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Eighteenth and Nineteenth Regiments, Kansas Cavalry Volunteers.

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EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH REGIMENTS, KANSAS
CAVALRY VOLUNTEERS.

JANUARY 17, 1896.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered
to be printed.

Mr. BAKER, of Kansas, from the Committee on Pensions, submitted
the following

REPORT:

[To accompany H. R. 356.]

The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 356) extending the provisions of an act granting pensions to soldiers and sailors, approved June 27, 1890, to the Eighteenth and Nineteenth regiments of Kansas Cavalry Volunteers, have considered the same and respectfully report as follows:

A similar bill was before your committee in the Fifty-third Congress and the report thereon (No. 1945, third session, Fifty-third Congress), fully stating the facts, is adopted by your committee as their report, and the bill is returned with the unanimous recommendation that it do pass.

[House Report No. 1945. Fifty-third Congress, third session.]

The Committee on Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 8631) extending the provisions of an act granting pensions to soldiers and sailors, approved June 27, 1890, to the Eighteenth and Nineteenth regiments of Kansas Cavalry Volunteers, have considered the same and respectfully report as follows:

A report from the officer in charge of the Record and Pension Office, War Department, shows that a battalion of the Eighteenth Kansas Cavalry Volunteers organized under a circular of June 21, 1867, from headquarters Military Division of Missouri, was mustered into the military service of the United States from July 13 to 15, 1867, at Fort Harker, Kans., to serve for a period of four months, and that it was mustered out of service at the same place November 15, 1867.

It also appears from the records that the Nineteenth Regiment Kansas Cavalry Volunteers organized under authority contained in a telegram from the Secretary of War to Lieutenant-General Sherman dated October 6, 1868, was mustered into the United States service by companies from October 20 to 29, 1868, at Topeka, Kans., to serve for a period of six months, and that the regiment was mustered out of service April 18, 1869, at Fort Hays, Kans.

The official report shows that these organizations were called out to aid in the suppression of Indian hostilities, and the records further show that the battalion of the Eighteenth Kansas Cavalry, above referred to, and the Nineteenth Regiment of Kansas Cavalry are the only two volunteer organizations mustered into the military service of the United States since the war of the rebellion.

At the time the Eighteenth Kansas was mustered in at Fort Harker a severe epidemic of cholera prevailed at that place, and it is shown by the records of the War Department that 20 deaths occurred in the battalion from that disease.

On the 21st and 22d of August, 1867, Companies B and C of this battalion were in an engagement with the Cheyenne Indians on Prairie Dog Creek in Kansas, with a loss of 14 officers and men killed and wounded, and Major Armes, of the Tenth United States Cavalry, commends in the highest terms the officers and men of the Eighteenth who took part in this engagement in saving the State of Kansas from further depredations from the Indians.

In his report the governor of Kansas says:

"On the 30th of August Major Moore, with the Eighteenth Kansas, struck a portion of the Indians who had engaged Major Armes on the 21st and 22d, and after an engagement of several hours gained a decisive victory. About the same time Major Elliott, with a detachment of the Seventh United States Cavalry, attacked another band and drove them in a westerly direction toward the headwaters of the Republican. After these several engagements the Indians retired to their winter haunts and left the frontier settlements of Kansas comparatively at peace."

In General Sheridan's report, dated Chicago, Ill., November 1, 1869, speaking of the depredations of the Indians on the plains during the previous summer and winter, he says: "So boldly had this system of murder and robbery been carried on, that not less than 800 people had been murdered since June, 1862—men, women, and children."

It had been the custom of the Indians to raid the frontier settlements during the summer, and then seek security by retiring into the mountains during the winter. General Sheridan continues:

"To disabuse the minds of the savages of their confident security, and to strike them at the period when they were the most, if not entirely helpless, became a necessity, and the general in chief then in command of this division authorized a winter campaign."

The Nineteenth Kansas Cavalry was mustered into the United States service in the last days of October for the purpose of prosecuting the campaign at this season of the year. On the 5th of November the regiment moved from Topeka, Kans., and, crossing the Arkansas River at Wichita, moved in a southwest direction to join the Seventh United States Cavalry, near the junction of Beaver Creek with the North Canadian, 112 miles south of Fort Dodge, at a cantonment called Camp Supply.

On the march the command was caught in a severe snowstorm, and, becoming entangled in the canyons of the Cimarron, did not reach Camp Supply until the 30th of November. Of this incident in the history of the regiment General Sheridan says:

"The regiment lost its way, and, becoming entangled up in the canyons of the Cimarron and in the deep snow, it could not make its way out and was in a bad fix. * * * It had been subsisting on buffalo for eight or nine days. * * * Officers and men behaved admirably in the trying condition in which they were placed, but the poor horses suffered greatly, and a number of them were lost."

