

8th Congress.]No. 52.[1st Session.

MILITIA.

COMMUNICATED TO CONGRESS, MARCH 22, 1804.

To the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:

I lay before Congress the last returns of the Militia of the United States. Their incompleteness is much to be regretted, and its remedy may at some future time be a subject worthy the attention of Congress.

March 22, 1804.

TH: JEFFERSON.

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<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=11sp&fileName=016/11sp016.db&recNum=173>Linked at <http://www.potowmack.org/ASPMA057.html>

The *Militia Act of 1792* authorized an inventory of militia weapons called "return of militia". Presidents Washington and Adams had little use for the militia and ignored the inventory requirement. President Jefferson for ideological reasons wanted to emphasize the militia over the regular army created in the Constitution, which was a professional mercenary army modeled after the British Army. He ordered the inventory and was sorely disappointed in compliance. Despite what the gun lobby will tell us now, gun ownership was scarce in the early Republic.

It was however Congress not private individuals whom Jefferson wanted to remedy the problem.

The conscript state militias served no theoretical purpose. No one wanted them. They completely discredited themselves in the War of 1812 and died out as an institution.

RETURN OF MILITIA—Continued.

ARMS, AMMUNITION, AND ACCOUTREMENTS.

STATES AND TERRITORIES.	For what year the Return of	Artillery Side Arms.	Sabres.	Pairs of Pistols.	Muskets.	Rifles.	Fusces.	Bayonets.	Cartridge Boxes.	Knapsacks.	Ham Hods.	Responsoons.	Pounds of Powder.	Cartridges with Balls.	Tumblers and Wagons.	Drums and Pipes.	Loose Balls.	Wires and Brushes.	Shirts.	Scabbards and Belts.	Stands of Colors.
New Hampshire.	1803	1,315	1,915	11,176	—	—	—	4,625	6,516	3,650	11,170	—	950	—	—	—	8,710	—	15,200	2,710	—
Massachusetts.	1803	2,533	2,450	45,075	—	—	—	37,507	38,571	21,461	38,751	—	3,515	—	—	—	61,065	35,562	82,016	39,292	—
Vermont.	1803	1,065	1,634	8,153	—	—	—	2,958	3,378	728	2,508	—	1,104	—	—	—	66,348	4,335	6,693	1,745	—
Rhode Island.	1803	87	87	3,052	—	—	—	2,139	2,263	105	2,833	—	—	—	—	—	—	2,130	4,722	11,909	—
Connecticut.	1803	2,291	2,762	13,920	—	—	—	13,986	14,056	6,483	15,920	718	—	—	—	—	—	14,093	—	14,276	—
New York.	1802	1,071	997	38,588	—	—	—	15,739	13,000	159	9,504	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	22,567	—	—
New Jersey.	1803	82	9,504	9,504	—	—	—	2,511	2,554	13	9,504	—	10	—	—	—	—	—	25,169	—	—
Pennsylvania.	1803	1,708	1,583	20,000	9,604	—	—	20,000	1,494	—	20,000	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2,919	—	—
Delaware.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Maryland.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Virginia.	1802	87	87	8,483	5,921	—	—	7,594	7,485	—	8,283	—	225	—	—	—	5,472	—	503	2,825	—
North Carolina.	1802	32	31	15,477	4,344	—	—	2,092	3,069	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
South Carolina.	1802	1,585	1,057	5,916	5,731	—	1,231	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Georgia.	1803	434	254	1,155	1,233	—	—	203	553	25	784	5	—	4,073	7	—	—	—	—	175	—
Kentucky.	1802	203	212	2,923	11,157	—	—	126	142	—	—	—	—	303	—	—	—	—	23,045	—	—
Tennessee.	1802	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ohio.	1803	29	22	431	1,770	—	—	63	109	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
District of Columbia.	1805	39	39	1,087	75	—	—	1,048	947	—	1,087	—	454	—	—	—	—	—	1,443	44	—
Mississippi Territory.	1803	74	74	160	586	—	—	85	159	—	160	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	236	117	—
Indiana Territory.	1803	—	—	976	976	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	740	—	—

WAR DEPARTMENT, 20th March, 1804.

H. DEARBORN, Secretary of War.

The return of militia inventoried every type of equipment considered important to military preparedness.

Absolutely no one then objected to a state or federal inventory.