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COMPILED MILITARY SERVICE RECORDS OF VOLUNTEER UNION SOLDIERS
WHO SERVED IN ORGANIZATIONS FROM THE TERRITORY OF DAKOTA:
1st Battalion Cavalry

Introduction

On the three rolls of this microfilm publication, M1960, are reproduced the compiled military service records of volunteer Union soldiers belonging to the 1st Battalion Dakota Cavalry. The records reproduced are part of the Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780's -1917, Record Group (RG) 94.

Background

Company A, 1st Battalion Dakota Cavalry was organized at Yankton, Dakota Territory, in April 1862 and was mustered out of service on May 9, 1865. Company B was organized at Sioux City, Iowa, on March 31, 1863, and was mustered out on November 15, 1865.

The battalion was assigned to duty in the District of Iowa and Dakota, Department of the Northwest, where it defended the frontier and operated against hostile Indians. From July-October 1864 it participated in Gen. Alfred Sully's Northwest Indian Expedition against hostile Sioux in Dakota Territory. As part of that expedition, the battalion participated in the Battle of Killdeer Mountain on July 28 and in engagements in the Little Missouri Bad Lands, August 6-9. During its time in service, the battalion lost six men, two killed in action and four by disease.

An important source for information about the 1st Battalion Dakota Cavalry, the Northwest Indian Expedition, and Indian disturbances during the Civil War is the War Department's *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901; reprinted Harrisburg, 1971 and 1985). This 128-volume publication, which should be available in most reference libraries, contains operations reports and other official correspondence.

Records Description

Compiled military service records consist of a jacket-envelope for each soldier, labeled with his name, rank, unit, and card numbers. Compilation of these records began in 1890 under the direction of Col. Fred C. Ainsworth, head of the Record and Pension Office of the Adjutant General's Office, Department of War. Information from muster rolls, regimental returns, and other records was copied verbatim onto the cards. A separate card was prepared each time an individual's name appeared on a document. The cards were numbered on the back, and these numbers were entered onto the outside jacket containing the cards. The carded information was verified by a separate operation of comparison; great care was taken to ensure that the cards were accurate.

A typical jacket contains card abstracts of entries found in official records relating to the soldier and original documents relating solely to that individual. Examples of the latter include enlistment papers, substitute certificates, casualty sheets, death reports, and correspondence. Jackets and cards include a section labeled "bookmark" which was reserved for cross-references to other records relating to the individual or his unit. The service records are arranged by arm of service, thereunder numerically by regiment or independent battalion or company, and thereunder alphabetically by name of the soldier.

In addition to the jacketed service records, this publication includes on Roll 3 unjacketed miscellaneous cards. Six of these cards are for soldiers for whom no compiled service records were created. This happened either because insufficient or contradictory information made it impossible to associate the cards with a particular soldier's service record or because no compiled service record had been established and the abstract did not provide enough evidence to justify establishing one. The remaining 18 cards are withdrawal notices identifying specific cards which were removed from the files by the Adjutant General's Office and later returned.

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 the individual unit's muster rolls and returns. Other series in RG 94 that contain information relating to volunteer Union soldiers include carded records relating to Union staff officers, carded medical records of volunteer Union soldiers, unbound and bound regimental records, and "record of events" cards.

The "record of events" cards include information copied from the unit's muster rolls and returns. They show the stations of the battalion at the time the muster roll or return was prepared and sometimes mention battles or skirmishes in which the unit participated. The cards for the Dakota volunteers have been reproduced on roll 9 of National Archives Microfilm Publication M594, *Compiled Records Showing Service of Military Units in Volunteer Union Organizations*.

Record Group 94 also includes a card index to Dakota volunteers, reproduced as Microfilm Publication M536, *Index to Compiled Service Records of Volunteer Union Soldiers Who Served in Organizations From the Territory of Dakota*, which may be used to determine whether a particular individual served in the 1st Battalion Dakota Cavalry. 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 included in this microfilm publication. The National Archives is continually producing microfilm publications of volunteer Union compiled military service records. A complete listing can be found in the National Archives publication, *Microfilm Resources for Research: A Comprehensive Catalog*, which is periodically updated and available on-line at <http://www.nara.gov/>.

If an individual from Dakota served in the Regular Army, information about that service is recorded in registers of enlistments in the U.S. Army and in other War Department records in RG 94. The registers of enlistments have been reproduced as Microfilm Publication M233, *Registers of Enlistment in the U.S. Army, 1798-1914*. If an application for a pension was made, the pension application case file may be among the Records of the Veterans Administration in RG 15. Indexes to the pension applications have been reproduced as Microfilm Publications T288, *General Index to Pension Files, 1861-1934*, and T289, *Organization Index to Pension Files of Veterans Who Served Between 1861 and 1900*.

Other record groups having information pertaining to volunteer Union soldiers and the events in which

they participated include Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (RG 105); Records of the Provost Marshal General's Bureau (Civil War) (RG 110); Records of the Accounting Officers of the Department of the Treasury (RG 217); and Records of the U.S. Army Continental Commands, 1821-1920 (RG 393).

Holdings of the National Archives relating to the Civil War are outlined in Kenneth W. Munden and Henry Putney Beers' *Guide to Federal Archives Relating to the Civil War* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1962) and Henry Putney Beers' *Guide to the Archives of the Government of the Confederate States of America* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1968), reprinted, respectively, as *The Union* (Washington, 1986) and *The Confederacy* (Washington, 1986).

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