

## **Ninth Infantry Regiment in the Yakima Wars of 1856 and 1858**

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The acquisition of new territory after the 1848 War with Mexico expanded the continental United States from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. With the discovery of gold in California in 1848 and later in the Northwest Territories, the flood gates of American migration broke. Blinded by greed the miners prospected on lands that still belonged to the Indians which resulted in armed conflict between the two groups. Initially the local citizens tried to ward off the Indian attacks with companies of armed volunteers. The untrained and undisciplined citizen soldiers were wholly inadequate for the task. The increasing violence required the presence of the Regular Army.

Following the War with Mexico, the Army again reduced itself to its prewar strength of one mounted rifle, two dragoon, four artillery and eight infantry regiments. The same number of regiments had to protect a nation which had doubled in size. The growing conflict on the West coast and the need to guard the migrant trails across the plains stretched this understrength Army to its limit. The subsequent outbreak of Indian Wars in Oregon and Washington Territories during the early part of the 1850s created a desperate cry for additional soldiers.

Congress had debated the expansion of the Army for years but the recent turn of events with the Yakima Wars in Washington and the Mormon Rebellion in Utah forced the decision. At the urging of Secretary of War Jefferson Davis and President Franklin Pierce, Congress finally appropriated the funds under the Act of March 3, 1855 to expand the Army by two regiments of infantry and two of cavalry. Recent developments in weapon technology inspired the War Department to organize a different kind of infantry.

An earlier technological advancement in France had significantly improved the lethality of warfare. In 1844, Colonel Thouvenin had designed a cylindrical bullet with conical head. He presented it to Captain Claude-Etienne Minie, Inspector of Musketry at

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Military School of Vincennes. Captain Minie had the political clout to convince his French Army superiors to adopt the innovation which went into effect in 1846.

Later Minie improved on the design. He added a hollow base to the conical bullet design. Expanding gases from the burnt powder would expand the hollow base of the bullet and propel it out the barrel. The bullet then would grip the rifled grooves on wall of the barrel and the spin of the projectile would increase the accuracy from 80 to 600 yards. Still smaller in diameter than the barrel a soldier could load quickly making the rifle a practical infantry weapon. The French Army adopted the Minie ball and rifle in 1849. It gained world wide recognition.

The US Army finally adopted rifled muskets based on Minie ball design for issue in 1855. The old regiments had to turn in their old 1840s pattern muskets for rifling. This conversion would not be completed until 1857 though. Only the new Ninth and Tenth Infantry Regiments would receive new Model 1855 rifled muskets. Impressed with the new rifles the War Department also looked to the French for a model for their new infantry - the Corps of Foot Riflemen, *Chasseur a Pied*. In June 1854, the Quartermaster General went so far as to write the Count de Sartiges, Envoy from France, for a complete outfit of a foot rifleman.

The 1855 pattern uniform consisted of a pleated frock coat trimmed in infantry blue instead of rifleman green. The "flower pot" shako with pompom became quite unpopular with soldiers. After prolonged wear it hurt one's head and eventually lost its shape. The leather waist belt was an exact copy of the French pattern with its interlocking buckle. The Ninth would carry a French pattern saber bayonet instead of the standard triangular bayonet. This pattern of uniform only lasted until 1858. The new infantry had a new look but maintained the old organization of ten infantry companies and a band. The new infantry regiments, however, received bugles instead of drums for battle field communication.

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The organization of four new regiments created a number of promotion vacancies. Each regiment offered four field grade positions. With sixteen vacancies to fill the War Department did not follow protocol and promote by seniority.

George Wright, West Point class of 1822, had fought and was breveted to major for valor during the Second Seminole War in Florida. He also distinguished himself during the War with Mexico with two additional brevet promotions to colonel and was wounded at the Battle of Molino del Rey. When Congress expanded the Army, Wright was serving as the lieutenant-colonel with the Fourth Infantry in Oregon. Wright was promoted ahead of senior officers on March 3, 1855, to become colonel of the Ninth Infantry Regiment. He would be assisted by three other field grade officers.

