THE FORGOTTEN BATTALION

(Being a short chronicle of some of the hardships and conditions endured by Indian war veterans in the Phil Kearney massacre of December 21st, 1866, and the Wagon Box Fight of August 2, 1867, as chronicled by William Murphy.)

I will give my experiences from the time I left Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, April 7, 1866. We marched to Fort Kearney, Nebraska, arriving there May 15, having marched every day, Sunday included. We passed or were passed by all kinds of rigs going in both directions, but mostly immigrants and bull trains. The immigrants were passing the finest kind of land for farming purposes, but one could travel without seeing a settler's house anywhere after the second day out. Buffalo and antelope were plentiful.

On arriving at Fort Kearney, we were issued two days' rations consisting chiefly of seven hardtack. Each hardtack was about four inches square and three-eighths of an inch thick. The balance of the rations were in the same proportion. The explanation given us was that the quartermaster in charge of the stores of rations had run short. A hungry man could have eaten the entire two rations at one meal and asked for more.

On May 18th I was assigned to Company A, Second Battalion, 18th U. S. Infantry. We left Kearney the 19th and marched to Julesburg, where we built a scow to ferry across the South Platte River, which was running bank full. On trying out the scow, we found it would not work owing to the quick-sands and shallows. In places the water would be only two or three inches deep while a few feet away there would be seven or eight feet of water. Two of our men got caught in the quick-sands and were drowned. We finally crossed by having a long rope stretched from man to man, strapping our guns and equipment to our backs and holding to the rope. Some of the men were up to their arm pits in water and some traveled nearly dry shod. We were ordered not to stop for anything, for if we did we would get stuck in the quick-sand.

Nothing more of an exciting nature happened until we passed through Scott's Bluffs. There an eight-yoke bull-team stampeded with two wagons loaded with parts and equipment for a saw-mill, and ran down a steep hill to the North Platte. I do not believe any of the steers were alive when they got to the bottom of the hill. This saw-mill was intended for Fort Phil Kearney and arrived a month or six weeks later. This of course delayed us some in building the fort.

At this time, at Fort Laramie, army officers and Red Cloud and his warriors held a council but came to no agreement. The report that we men got was that Red Cloud had issued an ultimatum to the officers that he would kill every white man that crossed the North Platte. At that time there were Indians—Sioux, Cheyennes and Arapahoes—camping for a mile or two along the North Platte and Laramie Rivers and the Government was feeding them—at least to the point of giving them beef steers to kill. They ate them all but the hides, hoofs and horns without washing. At that time we were shown samples of their marksmanship with the bow and arrow. The young boys could hit a button, pencil or any small article at about thirty yards.

After the council, we left Fort Laramie, crossed the North Platte at Bridger's Ferry, and after that we had a picket line outside of the guards. We kept this up till we built the stockade at Phil Kearney. The order of the day was in putting a guard to work building the stockade and our barracks then went on picket at night. Every other trick had one night in.

We arrived at Fort Reno about the first of July and that afternoon while the stock were grazing near camp, with some of the mules, being picketed, some hobbled and some being herded by a number of the men, a heavy hail storm came up with hail stones as large as pullets' eggs. Evidently the mules and horses thought it was no fit country for them. We had had some trouble about an hour previously in getting them to ford the Powder River, but they went back over it as though it were dry land. The animals that were picketed pulled their pins; the hobbled ones and even the stock the herders were riding all stampeded. The herders finally stopped their horses two or three miles from where they started. A company of cavalry from Fort Reno, with the herders, trailed the herd all night and it was overtaken at Pumpkin Buttes, some forty-five miles from the Fort. We got the stock back the next evening. If there had been a few Indians with their spears and buffalo robes, they could easily have had a herd of six or seven hundred head of horses and mules, and it is extremely doubtful if Fort Phil Kearney and Fort C. F. Smith would have been built had this happened.

I was detailed the next day to help load some wagons with provisions from the store-rooms at Reno. The warerooms were built of cottonwood logs, chinked and daubed with mud and having dirt roofs. Some of the daubing had dropped out and snow had drifted in. The dirt roofs also leaked and added to the dirty mess. (The soldiers made

great improvement in that Fort in the summers of 1866 and 1867.) We loaded up some sacks of bacon. I do not know how old it was, but the fat had commenced to sluff off from the lean and it was from three to five inches thick. There was a lot of flour in the store rooms and the mice had tunneled through it and the bacon, evidently for some time. Third of July was pay day and we received four months pay. There was some bootlegging, but very little drunkenness in those days. One method I saw here for punishing drunkenness was on this day, and one of the worst cases of cruelty I saw in the army. At the guard tent four stakes were driven into the ground and the drunken soldier was stretched at full length and tied to them. This was called the "Spread Eagle." The sun was beating down on him when I saw him, and I thought he was dead. Flies were eating him up and were running in and out of his mouth, ears and nose. It was reported that he died, but in the army one can hear all kinds of reports. I only saw that one case, but heard they started the same thing at Fort Reno a month or two later and caused a riot or mutiny. The commander gave the soldier his discharge as a compromise.