Of the march down the Washita General Sheridan says:

"The snow was still on the ground and the weather very cold, but the officers and men were very cheerful, although the men had only shelter tents. We moved due south until we struck the Washita, near Custer's fight of November 27, having crossed the main Canadian, with the thermometer about 18° below zero. On the next day we started down the Washita, following the Indian trail; but finding so many deep ravines and canyons I thought we would move out on the divide, but a blinding snowstorm coming on, and fearing to get lost with a large command and trains of wagons on a treeless prairie without water, we were forced back to the banks of the Washita, where we at least could get wood and water. * * *

"This was continued until the evening of the 16th of December, when we came to the vicinity of the Indians, principally Kiowas. They did not dream that any soldiers could operate in such cold and inclement weather, and we marched down on them before they knew of our presence in the country."

The result of this campaign was that Santanta and Lone Wolf, chiefs of the Kiowas, were taken prisoners, and by a threat of execution that tribe was forced to report at Fort Cobb, together with the Comanches and Apaches, and finally induced to go on their reservation.

From Fort Cobb the command marched to the base of the Washita Mountains and established Fort Sill, near Medicine Bluff. On the 2d of March following the Nineteenth Kansas Cavalry and the Seventh United States Cavalry, under the command of General Custer, went in pursuit of the Cheyennes. The course pursued was via Camp Radiminski, mouth of Elk Creek, to a point on North Fork of Red River, a few miles above the mouth of Salt Fork.

The Cheyenne trail was struck on Salt Fork on the 6th of March, 1869, and followed to the north along the eastern edge of the Llano Estacado until the 20th of March, when the Cheyennes were caught camped on Sweetwater Creek, about 10 miles west of the eastern line of Texas. This march was made practically without transportation or adequate supplies, and for the last few days the men subsisted on mule meat without bread or salt.

In General Custer's official report of this campaign he uses the following language:

"The point at which we found the Cheyenne village was in Texas, on the Sweetwater, about 10 miles west of the State line. Before closing my report I desire to call the attention of the Major-General Commanding to the unvarying good conduct of this command since it undertook the march. We started with all the rations and

forage that could be obtained, neither sufficient for the time for which we have already been out. First it became necessary to reduce the amount of rations; afterwards a still greater reduction was necessary, and to-night most of my men made their suppers from the flesh of mules that have died on the march to-day from starvation. When called upon to move in light marching order, they abandoned tents and blankets without a murmur, although much of the march has been made during the severest winter weather I have experienced in this latitude.

"The horses and mules of this command have subsisted day after day upon nothing but green cottonwood bark. During all these privations the officers and men maintained a most cheerful spirit, and I know not which I admire most, their gallantry in battle or the patient, but unwavering, perseverance and energy with which they have withstood the many disagreeable ordeals of this campaign.

"As the term of service of the Nineteenth Kansas Cavalry is approaching its termination, and I may not again have the satisfaction of commanding them during active operations, I desire to commend them—officers and men—to the favorable notice of the Commanding-General. Serving on foot, they have marched in a manner and at a rate that would put some of the regular regiments of infantry to the blush. Instead of crying out for empty wagons to transport them, each morning every man marched with his troop, and—what might be taken as an example by some of the line officers of the regular infantry—company officers marched regularly on foot at the head of their respective companies; and now, when approaching the termination of a march of over 300 miles, on greatly deficient rations, I have yet to see the first straggler.

"In obtaining the release of the captive white women, and that, too, without ransom or the loss of a single man, the men of my command, and particularly those of the Nineteenth Kansas, who were called into service owing to the murders and depredations of which the capture of these women formed a part, feel more fully repaid for the hardships they have endured than if they had survived an overwhelming victory over the Indians."

Your committee is further advised by Hon. H. L. Moore, Member of Congress, who was the major commanding the Eighteenth Kansas during the whole term of its service, that this battalion, as well as the Nineteenth Kansas, was composed largely of men whose homes had been devastated and families murdered by the Indians during their raids on the frontier settlements. The Eighteenth suffered a loss of some 10 per cent from cholera and the casualties of battle. Its service was constant and arduous during the whole term of its enlistment.

The Nineteenth Kansas, of which Mr. Moore was lieutenant-colonel, and which he commanded during the latter half of its term of service, prosecuted this campaign during the most inclement weather, and, as the official report shows, much of the time without adequate food or camp equipage. The result of the campaign was to clear the plains of the Indians of the Southwest by forcing them onto their reservations, where they have remained ever since.

Upon full and careful consideration of this bill your committee are unanimously agreed that it is one of exceptional merit. The service rendered by these two organizations was of a very exceptional character, and the results of the same have been widespread and beneficent.

No dangerous precedent will be established by the enactment of this bill into law, as it will be remembered these are the only volunteer organizations which have been mustered into the United States service since the civil war.

The bill is therefore returned with the recommendation that it do pass.

