

To the extent which Lieut. Col. Tavis appears to have gone, the approval of this Department cannot by any means be accorded. When authority was given to Genl. Schenck to raise a Regiment of "Maryland Cavalry," it never was contemplated that they should be raised from rebels recently captured in arms against the Government. For these reasons the action of Lieut. Col. Tavis was stopped as soon as it came to the knowledge of the Department, and he was ordered to his Regiment.

The complaint of Lieut. Col. Tavis that the rebels recruited by him are about to be organized into a Delaware regiment of Cavalry is without any foundation, because no authority would be given to recruit rebels for Delaware, any more than to recruit them for Maryland Cavalry; and positive orders have been given to the Commandant of Fort Delaware to put an end at once to recruiting for any purpose among prisoners of war.

It is the desire of the Department that a Regiment of Maryland Cavalry should be recruited by volunteers, if it can be done, and there is no objection to Lieut. Col. Tavis being assigned to that duty by the Commander of the Department. The volunteers however must be loyal men, not rebel prisoners of war.

You will accept my thanks for furnishing to the Department copies of the several orders accompanying your letter.

Having called upon the Commissary General for the authority upon which he sent the telegraphic despatch to Genl. Schoepf on this subject, it appears that it was based only upon an inference of his own, derived from an endorsement from General Halleck, to the following effect:

"No prisoner of war should be exchanged and returned against his wishes. I have always advised that where the examining officer finds that a man was impressed into the enemy's service, like the East Tennesseans, and wished to join ours, and is satisfied of his good faith, he should be received."

It will be perceived that nothing more than the acceptance of individual cases of prisoners impressed into the enemy's service, who in good faith want to join our army, was contemplated; whereas the Commissary General misinterpreted these exceptionable cases, and assumed, in the name of the Secretary of War, to issue a general instruction.

Yours truly
Edwin M. Stanton
Secretary of War

Head Quarters 4th Maryland Volunteers
Camp at Rappahannock Station Va. Aug. 31. 1863

Hon. Aug. W. Bradford
Govr. of Maryland
Sir:

Your letter 27th Inst. to hand, I hasten to reply. Its contents are of the most unexpected and unpleasant character imaginable. I can hardly realize that I have been filling the position of Colonel, contrary to your wishes, and with an imputation of such a serious character