Our next camp was "Crazy Woman" (1) and was reached after marching for twenty-eight miles on a very hot day with no water except what we carried. The water was found to be very bad after we reached the North Platte, with the exception of one camp—I believe they called it Brown's Springs. (2) Most of the water was impregnated with alkali, which had a bad effect on lots of the men. Many of the soldiers had bad feet, owing to being forced to wear woolen socks in the hot weather, but no other kind was issued. Add to this the fact that there was only one ambulance available for sick soldiers, as the women and children had all the others in use, and you have a picture of what it meant for a soldier to be sick.

After crossing Crazy Woman, we found a wide bottomland on the north side and the road entered a long ravine, coming out on top of the divide going towards Buffalo Wallow. (3) This was a bad place and the Indians killed several people there during our stay in the country, stripping, mutilating and scalping the bodies. They may still be buried there, as we dug holes along the side of the road and then dropped the bodies in, covering them with rocks when possible to keep the wolves and wolverines from digging them

(1) Crazy Woman—a tributary of Powder River.

(2) Brown's Springs—Some 40 or 50 miles northwest of old Fort Fetterman.

(3) Buffalo Wallow—About 12 miles north of where the Bozeman Trail crossed Crazy Woman and a short distance off the road on the right hand side going north.

up. Sometimes an Indian would dig up the body and drag it down the road.

The next bad place was Buffalo Wallow. Several were killed there—immigrants, citizens and soldiers. We buried them as described above, and at every camp ground from C. F. Smith on, there are one or more bodies. Buffalo Wallow and Crazy Woman, however, were the two worst places between Fort Reno and Fort C. F. Smith.

We arrived at the forks of the Big and Little Pineys the 13th or 14th of July. For some reason they picked out a location about seven miles from the timber and from five to eight miles from any hay bottom. A Federal Judge who had been a judge of one of the territories was with us. I believe he had something to do with the selection of the location of the Fort, as he and his partner had a bull train. There was a man who was surely "on to his job." He was a good diplomat. He made love to men, women and children and lived at the fort most of the time. His partner ran the teams.

About the middle of July Phil Kearney was staked out. Up to the 17th of July we hadn't seen an Indian and had commenced to think the threat of Red Cloud at Fort Laramie was just a bluff, but the rest of that summer from July 17th, 1866, and continuously thereafter until July 14th, 1868, he was on the job. There was hardly a day passed at Phil Kearney, up to December 21st, 1866—the date of the massacre—, that we did not see Indians and the others at Fort Reno and C. F. Smith had about the same experience. The usual order of the day was to make a forced march to the relief of some immigrant or freight train. In most cases the Indians had taken their toll and gone before we arrived. On July 17th the Indians killed an Indian trader at Peno Valley, about four miles north of Phil Kearney. The Indians killed French Pete Gayzous and his five men, ransacked his wagons and stripped, scalped and mutilated the men. He was married to a Sioux squaw. She hid in the bushes until the soldiers rescued her. She was at the fort for about two months and left one night.

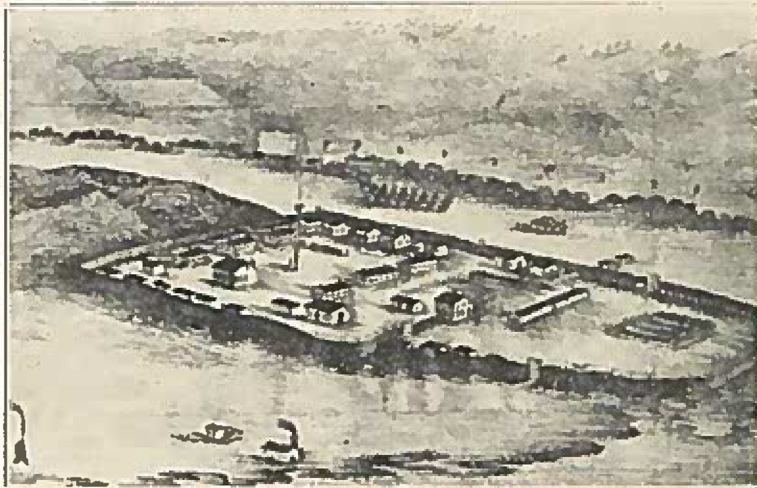
The same day the Indians ran off what we called our "dead herd." They were mules and horses that had sore necks, sore backs or were crippled. Some were crippled at the stampede a few days before. It took several men all day to drive them from one camping ground to another fifteen to twenty miles away. That day also three men were wounded and two killed. One man—John Donovan, of my company—was wounded twice, once with a poisoned arrow. One of the men received an arrow wound and an-

other a bullet wound. When the herd stampeded they ran across the Pineys and we could scarcely see them for the cloud of dust they raised. The mounted men followed until nearly dark but only found four dead animals.

