

MILITARY ORDER OF THE LOYAL LEGION OF THE UNITED STATES

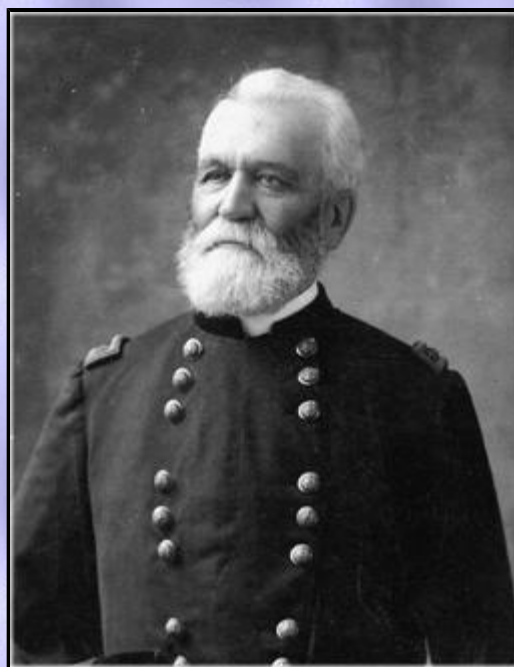


Loyal Legion Vignettes



**MAJOR GENERAL OLIVER OTIS HOWARD, USA
(1830 Maine – 1909 Vermont)
Founder and President of Howard University (1869-1874)
Founder and President of Lincoln Memorial University (1895)
Superintendent of the United States Military Academy at West Point (1881–1882)
Insignia Number 3808, Original Member of the Vermont Commandery
Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States**

**By
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Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States
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General Oliver Otis Howard

(Photograph Courtesy of Karl Frederick Schaeffer)

Oliver Otis Howard was born in Leeds, Maine, on November 8, 1830. He was the son of Rowland Bailey Howard and Eliza Otis. Frequently referred to as the "Christian General," Howard was known for his steadfast abstinence from alcohol, tobacco and swearing, habits he avoided even as a student and a young soldier.

Oliver Otis Howard attended North Yarmouth Academy, graduated from Bowdoin College in 1850, and then attended the United States Military Academy, graduating in 1854, fourth in his class of 46 cadets, as a Brevet Second Lieutenant of Ordnance. He served at the Watervliet Arsenal near Troy, New York, and was the temporary commander of the Kennebec Arsenal in Augusta, Maine. In 1857, he was transferred to Florida and participated in the Seminole Wars. During his time in Florida, he experienced a conversion to evangelical Christianity and at one point considered resigning from the Army to become a minister. Howard returned to West Point in September 1857 to become an Instructor of mathematics and the following year he was promoted to First Lieutenant. With the surrender of Fort Sumter and the beginning of the Civil War, all thoughts of the ministry were put aside and he decided to remain in the service of his country.

Howard was appointed Colonel of the 3rd Maine Infantry Regiment and temporarily commanded a brigade at the First Battle of Bull Run. He was promoted to Brigadier General effective September 3, 1861, and given permanent command of his brigade. He then joined Major General George B. McClellan's Army of the Potomac for the Peninsula Campaign. On June 1, 1862, while commanding a Union brigade in the Battle of Fair Oaks, Howard was wounded twice in his right arm, which was subsequently amputated (He was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1893 for his heroism at Fair Oaks). General Philip Kearny, who had lost his left arm, visited Howard and joked that they would be able to shop for gloves together. Following the amputation of his arm, he spent three month recuperating. Howard recovered quickly though and rejoined the army in time for the Battle of Antietam, during which he rose to division command in the II Corps. He was promoted to Major General in November 1862 and assumed command of the XI Corps the following April; replacing Major General Franz Sigel. The XI Corps was composed largely of German immigrants, many of whom spoke no English. The soldiers were resentful of their new commander and openly called for Sigel's reinstatement.

At the Battle of Chancellorsville, Howard suffered the first of two significant military setbacks. On May 2, 1863, his Corps was on the right flank of the Union line, northwest of the crossroads of Chancellorsville. Robert E. Lee and Lieutenant General Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson created an audacious plan in which Jackson's entire Corps would march secretly around the Union flank and attack it. Howard was warned by Major General Joseph Hooker, now commanding the Army of the Potomac, that his flank was "in the air", not anchored by a natural obstacle, such as a river, and that Confederate forces might be on the move in his direction. Howard failed to heed the warning and Jackson struck before dark, routing the XI Corps and causing a serious disruption to the Union battle plan.

