

April 2, 1917.

Brigadier General E. Leroy Sweetser,
Acting The Adjutant General,
State House,
Boston, Mass.

Copied

My dear General:

I am in receipt of your letter of the 25th ultimo. The matter in question, touching damages committed by troops on Las Cruces march, was handled by a board of officers consisting of General MacMaken, president, General Williams, member, and Colonel W. K. Wright, 23d Infantry, member and recorder. This board made a long and patient and, I think, fair investigation of all damages alleged to have been committed and made assessments accordingly. These assessments were all collected and disbursed, except those assessed against your brigade and, I think, the Massachusetts cavalry. On this latter subject, I am a little in doubt, but I think it was the cavalry.

General Williams was the active member of the board and received and disbursed the money. On his departure from El Paso, I advised him to turn all the papers in the case over to General MacMaken, who, in turn, upon leaving El Paso, was to turn them over to Colonel Wright, the only member of the board to remain. Colonel Wright is now in El Paso commanding his regiment and I have no reason to believe he has not everything in the case. I am, therefore, enclosing your letter to him with a copy of my answer thereto. General Williams was absent some little time before he finally left for muster out, he having been ordered to Washington to testify before the Military Committee of congress and having been given a leave of absence subsequently. This may explain why he did not answer your communications. General Williams' address is, Brigadier General Roger D. Williams, Lexington, Kentucky, and I think he will give you any further information possible.

In regard to the justice of these assessments, I can only say that they were made by a board legally constituted and whose action, so far as I know, cannot be reviewed. Even Division Headquarters was assessed proportionately and assessments paid and every organization in the Division paid up, as you say, except the organizations from your state, which were mentioned. It was impossible to fix the damage on individual persons, and assessing organizations was the only recourse left. I regard the matter as one where the honor of all of us was at stake and cheerfully paid my little share, as if