About July 20th, Orderly-Sergeant Lang of my company and I bought two fresh cows from an immigrant train. No one wanted to work in the kitchen, so I volunteered in order to be able to take care of the cows morning and evening. It was not known that I had any interest in the cows or it might have caused some trouble. We had a first class baker in the company who volunteered to do the baking and cooking At that time the Government did not furnish cooks or bakers. They simply furnished the rations and the soldier could cook them himself or eat them raw if he saw fit. They furnished no vegetables. We cooked soup, bacon and coffee and dished it out to the men in their cups and plates—we had no dining room. We boiled everything. I believed the bacon would have killed the men if it had not been thoroughly boiled. As it was it surely came near to it that winter. During the winter of 1866 and 1867 the bacon and flour I had seen at Reno was given to us. The flour had been hauled sixty-five miles and handled several times. The result was that the refuse left by the mice was well mixed with the flour and we found a number of dead mice in it also. As we couold not get a sieve, we manufactured one out of a burlap sack by pulling out some of the strings and nailing it on a wooden frame. We got most of the larger refuse out. The bacon, where the fat had commenced to sluff off from the lean, was yellow with age and bitter as quinine. Some of the worst we shaved off, but we could not spare too much. One reason why our rations were so scanty was that flour was worth $100.00 per sack and bacon, coffee and beans proportionately. The companies of those times had no quartermaster or commissary sergeants and two or three men would be detailed to go and get the rations. They were piled out in a heap and you could take them or leave them.

At this time the Second Battalion of the 18th Infantry was divided up by leaving two companies at Fort Reno to relieve two volunteer companies. Four companies went sixty-five miles north of Reno and built Fort Phil Kearney. Two companies went ninety miles farther north and built Fort C. F. Smith on the bank of the Big Horn which left four companies at Phil Kearney. I was among those left at this place. We started in building the Fort Phil Kearney stockade, which was six hundred feet by eight hundred feet. The logs were set three feet in the ground, projected

eight feet and were hewed on two sides to a touching surface. We built quarters for the officers, ware-rooms, sutler's store, guard house, stockade for the mules and quarters for the men. There were approximately two hundred and fifty men at the Fort, but I could not vouch for the exact number. I was a member of Company "A" of forty-eight men. Company K was the largest and had about sixty-five men, if I remember correctly. Some time after we established the Ford, Company "C" of the Second U. S. Cavalry arrived with some sixty men which made about



Fort Phil Kearney in 1857, from a sketch made by Bugler and Nicoll of the U. S. Cal. Courtesy of Major A. B. Ostrander.

three hundred all told. Some reports stated that we had a mounted infantry, but that was a mistake They were about thirty men who were detailed out of the Infantry company at the Fort.

On December 6, 1866, the wood train was attacked. In itself this was nothing unusual, as it was an every day occurrence. Colonel Carrington, with Company "C" of the Second Cavalry and some mounted men, went to its relief. The Indians retreated and crossed the Pineys and Carrington followed them and was nearly trapped. This was two or three miles north of where the massacre occurred December 21st, following. It was at this time that Lieutenant Bingham and Sergeant Bowers were killed. Carrington himself had charge of the command. Bingham was on the skirmish line and was on the right flank with Sergeant Bowers and John Donovan. Carrington saw his danger

and had the recall sounded. That left Lieutenant Bingham, Sergeant Bowers and John Donovan cut off by the Indians. They dismounted for a short time, but decided that their only chance was to run the gauntlet, as their commander had retreated to a higher point. Lieutenant Bingham and Sergeant Bowers were pulled off their horses by the Indians. John Donovan was armed with a Colt army revolver and a single shot Star carbine using a copper cartridge, the same as a Spencer carbine. The revolver, he told me, was all that saved him when the Indians were on each side of him trying to pull him off his horse, for just in the nick of time he shot one on each side. He was a bunkie of mine and a good man and was a Civil War veteran. We both belonged to the same company—Second Battalion, 18th U. S. Infantry. He told me that Bingham was unarmed except for a cavalry sabre.

The Phil Kearney Massacre, December 21, 1866.

We had a fine fall, with cool nights, and on this day the wood train left as usual, about seven o'clock, to go to the timber. As I remember, we mounted guard as usual at eight o'clock. I was in the Orderly-Sergeant's office giving him the money for the milk when the Orderly gave him the order to have Company "A" go to the relief of the wood train. They "fell in" in front of our quarters, which was the men's northwest quarters of the garrison. The main gate was at the north end of the stockade. The road ran by the west end of the quarters and passed by the adjutant's office and all officers' quarters, to the government storerooms and into the stock corral. The bastion of the stockade was at least two hundred feet from where the men fell in in front of the quarters. I was standing right there and saw the men start on a double quick and go up over Sullivan's hill. From the position of the troops, the guard could not have heard any command given, for he would have had to hear the command through the buildings. Captain Fetterman was the captain of Company "A." Fetterman was at the fort for only a short time, not over fifteen days, from my recollection.