At the Battle of Gettysburg, the XI Corps, still chastened by its humiliation in May, arrived on the field in the afternoon of July 1, 1863. Poor positioning of the defensive line by one of Howard's subordinate division commanders, Brigadier General Francis Barlow, was exploited by the Confederate Corps of Lieutenant General Richard S. Ewell and once again the XI Corps was routed, forcing it to retreat through the streets of Gettysburg, leaving many prisoners behind. On Cemetery Hill, south of town, Howard quarreled with Major General Winfield S. Hancock about who was in command of the defense. Hancock had been sent by Major General George G. Meade with written orders to take command, but Howard insisted that he was the ranking general present. Eventually he relented. He started circulating the story that his Corps' failure had been triggered by the collapse of Major General Abner Doubleday's I Corps to the west, but this excuse was never accepted at the time or by history — the reverse was actually true — and the reputation of the XI Corps was ruined. Howard does receive some credit for the eventual success at Gettysburg because he wisely stationed

one of his divisions (Major General Adolph von Steinwehr) on Cemetery Hill as a reserve and critical backup defensive line. For the remainder of the three-day battle, the XI Corps remained on the defensive around Cemetery Hill, withstanding assaults by Major General Jubal Early on July 2 and participating at the margin of the defense against Pickett's Charge on July 3.

In a conversation with President Lincoln in Washington, DC in 1863, General Howard was asked to consider creating a university for the people in the Appalachia, Cumberland Gap region after the Civil War ended. The people in this area were very poor and President Lincoln was interested in creating an institution in this area that would be open to anyone regardless of race, national origin, sex, age, or religion.

Howard and his XI Corps were transferred to the Western Theater to become part of the Army of the Cumberland in Tennessee. In the Battle of Chattanooga, the XI Corps joined the impulsive assault that captured Missionary Ridge and forced the retreat of General Braxton Bragg. Howard eventually took command also of the IV Corps in the Army of the Cumberland, and with the combined force of more than 80,000 men, led the right wing of Major General William Tecumseh Sherman's famous *March to the Sea*, through Georgia and the Carolinas.

As Sherman drew close to Atlanta, he received news that Major General James B. McPherson, Commander of the Army of the Tennessee, had been killed. In a controversial decision, Sherman gave the command to Howard, citing on Howard's sterling character and his outstanding administrative skills. Howard was good to the task, and his diligence paid off when he was named commander of the Army of the Tennessee on July 28, 1864, an appointment that brought him the distinction of holding major commands in all three of the main field armies of the Union during the Civil War. Although Howard lacked tactical strengths, he brought other talents to the table that ensured he was able to achieve a distinguished career during his military life.

From May 1865 to July 1874, General Howard was commissioner of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands. During his tenure with them he spent more than \$5 million on education, focusing his efforts on African American schools at all levels from elementary to teacher training. In 1869, he had a key role in the founding of Howard University in Washington, D.C. He was placed in command of the Department of the Columbia in 1874, went west to Oregon's Fort Vancouver, where he fought in the Indian Wars, particularly against the Nez Perce, with the resultant surrender of Chief Joseph. In Chief Joseph's famous 1879 Washington, D.C., speech, he claimed, "If General Howard had given me plenty of time to gather up my stock and treated Too-hool-hool-suit as a man should be treated, there would have been no war." Subsequently, Howard became Superintendent of the United States Military Academy at West Point (1881–1882). He retired from the United States Army on November 8, 1894 with the rank of Major General, after more than 40 years of continuous military service. Howard also is remembered for his work with Indian relations, notably with the Apache and New Perce nations. His humanitarian approach made him a respected negotiator, and he was successful in his work with Native Americans throughout the West.

His life after his retirement, however, was far from sedate. He traveled all over the United States, speaking on behalf of causes near to his heart. He was a tireless and creative philanthropist, and his surviving correspondence is a virtual who's who list of prominent individuals with whom he communicated on behalf of the projects he represented.

[HOWARD UNIVERSITY](#)

General Howard also is remembered for playing a role in the founding of Howard University, which was incorporated by Congress in 1867 initially for the training of African American ministers. The school is nonsectarian and is open to both sexes without regard to race. As Commissioner of the Freedmen's Bureau, Howard was known for promoting the welfare and education of former slaves,

freedmen, and war refugees. On November 20, 1866, ten members, including Howard, of various socially concerned groups of the time met in Washington, D.C., to discuss plans for a theological seminary to train colored ministers. Interest was sufficient, however, in creating an educational institute for areas other than the ministry. The result was the Howard Normal Institute for the Education of Preachers and Teachers. On January 8, 1867, the Board of Trustees voted to change the name of the institution to Howard University. Howard served as President from 1869 to 1874.

