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Laws and Regulations Pertaining to the Organization of the Texas Rangers

## An Act to Provide for the Protection of the Frontier in 1874



English





Texas was in chaos for a decade after the Civil War. Comanche Indian had pushed settlers back from west and northwest Texas. Criminal gangs who operated under the pretense of being Confederate guerrillas during the War fled to Texas. The border with Mexico became a war zone as both sides raided the estimated 3 million cattle in the open range of the “Nueces Strip”.

Law enforcement was almost non-existent. When Texas asked for U.S. troops they were largely ignored. A weak State Police force organized during Reconstruction proved ineffective.

Beginning in 1870, Texans resolved to solve their own problems through the Texas Rangers. The Legislature passed a series of acts authorizing county-based Ranger companies of 25 to 75 men “for each county that may be so infested” with “marauding or thieving parties.”

If this proved ineffective, the Governor was authorized to raise a battalion of up to 450 mounted men in six companies of up to 75 men each. If this *still* was inadequate, the Governor could call out unlimited numbers of volunteer Minute Men.

The Acts revised in 1874 and became a blueprint for frontier law enforcement for a quarter-century. The Governor created Major John B. Jones’ Frontier Battalion, although it never reached the authorized limit of 450 men. Leander McNelly’s Washington County Volunteers — a.k.a. the Special Force — was formed under provisions of the act to address problems on the border.

Texas Ranger companies “A” through “F” are the direct descendents of the companies founded in 1874. The job has changed in many respects, but the tradition continues.

## An Act to Provide for the Protection of the Frontier of the State of Texas in 1874



English



**Section 1.** Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Texas, That upon satisfactory evidence being furnished the Governor of this State that hostile Indians, Mexicans, or other marauding or thieving parties are depredating upon the lives or property of the citizens of any county or counties upon the frontier of this State, the Governor is hereby required, and shall organize or cause the same to be done, one company of not less than twenty-five, nor more than seventy-five men, for each county that may be so infested; provided, the whole number of men shall not exceed seven hundred and fifty.

**Sec. 2.** That said companies shall be raised from the county and surrounding counties on the frontier, designated by Governor.

**Sec. 3.** That no company shall be mustered into the service of this State, under the provisions of this act, for a longer period of time than twelve, nor shorter period than three months.

**Sec. 4.** The commissioned officers of each company of fifty men or more, shall consist of one captain, one first lieutenant and one second lieutenant; of less than fifty men, one first lieutenant and one second lieutenant. The non-commissioned officers for each company shall consist of one sergeant and one corporal for every ten men.

**Sec. 5.** That the commanding officers of the companies shall purchase all necessary rations and forage hereinafter provided for, and shall give the person from whom such purchases shall be made a certificate of purchase, stating the amount, kind, quality and price of articles furnished, to which shall be attached an affidavit, signed by the officer and the person from whom the purchase may have been made. Said affidavit shall be as follows: That the claim or account is accurate and just, and that the price charged is not above the market value of the article at the time and place where sold, and that said articles were actually used or consumed by said company.

**Sec. 6.** In the event any commanding officer shall purchase a greater amount of rations or forage than is hereinafter allowed, the paymaster shall deduct the excess thereof from his pay.

**Sec. 7.** That the commanding officer of each company mustered into service under the provisions of this act, shall forward to the Adjutant General of the State, on the last day of each month, a pay-roll showing the amount due each member of his command; which pay-roll shall be certified to by the commanding officer. And it is hereby made the duty of the Comptroller to draw his warrant upon the Treasurer in favor of each officer, non-commissioned officer and private in the command, separately, for the amount due on each one as set forth in the pay-roll, which warrants shall be forwarded by the Adjutant General to the commanding officer of the company, to be delivered to the men of his command, and said warrants may be paid by the sheriff of the county in which the command was raised or is in service, out of any funds in his hands belonging to the State, and all transfer of warrants by officers or men shall be certified to before some civil officer authorized to administer oaths, and when so transferred they shall be payable at the treasury of the State upon presentation.

**Sec. 8.** Each member of such company organized under the provisions of this act shall be required to furnish himself with a suitable horse, and one six-shooting pistol (army size) blankets, clothing and camp equipage: the horse shall be valued by the enrolling officer hereinafter provided for, and two other disinterested persons, who shall be sworn to make



a true and fair valuation of the same; and should any horse or horses be killed or permanently disabled whilst in action, the paymaster shall pay the owner of the same the appraised value thereof, upon an affidavit made to that effect by the owner of the horse and a member of the company, upon the certificate of the commanding officer of the company, that the facts set forth in said affidavit are true; and no member of any company shall dispose of or exchange his horse or arms whilst in the service of the State, without the consent of the commanding officer of his company.

**Sec. 9.** The State shall furnish all necessary ammunition, and each officer and private an improved breach-loading cavalry gun at cost; the guns furnished each company to be of the same kind and calibre, the price of which shall be deducted from the first money due the company; provided, that any member may furnish his own gun if of the same kind, calibre and good condition.

**Sec. 10.** The presiding justice of each of the counties in which it may be necessary to organize a company, shall be the enrolling officer for such county, whose duty it shall be to organize and muster into service the company of such county, and return the muster rolls of the company to the Adjutant General. And should any county not organized require a company under the provisions of this act, then the presiding justice of the county to which said unorganized county is attached for judicial purposes, shall organize and muster into service the company of such unorganized county in the same way and manner as prescribed by this section for the company of his own county.