I did not see the mounted men go out. They never passed through the main fort, but went out either the east or the west side of the stockade where the stock was kept. At the noon hour we could hear volleys plainly, and they continued for a long period of time. About two or two-thirty, Colonel Carrington ordered reinforcements of about forty-five men under Captain Tenyck to go out They went at a double-quick, or as fast as they could, until they came to the crossing of the Big Piney. Cool nights had caused ice

to form on the edges of the stream, but this stream was hard to cross at any time of the year. The men had to remove their shoes and stockings to get across. At that time Colonel Carrington's orderly, a man by the name of Sample, met the reinforcements and told Captain Tenyck that the men were all dead and that the Indians were all over the ground where the men had been. Some of the men said that this was Sample's second trip out with information. I could not say, as I saw him but once for certain. In reply to this, Captain Tenyck said that there were not enough Indians in the country to kill the men. He advanced along the road with a few men on each side on the ridges as skirmishers. When they got to the top of the divide which separates the Piney Creeks from the Peno Valley, where the men had been stationed, they found that the Indians had withdrawn from where they had massacred the soldiers and seemed to be rehearsing the battle. They were shooting, shouting and charging up and down the hill over and over again. I suppose the hill must have been as much as a mile away from where the men were massacred. Our first thought was that the battle was still going on, but a man from my company by the name of McLain who had been with the haying party and was familiar with the road, said, "There are the men down there, all dead." Sure enough There was at that time a large stone that had the appearance of having dropped from a great height and thereby split open, leaving a space between the pieces men could pass through, which made a good protection for a small body of men, I should say for about twenty-five or thirty. Around this rock was where the main body of the men lay. There were just a few down on the side of the ridge north of the rock, not more than fifty feet from the main body. Along down the ridge, farther north and east, we found the bodies of Captain Brown, the two citizens, Wheatly and Fisher, and also a man of my company by the name of Baeber. They were scalped, stripped and mutilated. They must have put up a hard fight, as they were all armed with breechloading rifles and a lot of empty shells lay all around The Indians had given Baeber an extra dose. It looked as though they had first stripped him and then filled his body with arrows, as they were sticking out of him all over like porcupine quills. He had straight black hair and looked something like an Indian himself. He had passed through the Civil War, as had three-fourths of the men that were killed. In some reports of the massacre it was stated that the men were ambushed, but looking over the ground anyone could see, and can now see, that they had

a very good position for the arms that were used in those days. There was no stampede or ambush. Col. Carrington sent two empty wagons and an ambulance, and possibly one box of ammunition of one thousand rounds (certainly not more than that.) These conveyances were used in bringing in the dead. There was not even one load, 20,000 rounds, in the three forts. They started out with twenty rounds each and undoubtedly used some of this on their detail work before the massacre. We had known for a long time that we were short of ammunition.

On the ground around the rocks there were thousands of arrows, a lot of which were picked up by our men.

It was customary, I understood, to have the guards have target practice when they came off guard, but our guns were loaded when we got into the Indian country and were kept so. We had no target practice of any kind. At the time of the massacre they tried to show that Captain Tenyck showed cowardice and took a roundabout way, but this was not true. One thing was sure about Tenyck—there was no cowardice in his make-up. He could not have taken a roundabout way if he wanted to do so, as his command was in plain sight of the fort. There was an Indian riding around near where the bodies of the dead were lying. He hollered for the men to come down. Captain Tenyck told some of the men to go down and load the wagons and ambulances with the bodies. All of the bodies were stripped, scalped and mutilated with the exception of two who were not scalped but the Indians had drawn a buffalo bag over their heads. We returned to camp without firing a shot. It was dark when the 45 men under Captain Tenyck returned to the fort.

At the fort all was excitement. The magazine at the fort was a half dug-out located on the parade grounds. The men worked all night there building a stockade all around it with green planks and putting water and provisions inside in case of a siege. The next afternoon Colonel Carrington with about fifty men went after the balance of the bodies. They dug a long trench and put two or three bodies into each box.

A day or two after the massacre the weather turned bitterly cold and the men were badly frozen trying to bury the dead. There was a heavy fall of snow which drifted the roads and ravines badly. The Master of Transportation had left some time in November and with him in his pockets went the money for our supply of wood and hay. It was reported that he went to Canada. We had to go seven miles for pine wood for the officers. The men got green cottonwood from the Piney bottoms and fed the tops

to the mules. The poor mules ate holes through the logs in their stables. We had to go to Reno, sixty-five miles away, for corn. The snow was very deep and it took several days to make the trip. The men suffered terribly as there was no shelter for men or mules and they were three or four nights out on the road. The mercury dropped to twenty-five and forty below zero and kept that way for about six weeks. Our shoes were made of cheap split leather and the shoddy clothes that were furnished at that time were not any protection. One thing in our favor was that after the first few days storm we had very little wind. Burlap sacks were at a premium and saved our lives. We wrapped them about our shoes to keep from freezing, for there were no overshoes or rubbers to be had at the fort. A few years later soldiers were furnished fur overcoats and overshoes. Some time the 1st of January reinforcements arrived, marching on foot from Fort Laramie. They had had to shovel snow all the way. Their arrival made our conditions, if anything, worse, for they had no provisions and no feed for the stock. Two companies of Cavalry that came to the relief of the fort returned at once to Fort Laramie. They had brought some extra ammunition with them which we needed badly. Most of the men were badly frozen.