LINCOLN MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

General Howard never forgot President Lincoln's request to organize a great university for the people in the Cumberland Gap area. The General remembered his commitment to fulfill Lincoln's request. In 1887, General Howard and Revered A.A. Myers, a Congregationalist minister, who came to the Cumberland Gap area in the 1880s, joined with M.F. Overtone, C.F. Eager, A.B. Cistercian, M. Arthur and Robert F. Patterson, a Confederate veteran, in forming Lincoln Memorial University (LMU) in Harrogate, Tennessee in 1895. In commemoration of Lincoln's Birthday, the institution was chartered by the state of Tennessee on February 12, 1887.

The Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum at LMU houses one of the most diverse Lincoln and Civil War collections in the country. Exhibited are many rare items - the cane Lincoln carried that fateful night at Ford's Theatre, two life masks, the tea set he and Mary Todd used in their home in Springfield, and numerous other artifacts. Approximately 30,000 books, manuscripts, pamphlets, photographs, paintings and sculptures tell the story of President Lincoln and the Civil War period in America's history. A number of items on display are from the collections of the Ohio Commandery of Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States.

On December 22, 1899, General Howard's son, Lieutenant Guy Howard, United States Army, was killed at the Rio Grande River, Philippines in the Philippine War, and Howard was devastated. As a part of the healing process, Howard continued to throw himself completely into his last work, establishing a living memorial to Abraham Lincoln. The school was created with a well-defined mission to help the poor youth of Appalachia, and Howard gave his full energy to raising the endowment for Lincoln Memorial University in the Cumberland Gap, a region which had largely remained loyal to the Union during the Civil War. Howard even served as the University's president from 1901 until 1903.

On October 26, 1909, Howard wrote a letter to then LMU President Dr. William L. Stooksbury, about plans to raise money for a medical school to be affiliated with the University. It would be his last correspondence. Howard suffered a stroke that afternoon and quietly died that evening. True to his self-sacrificial nature, as he fell ill, Howard climbed to the top floor of his home to take to his bed so as not to disturb his ailing wife resting on the lower floor. General Oliver Otis Howard went about the work of his long and productive life, quietly and modestly, but the impact he had on the people he served is still bearing fruit.

General Howard was married on February 14, 1855 in Portland, Maine to his childhood sweetheart, Elizabeth Anne Waite, with whom he had seven children: Guy Howard (1855-1899), Grace Ellen (Howard) Gray (1857-1949), James Waite Howard (1860-post 1932), Chauncey Otis Howard (1863-post 1932), John Howard (1867-1921), Harry Stinson Howard (1869-1960), and Bessie (Howard) Bancroft (1871-1920).

General Oliver Otis Howard died on October 26, 1909 in Burlington, Vermont, and is buried there in Lake View Cemetery. A bust of Howard designed by artist James E. Kelly is on display at Howard University. An impressive equestrian statue is on East Cemetery Hill on the Gettysburg Battlefield. A dormitory at Bowdoin College is named for Howard. The Oliver O. Howard Relief Corps of the Grand Army of the Republic provided funds to help destitute former Union soldiers and to support

worthy public causes. It contributed money and the design for the State Flag of Utah in 1922. Howard was the author of numerous books after the war, including Donald's School Days (1878), Nez Perce Joseph (1881), General Taylor (1892), Isabella of Castile (1894), Autobiography (1907), and My Life and Experiences among Our Hostile Indians (1907).

General Howard was elected an Original Companion of the Vermont Commandery of Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, Insignia No. 3808 and was an active member the rest of his life. Four of his sons, Guy, James, John, and Harry, also became affiliated with of the Vermont Commandery as Hereditary Companions.

Descendants of Oliver Otis Howard and descendants of his siblings, are eligible for hereditary membership in the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States (MOLLUS - founded by Civil War officers on April 15, 1865) and the Dames of the Loyal Legion of the United States (founded in 1899 as the auxiliary to the MOLLUS). For more information on either or both organizations, please visit each organization's national website:

[Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States](#)

[Dames of the Loyal Legion of the United States](#)

Sources:

- 1) Membership Records of Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States
- 2) Who's Who in America, p.594.
- 3) Wikipedia: Oliver O. Howard (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oliver_O._Howard)
- 4) Lincoln Memorial University: (see <http://www.lmunet.edu/>)
- 5) Howard University: (see <http://www.howard.edu/>)

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