

THE UNITED STATES ARMY IN WASHINGTON TERRITORY.

The operations of the United States Army were more extensive and more interesting in the Territory of Washington during the first years after the separation from Oregon than at any period since. They included several years of warfare with the Indians, and in connection therewith required the establishment of a number of military posts. The troubles with the Indians were no more than settled before another of alarming character loomed up in the San Juan Island embroglio of 1859-'60. There were also operations in military roads, some of which were opened and some merely projected, but all of which were more or less exciting in those the days of first and small things. The soldiers came and went. Barracks were built at Steilacoom, Port Townsend, Bellingham, San Juan, Colville and elsewhere, at enormous expense, and abandoned after a few years' occupancy. Fortifications were erected on San Juan Island, and others were contemplated at Point Defiance and like places. The War of Rebellion changed matters greatly, the many regular soldiers being displaced by a few volunteers, and not until nearly forty years later were there so many army posts and so many Federal troops in Washington as were here a half century ago. It is not the purpose of this article to enter in detail upon the works and movements of the United States soldiers here at that time, but merely to tell in briefest manner possible of the posts temporarily or permanently established, and equally briefly of a few of their occupants. Many of the officers at these stations became very prominent during the Civil War a few years later, going from the lower ranks to the very top, two of them—Captain U. S. Grant and Lieutenant P. H. Sheridan—becoming commanders over all. Grant was at Fort Vancouver in 1853, and Sheridan at the Cascades in 1856, and later at Fort Vancouver and at Fort Hoskins in Oregon. It may be just as well here to correct a common and oft-repeated misstatement, that these two officers were stationed at Fort Steilacoom, and that they were known to many of the old residents, slept and ate in various public houses, played billiards and did similar and many remarkable things at different places in Western Washington. Neither of these men ever lived on Puget Sound, ever visited it or ever saw it, and the stories told of them so glibly in connection with this part of the country are fiction pure and simple.

The first military posts established in Washington were in the summer of 1849, General B. Riley then having command of the United States military forces on the Pacific. Major Hathaway then landed at Vancouver, and began a station that has continued to this day; that has been favored in the past above all others on the Pacific Coast except the Presidio at San Francisco, and that now is more extensive and consequential than at any time before. Captain Bennett M. Hill came up the Coast on the same ship with Major Hathaway, but continued on to Puget Sound, where he located an army post on the prairie back of the present town of Steilacoom. The suite was occupied as a garrison for about twenty years, when it was abandoned, the land and buildings upon it being acquired by the Territory for the purposes of a hospital for the insane, and so used since. These two were the only military encampments for seven years. Colonel Bonneville succeeded Major Hathaway, and Major Larnard followed Captain Hill, at Vancouver and Steilacoom, respectively.

The forts or posts, their commanders and troops, were as here stated for the first eight years of Washington Territory:

1853.

Fort Vancouver—Two companies of the Fourth United States Infantry, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel B. L. E. Bonneville.

Fort Steilacoom—Two companies of the Fourth United States Infantry, commanded by Brevet Major Chas. H. Larnard. While at this station Major Larnard visited Whidby Island with a few soldiers in an open boat, looking after troublesome Indians. A storm arose; the boat was lost, and he and others were drowned.

Brigadier-General Ethan Allen Hitchcock then commanded the Pacific Division. Headquarters were at Benicia, California.

1854.

Fort Vancouver—Two companies of the Fourth Infantry, under Lieutenant-Colonel Bonneville.

Fort Steilacoom—Two companies of the Fourth Infantry, under Captain D. A. Russell.

In 1854, '55 and '56 the Department of the Pacific was commanded by Brevet Major-General John E. Wool.

1855.

Fort Vancouver—Two companies of the Fourth Infantry, under Major G. J. Rains.

Fort Steilacoom—Two companies of the Fourth Infantry, under Captain M. Maloney.

1856.

Fort Vancouver—One company of the Fourth Infantry, under Lieutenant-Colonel T. Morris.

Fort Steilacoom—Three companies of the Fourth and Ninth Infantry, under Lieutenant-Colonel Silas Casey.

New Post on Muckleshoot Prairie—Two companies of the Third Artillery and Fourth Infantry, under Captain E. D. Keyes.

Camp on Naches River—Three companies of the Ninth Infantry, under Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel E. J. Steptoe.

