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COMPILED SERVICE RECORDS OF VOLUNTEER UNION SOLDIERS WHO SERVED IN ORGANIZATIONS FROM THE TERRITORY OF NEBRASKA

Introduction

On the 43 rolls of this microfilm publication, M1787, are reproduced the compiled service records of volunteer Union soldiers belonging to units from the Territory of Nebraska. These records are part of carded records, volunteer organizations: Civil War, 1861-1865, in Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's-1917, Record Group 94.

Background

The Compilation Process

The compilation of service records of Union soldiers began in 1890 under the direction of Col. Fred C. Ainsworth, head of the Record and Pension Office of the Department of War. Abstracts were made from documents in the custody of the Department and from muster, pay, and other rolls borrowed from the Second Auditor of the Treasury. The abstracts made from the original records were verified by a separate operation of comparison; great care was taken to ensure that the abstracts were accurate.

Organizational Histories

The **First Nebraska Cavalry** was organized at Omaha, Nebraska Territory, June 11-July 21, 1861, as the First Regiment Nebraska Infantry. It was to serve for three years. On October 11, 1863, its designation was changed to the First Regiment Nebraska Cavalry. Most original members were mustered out on August 24-25, 1864, due to expiration of their terms of service. The organization, composed of some veterans and recruits, was retained in service. On July 10, 1865, it was consolidated with the First Battalion Nebraska Cavalry, which had been organized at Omaha from January 14-August 31, 1864, to form the First Regiment Nebraska Veteran Cavalry. This regiment was mustered out of Service on July 1, 1866.

The **Second Nebraska Cavalry** was organized at Omaha from October 23, 1862-March 24, 1863, to serve three months. It was mustered out by companies, September 4-December 23, 1863.

The following independent companies, composed primarily of Native Americans, operated against other Indians on the plains and protected emigrants and lines of communications. The **Omaha Scouts** were

organized at Omaha, Nebraska Territory, on May 3, 1865, to serve for one year. Independent Company "A", also known as the **Pawnee Scouts**, was organized at Columbus, Nebraska Territory on May 3, 1865, and was mustered out of service on April 1, 1866.

Records Description

Compiled service records consist of a jacket-envelope for each soldier, labeled with his name, rank, and unit. A typical jacket contains (1) card abstracts of entries relating to the soldier found in original muster and hospital rolls, descriptive books, lists of deserters, returns, and notational cards; and (2) the originals of any papers relating solely to the particular soldier. Examples of the latter include enlistment papers, substitute certificates, casualty sheets, death reports, prisoner of war papers, and correspondence. A jacket may be annotated with cross-references, usually to other file series that include records relating to the individual whose service record has been compiled. The jackets are grouped by regiment or independent battalion or company and thereunder arranged alphabetically by surname of soldier. Because treatment of surnames varied in the filing of records of Omaha and Pawnee Scouts, a record for a soldier with a name such as Bad Earth may sometimes be found under B and sometimes under E, as Earth, Bad.

In addition to jacketed service records, this microfilm publication includes on the last roll unjacketed miscellaneous card abstracts and miscellaneous personal papers relating to volunteer Union soldiers from the Territory of Nebraska. These miscellaneous records were accumulated by the War Department with the expectation that they would be incorporated in individual compiled service records. This expectation was never fulfilled, however, either because insufficient or contradictory information made it impossible to associate the abstract or papers with a particular soldier's service record or because no compiled service record had been established and the abstract or papers did not provide enough evidence to justify establishing one. The miscellaneous card abstracts are arranged alphabetically by soldier's surname, as are the miscellaneous personal papers.

The record of a particular volunteer Union soldier from the Territory of Nebraska may not appear in this microfilm publication for several reasons. First, he may have served in a unit from another State or in the Regular Army. Second, he may have served under a different name or used a different spelling of his name. Third, proper records of his service may not have been made; or, if made, may have been lost or destroyed in the confusion that often attended the initial mobilization, subsequent military operations, and disbandment of troops. Fourth, the references to the soldier in the original records may have been so vague as to make it impossible to determine his correct name or the unit in which he served.

Related Records

Among the records of the Adjutant General's Office in the National Archives are many of the original records that were abstracted or "carded" by the Record and Pension Office. These include, in particular, descriptive books of volunteer organizations: Civil War, 1861-65. Other series in Record Group 94, that may contain information relating to volunteer Union soldiers from the Territory of Nebraska include: (1) carded records relating to staff officers: Civil War, 1861-65, arranged alphabetically by surname of officer, (2) carded medical records, volunteers: Mexican and Civil Wars, 1846-65, arranged by State (or Territory) and thereunder by initial letter of surname, and (3) those portions of carded records, volunteer organizations: Civil War, 1861-65, that comprise records for non-State organizations, such as U.S. Sharp

Shooters, Signal Corps, U.S. Colored Troops, and Veterans Reserve Corps.

Record Group 94 includes a card index that may be used to locate the compiled service record of a Union soldier from the Territory of Nebraska. This index, reproduced as Microfilm Publication M547, *Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the Territory of Nebraska*, contains the names of Nebraska soldiers for whom there are regular compiled service records. An index card gives the name of the soldier and his rank as well as the unit in which he served; sometimes there is a cross-reference to his service in other units or organizations. This index does not cover the miscellaneous card abstracts and personal papers included in this microfilm publication.

Information about Nebraska soldiers who served in the Regular Army is recorded in Registers of Enlistments in the U.S. Army, 1798-1914 (reproduced as Microfilm Publication M233), and in other War Department records in Record Group 94. If an application for a pension was made, information about the soldier may be among the pension application files of the Veterans Administration in Record Group 15. Supposed Union military service is sometimes shown by the records to have been civilian service as a scout, guide, or spy. Evidence of such service may be among the records of the Provost Marshal General's Bureau in Record Group 110.

Record-of-events cards for most Nebraska organizational units have been microfilmed as part of *Compiled Records Showing Service of Military Units in Volunteer Union Organizations* (Microfilm Publication M594). These cards, part of carded records, volunteer organizations: Civil War, 1861-65, in Record Group 94, give stations, movements, and activities of all or a portion of a unit, and sometimes provide information relating to the unit's organization or composition.

Regimental papers filed with the muster rolls of volunteer organizations: Civil War, Mexican War, Creek War, Cherokee Removal, and Other Wars, 1836-65, in Record Group 94, include numbered documents that refer to groups of soldiers and may supplement the information contained in an individual's compiled service record. The rolls and related papers are arranged by alphabetically by State (or Territory), thereunder by arm of service, thereunder numerically by regiment, thereunder chronologically by war, and thereunder by company.

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Miscellaneous Personal Papers