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Mounted force letter from General Jesup to the Hon. A. H. Sevier, in relation to mounting a part of the forces of the United States, for the protection of the country south of the Missouri River.

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MOUNTED FORCE.

APRIL 8, 1830.

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LETTER

FROM

GENERAL JESUP TO THE HON. A. H. SEVIER,

In relation to mounting a part of the forces of the United States, for the protection of the country south of the Missouri river.

QUARTERMASTER GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington City, April 5th, 1830.

SIR: I received this morning your letter dated the 3d instant; and have the honor to observe, in reply to your inquiry "whether a mounted force would not, on the whole, be as cheap as an efficient defence by infantry," that it would be difficult to make an estimate of the comparative expense of the two modes; but experience, I think, has abundantly demonstrated that the nature of the country south of the Missouri river, and the character, habits, and resources of the Indians who range on or inhabit it, are such as to render it impossible to secure that portion by infantry alone, how numerous or well appointed soever they may be. As well might we leave the defence of our maritime frontier, and the protection of our foreign commerce, to the artillery stationed on our seaboard. The means of pursuing rapidly, and punishing promptly, those who aggress, whether on the ocean or the land, are indispensable to complete security; and if ships of war are required in the one case, a mounted force is equally so in the other. Were we without a navy, piracies might be committed with entire impunity, not only on the high seas, but in our very harbors, and within view of our forts. So, without a mounted force on the frontier south of the Missouri, the Indian, confident in the capacity of his horse to bear him beyond the reach of pursuit, despises our power, chooses his point of attack, and often commits the outrages to which he is prompted either by a spirit of revenge or a love of plunder in the immediate vicinity of our troops; and the impunity of the first act invariably leads to new aggressions. To compel him to respect us, we must make him feel our power, or, at all events, convince him that he can have no security in flight.

I have the honor to be,

Sir, your obed't serv't,

TH. S. JESUP, *Quartermaster General.*

HON. A. H. SEVIER,

House of Representatives, Washington City.