Captain Silas Casey, West Point class of 1826, had fought in the Second Seminole War, was wounded and breveted twice to colonel during the War with Mexico at the Battles of Contreras, Churubusco and Chapultepec. He left the Second Infantry to become the lieutenant-colonel. Captain Edward J. Steptoe, West Point class of 1837, had also fought in the Second Seminole War and was also breveted twice to the rank of lieutenant-colonel for valor in the Mexican War. Captain Robert S. Garnett, West Point class of 1841, had served as Aide de Camp to General Taylor in Mexico and was also breveted twice for valor. From 1852 to 54 he had served as the Commandant of Cadets at West Point. Steptoe and Garnett, both artillery officers, became the two majors of the regiment. These openings allowed the War Department to promote officers of proven merit.

As field grade officers the three had no assigned duties or command other than what the colonel gave them. These ranks were authorized for the purpose to organize several companies into a battalion for field operations or to command a post. In campaigning against hostile Indians the Army generally operated in small units of companies and battalions. The three additional field grades positions permitted Wright to

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organize his command into as many as three or four subordinate commands if he commanded a battalion.

West Point had always been the primary source for officers in the Regular Army during the Nineteenth Century. This rapid expansion exceeded the number of newly commissioned officers available. Consequently the half of the company grade commissions were given out to political appointees. Fortunately Secretary of War Davis selected men who had held previous commissions during war.

General Order No. 4, March 26, 1855, began the unbroken lineage of the Ninth Regiment of Infantry. That day the Casey established the headquarters at Fortress Monroe in Virginia. He commanded the regiment awaiting Wright's arrival from California. Garnett was on court martial duty at Fort Wachita in the Indian Territory (Oklahoma) and would join the Regiment out West. The company grade officers opened recruiting rendezvous in Maine, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Ohio and Tennessee. In essence nearly each of the ten companies was recruited from a different state.

The Army offered low pay and a lot of manual labor. Immigrants volunteered to seek work, a few sought the adventure of a possible Indian campaign but many saw the new regiments as a free ticket out West to the gold fields. Once each company quota of 74 privates was filled they transferred to Fortress Monroe for equipping and drilling.

Fortress Monroe was a coastal fortification guarding the entrance to the James River. It had a large parade field for drilling and its two story casemate walls provided adequate billeting for soldiers. With the last company recruited in November, the Regiment was ready for frontier service. While the other regiments were scattered across the frontier in isolated posts, the new regiments would arrive in their Geographical Departments and remain as regiments.

The War Department had planned to send the Ninth Infantry by rail to Fort Leavenworth, then march it across the prairie along the Oregon Trail to impress the native

populations of the headquarters of the Missouri River and tributaries of the Columbia. However the Yakimas attacked a small battalion of the Fourth Infantry under Major Granville O. Haller in the Washington Territory in November 1855. Brevet Major Gabriel R. Rains of the Fourth Infantry led a punitive expedition against the hostiles on October 30, 1855 with the help of Oregon mounted volunteers. They only engaged in a few minor skirmishes with the hostiles. The humiliating defeat of Haller and failure of Rains lowered the moral of the Army and citizens while encouraging the defiance of the Indians. This provoked the Commander of the Pacific Department, General John E. Wool, to request the urgent deployment of an infantry regiment.

On December 15, the Ninth boarded the *SS St Louis* with 27 officers their families and 736 men bound for the Isthmus of Panama. The one month voyage provided an opportunity for everyone to become acquainted. Since Colonel Wright had no say in the selection of his junior grade officers he convened a board of officers to determine if the political appointees were fit for service. All passed.

The Regiment arrived at Aspinwall (later Colon) in Panama after nine days of sailing. Aspinwall was a small growing town, thriving with merchants trying to capitalize from the recent completion of the overland railroad. The soldiers, however, did not have time to browse, for they quickly loaded their baggage onto the awaiting rail cars and set off for the Pacific Coast. The recently completed railroad was "laid in hot haste over miasmatic quagmires, on crazy piles, or sliding along steep hill-sides or yawning ravines at a slant or angle of forty-five degrees, with creaking bridges, inferior cars, and cashiered engines." Nonetheless, the men arrived that afternoon at Panama City and just as quickly boarded the awaiting steamships.