**Sec. 11.** The commanding officer of any company, in case of emergency, shall have the right to call to his assistance the companies from the adjoining counties; provided, that not more than one-half of the men of any company shall be forced to leave their county. And when the troops are so called together, the ranking officer present shall take the command of all the troops, and shall hold them together so long as the emergency exists.

**Sec. 12.** The Governor shall designate the seniority of the commissioned officers of same grade created by this act.

**Sec. 13.** The amount of rations and forage shall not exceed the following, to-wit: For each man's daily allowance, three-fourths pound bacon, or one and one-half pounds fresh beef; one and one-fourth pounds flour or corn meal; and for every fifty men, seven and one-half pounds beans or peas, five pounds rice, ten pounds green coffee, ten pounds sugar, one-half gallon vinegar, one-half pound candles, one pound soap, two pounds salt, two ounces black pepper, fifteen pounds potatoes. The forage for each horse shall not exceed twelve pounds corn or oats per day, two ounces salt per week.

**Sec. 14.** Upon the organization of any company under the provisions of this act, the officers shall be elected by the members composing the same, and all vacancies shall be filled by election.

**Sec. 15.** The pay of officers and privates shall be as follows: For captains, (\$100) one hundred dollars; lieutenants, (\$75) seventy-five dollars each; sergeants, (\$50) fifty dollars each; for all other non-commissioned officers, (\$40) forty dollars each, and privates (\$40) forty dollars each per month, for every month of actual service.

**Sec. 16.** The Governor, when he may deem it necessary, shall appoint a surgeon for one or more companies, whose pay shall not exceed one hundred dollars per month, and all necessary medicines to be furnished him by the State.



English





**Sec. 17.** The troops raised under the provisions of 'this act shall be governed by the rules and regulations of the United States army, so far as the same may be applicable, but shall always be and remain subject to the authority of the State of Texas, for the protection of the frontier.

**Sec. 18.** The Adjutant General shall cause to be made such other regulations for the government and control of the organization herein provided for as he may deem necessary, to the end that the force so provided shall be as effective as possible.

**Sec. 19.** That in addition to the force herein provided for, the Governor be and he is hereby authorized to organize a battalion of mounted men, to consist of six companies, of seventy-five men each. The commissioned officers shall be one major, who shall command the battalion, and one captain and two lieutenants for each company, and one quartermaster. The battalion and company officers shall be appointed by the Governor, and shall be removed at his pleasure.

**Sec. 20.** The pay of the officers and men shall be as follows: major, (\$125), one hundred and twenty-five dollars; captains (\$100), one hundred dollars each; lieutenants (\$75), seventy-five dollars each; sergeants (\$50), fifty dollars each; for all other non-commissioned officers (\$40), forty dollars each; privates (\$40), forty dollars each, per month; and nothing shall be paid by way of commutation.

**Sec. 21.** The Governor shall appoint a quartermaster for this force, who shall discharge the duties of a quartermaster, commissary and paymaster, and shall rank and receive the pay of a captain, and give such bond as the Governor may require for the faithful performance of his duties.

**Sec. 22.** That the officers and men of this force shall be paid quarterly.

**Sec. 23.** That this force is not designed as a standing force, but shall always be under the command of the Governor, to be operated by his direction in such manner, in such detachments, and in such localities as the Governor may direct; and the same shall be disbanded and reorganized, or reassembled, from time to time, as in his judgment the exigencies of the frontier may demand.

**Sec. 24.** Each soldier and officer shall furnish his own horse, and, unless the same is killed in battle, shall not be paid for by the State.

**Sec. 25.** The Governor is hereby authorized to keep this force in the field as long as in his judgment there may be a necessity for such a force, and soldiers who may volunteer in such service shall do so for such term not to exceed four years, subject to disbandment and re-assembly by order of the Governor.

**Sec. 26.** Whenever, in the opinion of the Governor, this force shall be insufficient to protect the frontier, he shall be authorized to call out the minute men, or any part thereof, hereinbefore provided for, which said force is hereby declared to be auxiliary and supplemental to the battalion of mounted men authorized by this act.

**Sec. 27.** The State shall furnish necessary ammunition, and to each officer and private of this battalion an improved breech-loading cavalry gun, at cost; the guns furnished to be of the same kind and calibre, the price of which shall be deducted from the first money due the battalion.

**Sec. 28.** Each officer of the battalion and of the companies of minute men herein provided for, shall have all the powers of a peace officer, and it shall be his duty to execute all criminal processes directed to him, and make arrests under *capias* properly issued, of any and all parties charged with offense against the laws of this State.

**Sec. 29.** That the Governor of the State is authorized to disband all troops now in the service of of the State for frontier protection, as soon as practicable, and that they be allowed to retain all arms furnished by the State at the same price that the same were furnished to the State.

**Sec. 30.** That an act entitled “An Act to provide for the protection of the frontier,” approved June 13, 1870, also an act entitled “An Act to muster into service mounted men for the protection of the frontier , approved November 25, 1871; also an act entitled “An Act to amend the first section of an act entitled ‘An Act to muster into service minute men for the protection of the frontier,’ approved November 28, 1871,” approved June 2, 1873, and all other laws and parts of laws heretofore enacted on the same subject, be and the same are hereby repealed.

**Sec. 31.** The Governor and the Adjutant General are hereby authorized and empowered to make all additional regulations not contrary to the laws of this State, which are necessary to carry out the provisions of this act.

**Sec. 32.** That this act not take effect and be in force from and after its passage.

**Approved April 10, 1874.**

## Open 7 Days a Week

Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum

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Waco, TX 76706

(254) 750-8631

[info@texasranger.org](mailto:info@texasranger.org)

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