In the early spring we were issued some cornmeal, ground at the fort. We were not as badly off as the men at Fort C. F. Smith. They were abandoned from the middle of November, 1866, until March, 1867, and corn was about all they had to eat. I am of the opinion that the officers thought that the men were all killed at the time of the massacre and no one was left. We didn't have a stick of wood three days after the massacre. The slabs from the mills were used in roofing the barracks and these were all covered with dirt except the officers' quarters and all of the buildings in the stock stockade. The cull slabs were used by the mills to keep up steam. The wood and hay all went to Canada with the Master of Transportation. About the first of March two sergeants—two men that should have monuments, but forgotten—volunteered to go to Fort C. F. Smith and see what had become of the men there. The snow was very deep and they went on snow shoes. They finally returned, bringing some Crow Indians with them and a lot of mail packed on dogs. The men at all three forts were out of tobacco and some of them seemed to miss that as much as their rations.

In the spring of 1867 General John E. Smith arrived with recruits. They had been snowed in all winter on the Platte River where Fort Fetterman was built later. After

his arrival, there was a great change at the fort. Men up to this time had worked at all kinds of work. There were all kinds of mechanics in the army, and they had built the fort, driven teams, etc., but had had no drill or target practice. General Smith put all extra men working at extra pay at 35c per day. We had target practice for the first time. This was expensive, as the government charged twenty-five cents per cartridge to the men if they were short. We received a couple of orders from Omaha, Nebraska, Department of the Platte, never to shoot at an Indian until he shot at you It was undersigned by General Crooke. He wanted us to save the ammunition, I suppose.

The spring of 1867 also was the time the effects of the spoiled flour and bacon showed up. All of the men that were at the fort at the time it was established got the scurvy. Some lost their teeth and some the use of their legs. In the spring when the grass came up there were lots of wild onions, and the scurvy gang was ordered out to eat them. The writer had to get out on his hands and knees for some time and then the general order came not to let the men dig onions, as some of them at Julesburg had been poisoned, but we went out just the same. We thought we might just as well die at once as to die by inches. The Government carried these men on the roll until their time was up. There were several of my company discharged at Omaha on the first of March, 1869. In this way they avoided the necessity of giving a pension, as would have been compulsory if let out as they they should have been. I remember one man they gave a "Bob-Tail" discharge to because he got drunk a few days before his time to be discharged. I do not know what became of him, as both of his legs were as stiff as posts from the hips down. A lot of men who should have been discharged for disability were thus carried or gotten rid of by some other means and did not get the pension they were justly entitled to.

At Omaha Barracks I saw another cruelty similar to the one I saw at Phil Kearney in 1866. A member of Company "C" had broken some of the rules, just what I do not know now if I ever did. His head was shaved and he was branded with a hot iron and drummed out of the army. At that time it was suicide to go a mile from the fort, for the Indians watched the road constantly, but this did not seem to matter. The day for carrying out the penalty had arrived, so he was drummed out About that time there was a bull train coming in and I suppose they picked him up. I had thought that this custom was just a way the officers of Fort Phil Kearney had of punishment, but by February

or March, 1869, there had been four or five men drummed out of the Omaha Barracks. In each instance the men were branded with a hot iron, their heads were shaved, they were marched around the fort with a fife and drum playing "Poor Old Soldier," and then drummed out. (The cruelty was not all practiced by the Indians.)

General Smith was a strict officer, but he was just. Our rations were better and things went along smoother. After the massacre, the Indians did not show up again until some time in May, owing to the condition of their ponies, I suppose. They then commenced to attack the trains again but we had more men to guard them by that time. In the summer of 1866 a detail of about seven men was the limit. In the summer of 1867 it was about twenty men.

The Wagon Box Fight

About July 1st, twenty men were detailed from Company "A" to guard the Gilmore and Porter bull train. They had the wood contract and had established their camp about six miles from the fort. They used only the running gear to haul the logs on, so used the wagon boxes to form a corral about two or three hundred yards from the timber. The logs were hauled out to the corral and the teams circled around the corral, and some loaded and some hauled logs and top-loaded at the corral. They could haul a full load from the corral to the fort, but only a small load out of the timber. These logs were some sixteen to eighteen feet long. August second, the day of the fight, the Indians charged up to these wood piles which were fifteen or twenty feet from the corral. The wagon boxes were of the "Prairie Schooner" type, about five feet high, with an extra board about fourteen inches high to go on top of the boxes. These wagon boxes had no lining whatever.

On July 31st, the Indians had tried to drive off the cattle that were grazing between the Pineys about a mile from the foot of the mountain. They tried to stampede the cattle, but the men at the corral ran out on each side and stopped the cattle. The Indians tried hard to get a civilian by the name of Brown. Some of the soldiers at the corral managed to give the Indians a hot time and several were hurt before they abandoned the idea and picked up their men. A boy about fifteen years of age was with the civilian and hid in the brush and was not injured. Both this man Brown, and the boy, were in the Wagon Box Fight, the only civilians in the fight.