Colonel Wright loaded the majority of the Regiment aboard the *Golden Age* and the rest under Lieutenant-Colonel Casey aboard the *Oregon*. Having completed the crossing from the Atlantic to the Pacific in a day the Regiment departed for San Francisco. There the Regiment remained in harbor for two or three days. Knowing that

the Regiment would be immediately deployed on campaign upon arrival, the families held a moonlight dance on the deck of the *Oregon*. Commodore Watkins held a dinner for the officers and their families aboard the *Golden Age*. As the junior officer, Second Lieutenant David B. McKibbin, was called upon to give a toast to which he quickly responded, "Commodore Watkins worthy of the age in which he lives." The lieutenant who had left after two years at West Point earned everyone's congratulations.

Finally Casey with two companies crossed over to the *SS Republic* enroute to Fort Steilacoom at Puget Sound, Washington Territory. The eight remaining companies under Wright departed for Fort Vancouver, Oregon.

By chance Wright met south-bound steamer carrying his department commander, General John E. Wool. Indian problems to the south required the general's immediate presence. Wool could no longer await the long anticipated arrival of the Ninth Infantry. This fortunate encounter of the two steamers provided the general the opportunity to update and convey orders to the arriving regimental commander.

Recent gold discoveries had advanced the frontier settlement process in the Pacific Northwest. Governor Isaac I. Stevens of Washington Territory, at the urging of his constituents, signed into treaty in 1855 the cessation of lands belonging to the Indians without their consent. The Yakima tribe under the leadership of Kamiakin took up arms in protest. Early events of the uprising interestingly fell in favor of the hostiles which encouraged further resistance. This required the newly formed Ninth Infantry to reinforce the infantry, artillery and dragoons regiments scattered across the District of Columbia.

Wool instructed Colonel Wright to assume command of the District from Major Rains with the mission to resolve the Indian affair. Wool directed eight companies move up the Columbia River with their headquarters at The Dalles. The remaining two companies with Lieutenant-Colonel Casey would proceed up the coast aboard the *John L. Stephens* and conduct operations around Puget Sound. Wright would divide his own force into two subordinate commands to establish a fort at the old Hudson Bay trading

post, Walla Walla, and another at Naches Pass on the Yakima River. Two such military garrisons in the vicinity of the popular Indian fishing sites would place the regiment in an advantageous position to subjugate the hostile tribes.

Wright's eight companies arrived at Vancouver on January 22, 1856. They unloaded supplies and baggage then set up bivouac on the parade field. Although the War Department dropped the original idea of a regiment of foot riflemen, their new uniforms and rifle made them stand out from the rest of the infantry. The regiments out West referred to the men of the Ninth as the rifles or riflemen. The regiment awaited logistical preparations for the campaign.

The Regimental Quartermaster Officer, Lieutenant Lyman Bissell pushed supplies forward to The Dalles. The rapids at the Cascades presented a delay. Crews had to unload supplies at landings below the falls then transfer them by land a short distance to awaiting steamboats on the upper landings. The extensive load of supplies took at least two weeks to transport. Bissell remained at the Cascades to supervise the transfer.

Meanwhile the Regiment made preparation of its own. The Regiment stored their dress uniforms and shakos away in trunks. Wright had the quartermaster issue the men locally purchased blue flannel Hudson Bay hunting shirts fastened at the waist with the leather belt. Officers wore their shoulder straps to identify their rank. Sergeants and Corporals could be identified by the width of the strip on their pants. The broad brimmed black felt slouch hat gave the men more the appearance of hunters than soldiers. More practically dressed for campaign on the prairie the Regiment departed up river.

On March 8, Wright led out with Companies A, E, F and I departed for the Dalles. He sent companies D and K by steamer on March 11 to join Casey at Fort Steilacoom. Wright's command arrived at The Dalles, March 10. Companies C and G followed one day later. The column received an augmentation of horse mounted dragoons.

Captain Henry D. Wallen of the Fourth Infantry finished construction of a small stockade and left eight of his infantrymen and a twelve pound mountain howitzer under

the charge of Sergeant Kelley. Disembarking at The Dalles, the Wright started his march into Indian country.

