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Tread Quarters Department of Virginia,
ARMY OF THE JAMES.
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In the field, February 191865
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MMN # 76621

Date: February 19, 1865

Description: E.O.C. Ord wrote to George F. Shepley to defend a military commission inquiry into activities of officers in the area.

Head Quarters Department of Virginia,
Army of the James.
In the field, February 19th 1865
Brig. Genl, Geo. F Shepley
U.S. Vols
Sir

Your letter of the 16<sup>th</sup> inst. is received, in which letter, you request that if the Commission now in session at "Norfolk," Genl Gordon, President, is to act as a Court of inquiry, into your Official conduct, you be permitted to Cross examine and interrogate the witnesses, so as to innstigate the circumstance in the question In answer, I have to state that the Commission was not intended for the trial of any officers, it was to investigate and report upon the nature and extent of a certain illicit trade.

same as prescribed by the articles of War, for "Courts of Engury". I cumot question the manner simply because military Ommisum, an mat so muca Creations of lan as of Custom, and of the war borner in the source Country & Oun arsun you, homen Gent that you were not relieved from the Comm and at Norfold, from, or owing to, any action of this Commission. The Order for your whis and to put you in the file, for the spring cumpanyou, Siml Butter," informed me before he left the Department! In intended to issue; and after com commention with you, on the subject of Colonel mopo and their management, hold before the Commission was thought of, or the illies truck reported to exist, I much up my mind to Order you to the file, with a sin of giving you

This investigation includes a wide scope. the investigation

The manner of conducting ^ may not have been the same as prescribed by the Articles of War, for "Courts of Enquiry." I cannot question the manner, simply because "Military Commissions, are not so much creations of law, as of customs, and of the war power in the enemies Country. I can assure you, however, Gen<sup>1</sup> that you were not relieved from the Command at Norfolk, from, or owing to, any action or investigating of the Commission. The Order for your relief and to put you in the field, for the spring campaign, Genl "Butler," informed me before he left the Department, he intended to issue; and after some conversation with you, on the subject of Colored troops and their management, held before the Commission was thought of, or the illicit trade reported to exist, I made up my mind to Order you to the field with a view of giving you

Mead Quarters Department of Virginia, ARMY OF THE JAMES. In the field, Fely-19th the Command of a Division of Colonel troops. which I still think you can Commund will, and in suying this I mum to rate you, in point of intelligene and a disposition to do your duty, higher than many Brugader Generals of This anny But General There is no med or proposely, in your placing yourself or poor you I defence before this Walitary Emmusion, for, so far as I could have in a consenation with the Insulant no incline was before the Com-- mission in culpating you as interested in illiet trade and should the investigations invalor you as a party by withour of any cost, I promise you you shall have a copy of all such excurse; I cannot promise you a capy of all the

Head Quarters Department of Virginia,
Army of the James
In the field, Feby - 19th 1865
the command of a Division of Colored troops
which I still think you can command well; and
in saying this I mean to rate you, in point of
intelligence and a disposition to do your duty,
higher than many Brigadier Generals of
this army

But General, there is no need, or propriety in your placing yourself upon your defence before this Military Commission; for so far as I could learn in a conversation with the President, no evidence was before the Commission inculpating you as interested in illicit trade, and should the investigations involve you as a party by evidence of <u>any</u> sort, I promise you, you shall have a copy of all such evidence; I cannot promise you a copy of all the

on proceedings of the Commission as they may be very Valencinous, and of a confidential nature. Ingrafoutfully
Grur Obt, Sent
EN.C. Ord.
Maf. Gul Vals.
Comage

the proceedings of the Commission as they may be very voluminous, and of a Confidential nature.

I am Sir
Very respectfully
Your Obt. Servt
E.O.C. Ord
Maj. Genl Vols.
Comd'g.