I was with a detail of six men and a Corporal guarding a train a mile or so from the Gilmore and Porter train. We saw the skirmish, but took no part in it. The corral was

burned the day of the Wagon Box Fight, and the Indians followed the men to the timber and tried to burn up some of the oxen. They fastened them to trees, but only killed five or six head. During the years we were there, the Sioux Indians never followed the men into the timber, but seven men were killed by the Blackfeet Indians in the timber.

It was on August 1st that Company "C" relieved twenty men of Company "A." Company "C" was a strong company and General Smith knew the Indians would be after revenge. About eight o'clock, August 2nd, the men on the picket hill saw a large body of men (Indians) on the east side of the Big Piney and signaled the fort. The picket hill was south of the fort, and one could see all over the valley and watch the wagon corral and the men from the time they entered the timber or came out and all the way down to the fort. The men at the corral saw the Indians about the time the picket did. They cut port-holes through the unlined wagon boxes, scattered the ammunition along the boxes, removed the end-gates so they could move freely around the circle and piled ox-yokes and logs at the two ends of the corral which was circular in form. Smith immediately called out most of the available men to go to their relief and though he had been sick for some days he went with his men as far as the foot of Sullivan's Hill. The relief got there in time and the men at the corral were surely glad to see them. They were a hard lot to look at. The day was hot and the sun was beating down upon them in the wagon beds. The smoke from their guns had colored their faces and they looked as though they had used burnt cork on their faces. Red Cloud was fooled this time. Red Cloud with 3,000 warriors could not defeat thirty-eight men.

Up until about the first of June we had been armed with the old Springfield muzzle loading rifles. The men at the Wagon Bed were armed with needle guns, single shot, using a copper cartridge. They were good for eight to ten shots and after that it was necessary to eject the shell with a ramrod, as the ejector cut a groove in the rim of the cartridge. There were thirty-eight men in the corral and the Gilmore and Porter men that the soldiers were guarding were in the timber,—some fifty or sixty men, soldiers and civilians. The Indians did not molest them.

In the summer of 1867 the Government built a log cabin some three hundred yards from the fort and on the banks of the Big Piney, also a foot-bridge for the Indians to cross. There were about two thousand Crow Indians on the east side of the Big Piney. About the same time that the Indians came, there were six 6-mule Government teams

that arrived with goods for the Indians. There was an Indian agent at the fort whom we called Doctor. I will not give his name, for he is now gone where all good preachers go. The soldiers guarded the cabin, the agent and his goods. We also had a guard on the end of the foot-bridge to keep the soldiers from visiting the Indians. The Indians had also put a guard on their end of the bridge to keep the Indians from crossing the Piney.

We thought the goods were to be given to the Indians, but judging from what I saw, the Indians paid several times the value of what they got. For a folding pocket glass about three inches across, a beaver skin or two buckskins was the price. The goods consisted of beads, calico, blankets and all kinds of trinkets that an Indian would like. Our interpreter, John Sted, was busy for about ten days. The six 6-mule teams went back loaded with furs. When the Doctor got back to Omaha he published a long article in an Omaha paper, stating that a foreigner could travel anywhere on the plains and not be molested by the Indians. I noticed, however, that he had a guard of twenty men all the way to Fort D. A. Russell. (4)

The Crow Indians were not very well pleased with the treatment they had received and the young ones got quite ugly. When they went away they passed by Gilmore and Porter's wood train and helped themselves to what they wanted. They got a pile of ox-bows and two of the Indians would pull to see if they could pull it straight without breaking it. The bows were of good hickory, but owing to the dry climate some of them broke, which made Mr Porter angry, and he knocked one of the Indians down with one of the broken bows. The Indians then went away. It seemed that they wanted the bows to make a bow.

There were Indian camps scattered about along the Piney all the time after the first winter. The old squaws were inveterate beggars and a hard looking lot. They were dirty, their hair was matted and most of them had nearly all of their fingers cut off. I thought at first that they were frozen off, but later learned that this was the way they mourned for their dead. I still believe that they were frozen off, as they were beasts of burden, packing wood through the snow, sometimes for long distances, and with poor tools with which to cut the wood. The men folks and younger squaws burned the wood as fast as they could get it in the winter time.

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(4) Fort Russell—Name changed to Fort Francis E. Warren by Act of Congress effective January 1, 1930.

Iron Bull was the war-chief of the Crows at that time and ruled with an iron hand. General Smith asked him to keep the Indians at their camp. He put a guard at the east end of the bridge, but some of them would ford the Piney and get into the fort. The Indian police, armed with rods six or seven feet long, would get after them and if they caught any of the squaws or bucks would give them a good flaying. I saw one Indian at our quarters, whom the Indians had whipped with their switches. He got angry, and as he had smuggled a bow and arrow, he stood them off. One of the police hunted up a chief. When the chief got there he hit the troublesome Indian on the head with his tomahawk and he was a good Indian, maybe ever after. The Indians dragged him off to their camp.

