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COMPILED SERVICE RECORDS OF VOLUNTEER UNION SOLDIERS WHO SERVED IN ORGANIZATIONS FROM THE STATE OF OREGON

Introduction

On the 34 rolls of this microfilm publication, M1816, are reproduced the compiled service records of volunteer Union soldiers belonging to units from the State of Oregon. 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 Oregon Cavalry** was organized in Willamette Valley, Oregon, between February and April 1862. In May 1862, the regiment was ordered to Walla Walla Country and Mining Districts of the Nez Perce and Salmon River Countries to protect travelers and miners. The headquarters was at Fort Walla Walla, Washington Territory. The regiment was mustered out on November 20, 1866. **Olney's Company Oregon Cavalry** was a special detachment formed on July 12, 1864, for a scouting expedition; it was mustered out on October 31, 1864.

The **First Oregon Infantry** was organized at large from November 11, 1864, to January 2, 1865. On December 19, 1864, the regiment was ordered to Fort Vancouver, Washington Territory. The unit served throughout the District of Oregon protecting forts in Washington and Idaho Territories from Indian attack. The regiment was mustered out on July 19, 1867.

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.

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 State of Oregon. 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 State of Oregon 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 State of Oregon 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 State of Oregon. This index, reproduced as Microfilm Publication M553, *Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of Oregon*, contains the names of Oregon 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 Oregon 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 (Civil War) in Record Group 110.

Record-of-events cards for most Oregon organizational units have been microfilmed as part of roll 163 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 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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