patterson, 1999

Photograph By M. R. Patterson, October 2002

The General's son, Alfred Reynolds, Rear Admiral, United States Navy, and his family are buried in Section 4 of Arlington National Cemetery.

Joseph Jones Reynolds, soldier, born in Flemingsburg, Kentucky, 4 January, 1822. He was graduated at the United States military academy in 1843, served in the military occupation of Texas in 1845-'6, became 1st lieutenant in 1847, and was principal assistant professor of natural and experimental philosophy in the United States military academy from 1849 until his resignation from the army in 1856. He was then professor of mechanics and engineering in Washington university, St. Louis, Missouri, till 1860, returned to the army as colonel of the 10th Indiana volunteers in April, 1861, became brigadier general of volunteers the next month, and was engaged in various skirmishes and in the action at Green Brier river, 3 October, 1861. He resigned in January, 1862, served without a commission in organizing Indiana volunteers, became colonel of the 75th Indiana regiment, 27 August, 1862, and brigadier general, 17 September of that year. He was in the campaign of the Army of the Cumberland in 1862-'3, became major general of volunteers in November, 1862, and was engaged at Hoover's Gap, 24 June, 1863, and Chickamauga, 19-20 September, 1863. He was chief of staff of the Army of the Cumberland from 10 October to 5 December of that year, and participated in the battle of Chattanooga. He commanded the defenses of New Orleans, Louisiana, from January till June, 1864, commanded the 19th army corps, and organized forces for the capture of Mobile. Fort Gaines, and Fort Morgan in June and August. He was in charge of the Department of Arkansas from November, 1864, till April, 1866, mustered out of volunteer service, 1 September, 1866, and reappointed in the United States army as colonel of the 26th infantry, 28 July, 1866. He received the brevet of brigadier general, United States army, 2 March, 1867, for gallant and meritorious service at the battle of Chickamauga, and that of major general, United States army, at the same date for Mission Ridge. During the reconstruction period, in 1867-'72, he was in command of the 5th military district, comprising Louisiana and Texas, was elected United States Senator from the latter state in 1871, but declined, commanded the Department of the Platte in 1872-'6, and in June, 1877, he was retired.

Posted: 4 April 1999 Updated: 29 October 2000 Updated: 18 August 2001 Updated: 19 December 2001

United: 12 October 2002