One day when the Indians were trading at the cabin they tied an Indian to a tree and the squaws and children with switches, sticks and stones, punished him severely. I only saw the last part of the show. The Indian broke loose and the squaws and children scattered. After knocking over some squaws, he lit out over the bluff with very little, if any, clothing. At first we thought he was a Sioux or a Cheyenne prisoner until we saw his head. He had the hair trim of a Crow Indian. We inquired of several Indians as to what he had been doing and finally one said, "He heap bad Indian. He never come back." The Indian men were looking on but took no part in the performance unless perhaps they had tied him to the tree.

When the Crows were at the fort they would hold war dances lasting most of the night. When a war party got to camp we could tell by the action of the squaws what success they had had. Sometimes the squaws would go up over the bluffs crying.

Some may not understand how they scalped the dead. The ran a knife around the edge of the hair and took off all the scalp. Some tribes cut the scalp up in small pieces and braided in it with their own hair, making a "scalp lock." They then are, in their own estimation, heap brave and look pretty and they smell, oh, so sweet!

The summer of 1867, the Second Battalion 18th U. S. Infantry became the 27th U. S. Infantry, and that year a treaty was made wtih the Indians for the abandonment of Forts Reno, Phil Kearney, C. F. Smith and the Bozeman Road. The Indians were not to molest us and were to be peaceable, but that made no difference to Red Cloud or Spotted Tail. They were never known to keep a treaty.

The great game country along the Bozeman Trail was a myth. All the time we were in that country I do not

believe I saw more than a hundred buffalo. It was a fine grass country, however, I only speak of the country along the Bozeman Trail. There may have been buffalo east of that where Campbell and Crook counties are now.

About the first of June General John E. Smith was called east and Captain Hart had command. He was a good man.

We asked Jim Bridger how the Indians lived in the winter, and he replied that only for their ponies and dogs many of them would starve. Some of them also went to the Government Posts. It has been said that Red Cloud was a great warrior. Here is a typical example of his actions: The picket hill at Fort Phil Kearney overlooked the fort and one could see a man with the naked eye and could count all the men in the post. The Indians, however, had field glasses and spy glasses so they could easily count the men. After the pickets retired for the night the Indians would get on the picket hill and copy all of our signals for the enjoyment of those in the fort. After the massacre, we had not more than a hundred men, sick and wounded included, while Red Cloud had six or eight thousand men. The Crow Indians told us the next summer that at the time of the massacre, Red Cloud got his warriors together to take the three forts, changed his mind and decided to take Phil Kearney first, then divide his warriors and massacre the troops at Fort C. F. Smith and Fort Reno, but the eighty-one men put up such a stiff fight he gave it up as a bad job. Think of it,—eighty-one men were too tough to be palatable for Red Cloud and six thousand warriors! We abandoned the three forts about the middle of July, 1868, and marched to Fort D. A. Russell. After living so long away from where there were any vegetables and having a lot of cripples with the scurvy, we thought the Government would furnish vegetables, but not one vegetable did we get. The men chipped in mostly and traded bacon, coffee and flour for vegetables. During the three years I was in the army the Government never furnished us with any vegetables. Ours was indeed a **"Forgotten Battalion."**

After a rest of about four days, my company (Company "A") was detailed to guard the U. P. Railroad from Sidney, Nebraska, to Cheyenne. Six men and a "non-com" were at each station with headquarters at Pine Bluffs, a distance of about fifty miles. I had charge of six men at Egbert ~~Buford~~ Station, about thirty-five miles from Cheyenne, Wyoming, and west of there. The rest of the regiment was sent down in Nebraska to hunt Indians on the Republican and Blue who had been killing settlers and freighters. The

soldiers captured a few prisoners and brought them back to North Platte, Nebraska. They were turned loose a short time later, given some rations and told to be good. I suppose they were until the next spring. Two Indians, chiefs, I think, were sent to Omaha Barracks, held for some time and then shipped home. In the spring of 1869 I went to work for J. W. Ilif, a cattleman. His stock ranged along north of the South Platte where the towns of Eaton and Greely are now located, thence east to Fremont's Orchards, Fremont, Nebraska, and north to the U. P. Railroad. He was the only cattleman in the country at that time. I rode all over the country from Fort Collins to Sidney and north to Pumpkin Creek and Laurence Forks, Horse Creek. One man, a Mr. Sims, had a few cattle on the head of Horse Creek and Dick and Dan Latham on the Fort Laramie Crossing. In nearly two years riding I never saw a buffalo. The report was that the Government had beat the Indian out of such a wonderful hunting ground. They said the whole country was full of game and made believe the Indians were robbed. As I remember the Indians were paid for every foot of land they took from the Indians. When I was working for Ilif the Indians would pass back and forth going south into Kansas and Nebraska and north up into the Dakotas and Wyoming. They burned one of our ranches in the winter of 1869. It was close to where Grover, Colorado, now stands, but we were all well armed and they kept clear of us. They left the trail occasionally and killed cows so they could get the unborn calves to eat. They left their mark sometimes along the U. P. They killed several people at different times. Once I remember was at Pine Bluffs, where they killed a nephew of "Pine Bluffs' Tracy. They took toll at the Bluffs several times, also at Sidney, Nebraska, and at Point of Rocks, west of Sidney. Some time about the middle of May, 1870, they ran off a band of Ilif horses from Simpson Canyon, Chalk Bluffs. The horses were at North Platte in possession of the Sioux Indians the next year. Once later in the spring of 1870 two of us were driving a herd of beef cattle to Cheyenne from Simpson Canyon. At Chalk Bluffs we ran into a band of Indians—seventeen in number. The Indians didn't start anything, and we did not, either. That was about seven miles east of Cheyenne. Many of the Indians we fought were peaceable at later fights. We had to fight them all at one time or another. At the time of the Custer Massacre, June 25th, for example, the Arapahoe Indians were on the Wind River Agency in Cheyenne, in the Indian Territory, being fed by the Government. The site of the Fetterman