Camp on the Yakima River—Eight companies of the First Dragoons, Third Artillery, Fourth and Ninth Infantry, under Colonel George Wright.

New Post at Cascades—One company of the Ninth Infantry, under Captain C. S. Winder.

1857.

Fort Vancouver—One company of the Fourth Infantry, under Lieutenant-Colonel T. Morris.

Fort Steilacoom—Two companies of the Fourth Infantry, under Captain M. Maloney.

Fort Bellingham—One company of the Ninth Infantry, under Captain George E. Pickett.

Escort to Northwestern Boundary Commission—One company of the Ninth Infantry, under Captain D. Woodruff.

Fort Townsend—One company of the Ninth Infantry, under Major Granville O. Haller.

Military Post on Muckleshoot Prairie—One company of the Ninth Infantry, under Second Lieutenant D. B. McKibbin.

Fort Simcoe, Sixty-five Miles North of Fort Dalles, in Simcoe Valley, Yakima County—Three companies of the Ninth Infantry, under Major R. S. Garnett.

Fort Walla Walla—Four companies of the First Dragoons, Third Artillery, Fourth and Ninth Infantry, under Lieutenant-Colonel Steptoe.

En Route for Fort Walla Walla—One company of the First Dragoons, under Captain A. J. Smith.

The Department of the Pacific was commanded by Brigadier-General Newman S. Clark in 1857 and also in 1858.

1859.

Fort Vancouver—Five companies of the Third Artillery and Fourth Infantry, under Lieutenant-Colonel Morris.

Fort Steilacoom—Three companies of the Fourth and Ninth Infantry, under Lieutenant-Colonel Casey.

Escort to Northwestern Boundary Commission—One company of the Ninth Infantry, under Captain D. Woodruff, at Semiahmoo Bay. Also one company of the Ninth Infantry under Captain J. J. Archer at Osoyoos Lake.

Fort Bellingham—One company of the Ninth Infantry, under Captain Pickett.

Harney Depot, in Colville Valley—Two companies of the Ninth Infantry, under Major P. Lugenbeel.

Fort Townsend—One company of the Fourth Infantry, under Major Haller.

Fort Cascades—One company of the Third Artillery, under Captain J. A. Hardie.

Fort Walla Walla—Four companies of the First Dragoons and Ninth Infantry, under Colonel Wright.

Escort to Lieutenant John Mullen's Walla Walla and Fort Benton Road Party—A detachment of the Third Artillery, under Lieutenant J. L. White.

General William S. Harney commanded the Department of Oregon, with headquarters at Fort Vancouver, in 1859, and in 1860, until relieved by Colonel George Wright.

1860.

Fort Vancouver—Six companies of Engineers and Third Artillery, under Major F. O. Wyse.

Fort Steilacoom—Four companies of the Fourth and Ninth Infantry, under Lieutenant-Colonel Casey.

Fort Walla Walla—Four companies of the First Dragoons and Ninth Infantry, under Major W. H. Grier.

Fort Cascades—One company of the Fourth Infantry, under Lieutenant F. Mallory.

Camp Chehalis, on Gray's Harbor—One company of the Fourth Infantry, under Captain Maloney.

Camp Pickett, on San Juan Island—One company of the Ninth Infantry, under Captain Pickett.

Harney Depot—Four companies of the Ninth Infantry, under Major Lugenbeel.

Escort to Lieutenant Mullan's Walla Walla and Fort Benton Road Party—Detachment of the Third Artillery, under Lieutenant White.

En Route to the Department at the Citadel on the Missouri River, 89 Miles Below Fort Benton—Recruits, under Major G. A. H. Blake, of the First Dragoons.

Escort to Northwestern Boundary Commission at Semiahmoo Bay—One company of the Ninth Infantry, under Second Lieutenant McKibben.

Escort to Northwestern Boundary Commission—Detachment of the Ninth Infantry, under Lieutenant E. E. Camp.

“The Department of Oregon” lasted but one year, or a little more, the Department of the Pacific succeeding it, as it also preceded it.

The reader will bear in mind that the foregoing reports of garrisons and commanders were based upon the situation at each post on the 30th of June. Officers then may have been in temporary command, and occasionally were, and again posts were at times temporarily abandoned, and so do not appear in the reports.

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