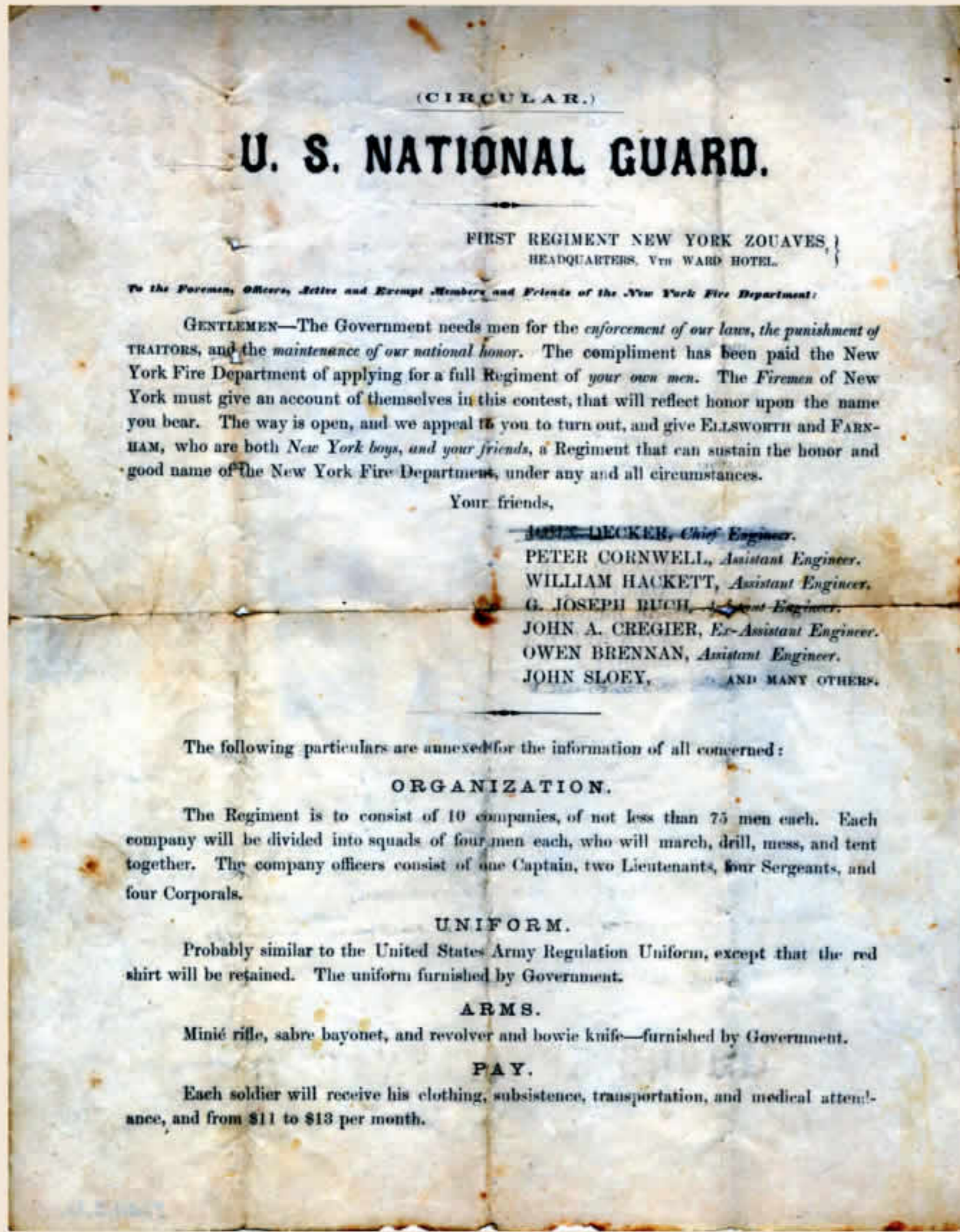


The Civil War Comes to Alexandria

In 1860, Alexandria was a vibrant southern city boasting a population of 12,652 and 96 firms which produced everything from bark to tin-ware. During the U.S. Presidential campaign in the fall of 1860, business-minded Alexandrians were decidedly pro-Union and cast a majority of their ballots for John Bell, the Constitutional Unionist candidate who opposed secession. Candidate Abraham Lincoln received only 2 votes.



In an effort to see that Virginia remained in the Union, Alexandrians elected George Brent, an opponent of secession, as a delegate to attend a meeting in Richmond to discuss the issue. But when South Carolina fired on Fort Sumter on April 12, 1861, and President Lincoln subsequently called for 75,000 troops to crush the rebellion, the mood of Alexandrians shifted dramatically from accommodation to war. On May 23, 1861, townsmen went to the polls and voiced their approval of the Virginia's articles of secession by an overwhelming vote of 958 in favor and 106 against.



Because of Alexandria's strategic importance as a railroad center and port, federal troops under the command of General Charles Sanford, of the New York State Militia, lost no time in invading the town by land and sea early the following morning. A regiment of New York Fire Zouaves, led by Colonel Elmer Ellsworth, landed near this location at the foot of Cameron Street.

As federal forces entered Alexandria, townsmen of Virginia's 6th Battalion hastily assembled at Prince and S. Washington Streets before boarding a train for Manassas Junction. On July 10, 1861, these troops were activated into the 17th Virginia Volunteer Infantry Regiment, commanded by local hero Colonel Montgomery Corse. They fought with the Army of Northern Virginia, under General Robert E. Lee, from the Battle of First Manassas in 1861 through the surrender at Appomattox Courthouse in 1865 and suffered tremendous losses over four years of hard fighting.



← Waterfront 

← Water Taxi 

↑ King Street

↑ Alexandria Archaeology Museum 

↪ Founders Park



WALKING MAP LEGEND

-  Information
-  King Street Trolley Stop
-  MetroRail Station
-  Public Parking
-  Taxi Stand
-  Water Taxi
-  Museum
-  Lodging
-  Capital Bikeshare
-  Shopping & Dining
-  Bike Route
-  5-minute walk (1/4 Mile)
-  Park
-  Public Parks
-  Attraction
-  Visitor Attraction
-  Civic
-  Civic Destination