Massacre, December 21, 1866, was about sixty miles south of the Custer field and ten years earlier in time.

For a year or two before the Custer Massacre, my partner, Peter Hamma, and I had a contract to haul Indian goods to the warerooms at Camp Carlin and some to the I. W. French warerooms on the corner of 15th Avenue and Eddy Street, Cheyenne, Wyo. The goods consisted of flour, bacon, coffee, sugar, hardtack and some boxes of merchandise. There was a large quantity of it. From Cheyenne the goods were freighted by bull trains and mules to a Red Cloud and Spotted Bull agency, Dakota. Some years afterward they moved the depot to Sidney, Nebraska, and freighted the goods from there, as it was a shorter haul. At the time of the Custer Masacre, Sitting Bull's children, squaws and old men were well taken care of at the agency while he was out killing settlers and stealing stock. Some writers said the old men and the squaws were the ones that mutilated the Custer dead, but this was not so, for they were not there.

In the latter part of the year 1927, Governor Johnson of Oklahoma made a statement printed in the Kansas City Star stating that the Indians always kept their agreements and all treaties, especially the treaty of 1867, laying all the blame on the Government for all of the Indian wars. I can only be charitable and credit him with ignorance and good intentions—certainly his statement lacked truth. This was directly opposite from most experiences of those having to deal with the Indians. I do not claim that all the wrong was one sided, but I do claim that the Indians could never be trusted and never paid any attention to the treaty in question. Red Cloud in particular, to the best of my knowledge, never kept a treaty he made.

I was at a reunion at Sheridan, Wyoming, in 1908 and was told that the Crow Indians were nearly self-supporting at that time, after thirty-five years. The Government had built quarters on the land, given them stock and teachers to show them haw to farm and raise good stock and yet after THIRTY-FIVE YEARS, with all this assistance, they were NEARLY SELF-SUPPORTING.

Little publicity or public recognition has ever been given the Indian War Veteran and his accomplishments. They are indeed a FORGOTTEN PEOPLE and the only ones in American history so treated. They seem to have been put in the same class with the police in a city. They were so placed for the purpose of being shot at and abused. Their deeds were in a country little known and against an enemy that was not a national menace as in other wars.

The natural result was that they were shelved when other veterans were getting pensions and monuments. They traveled through snow and cold without shelter, and were expected to do the impossible, such as traveling fifty to a hundred miles in a day on foot to get to the scene of some depredation by Indians The popular idea was that they were no good anyway. If the settlers that now enjoy their ranches in Nebraska, Wyoming, the Dakotas, New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, Minnesota and all of the western states, would stop and think, they would find that at least one Indian War Veteran lost his life for every township in the entire territory described.

All of the old timers in Cheyenne will remember my bunkie, John Donovan. He had three arrow wounds, one from a poisoned arrow that left a running sore. He was also a Civil War Veteran. He tried to get a pension for many years. I suppose when they saw he was a regular soldier they pigeonholed his application, for he was rejected several times. He finally got $16.00 per month. He died many years ago, but lived in the nine hundred block, East 22nd Street, in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

In 1908, when I went to the reunion in Sheridan, Wyoming, Colonel Carrington with his wife, five soldiers and two citizens were all we could rally. All but three are now dead. Mrs. Wheatly, the wife of the Wheatly that was killed at the massacre, married a man by the name of Breckenridge and lived on a ranch about five miles up the river from Fort Laramie. As I remember, she had two boys when she lived at Fort Phil Kearney. Lieutenant Colonel Grummond's widow married Colonel Carrington.

James Bridger was with us all the summer of 1866 up until late in the fall. If Col. Carrington and the officers had followed the advice of Bridger I do not think there would have been nearly as many of our men killed. He told the officers not to follow the Indians and to send more men on escort duty, but they thought he was old and did not know anything about Indian warfare. As I knew him, he was nothing like the Jim Bridger as pictured in the film, "The Covered Wagon," which I saw in 1926. I never saw him under the influence of liquor, and I know he did not have any squaws along with him. He must have been between sixty and seventy years of age at that time, but he was quite spry, was a good story teller and could speak the Indian language.

(Continued in January Number.)