No sooner had they departed than hostile Yakimas struck at dawn upon the sleepy settlement at the Cascades. Escaping steamboats reached Vancouver and The Dalles to warn the soldiers. Lieutenant Phil Sheridan of the Second Dragoons raced with a small party of forty soldiers on the steamer from Vancouver to the rescue. The rest of the garrison withdrew with their families behind the walls of the nearby Hudson Bay fort and made preparations for an anticipated Indian attack.

Young Phil arrived early the next day and advanced along the narrow strip of land toward the besieged settlements. With the steep mountain slope to his north and the cascading Columbia River to his south, the Indians blocked his approach to the burning cabins ahead. As the day ended in a stalemate, he made a daring move to cross the river to the south bank, maneuver around the wooded island then attack directly across by boat into the middle of the fight. In the process he noticed that the Indian men of the otherwise peaceful Cascade island were absent. By morning of the third day his men were in place.

Wright had camped six miles outside of The Dalles the morning of the attack. By midnight a courier reached his tent with the news of the Indian attack. The next morning the column of two hundred and fifty men marched back to the awaiting steamers, *Mary* and *Wasco*. The march and loading consumed a better part of the day. By nightfall they were finally underway. However, through a mistake by the fireman the flues of the *Mary* developed difficulties which delayed the arrival until first light of next morning.

The two steamers pulled along the bank a safe distance up river and the men rushed ashore. Wright quickly organized his command. Major Steptoe commanded the advance element with Captain Charles S. Winder's E, James J. Archer's I and Pinckney Lugenbeal's A Companies of the Ninth Infantry. A detachment of Second Dragoons under Lieutenant Tear and a howitzer battery under Lieutenant Alexander Piper joined.

They had no knowledge of what events transpired below. Their approach from the east by circumstance presented the possibility of bottling up the Indians in the narrow pass between the river and the mountain for a swift and total defeat.

As the lead column approached to close off the only Indian escape route, an over zealous bugler sounded his trumpet to alert the besieged settlers that rescue had arrived. As quickly as they had descended on the sleepy settlement, the Yakima Indians vanished. Three warriors were killed and only Company E lost one private killed and Company A had one wounded.

Stephens, none-the-less, linked up with Sheridan. The dragoon officer briefed the major on the events that had transpired over the last thirty-six hours. Another trap still afforded itself. After the flight of the Yakimas, the bewildered Cascade Indians would try to innocently return to their own island across from the settlements. Sheridan could catch them. Stephens concurred. He assigned Piper with the twelve pounder mountain howitzer to Sheridan's detachment to slip ahead to the island.

Sheridan shuttled his small force back across to the island with Piper in the first boat. They fired two or three shots from the gun to alert the Indians of the presence of artillery. With his entire detachment lined in skirmish formation the dragoons advanced across the island. As he anticipated, the Cascades huddled at the other end of the island. Their chief claimed that they had nothing to do with the hostilities. Sheridan, doubting their honesty, lined up the warriors then walked down the line and inserted his finger in the muzzle of each musket. In each case his forefinger brought out the tell-tell black mark of burnt powder of a recently fired musket. With the evidence in hand, the soldiers then disarmed the belligerents, placed the women, children and old men under guard then he proceeded back across the river with thirteen of the principle culprits.

The steamer, *Fashion*, finally arrived with Lieutenant L. G. Powell and his thirty man company of Portland volunteers and another company of volunteers from Vancouver. These men had organized together to rescue their fellow settlers. They

unfortunately arrived too late to participate in any action but still wanted to exact revenge for the attack. Captain Wallen also landed with the rest of his company. The *Fashion* returned again with Colonel A. P. Dennison, aid to the governor, and another company of forty volunteers under the command of Captain Steffen Coffin.<sup>1</sup> There was little for them to do so the volunteers returned to their homes the next day.

Sheridan turned his prisoners over to Wright who in turn conducted a military trial. As customary treatment for Indian attacks during the early period of the Indian Wars, nine perpetrators of violence were sentenced to death by hanging. Chief Chenoweth customarily offered to buy back his own life with horses, women and property to each of the officers who sat on his court. The officers answering to different legal customs denied his appeal.

As no adequate facilities were available, the soldiers simply threw a rope over the limb of a tree, stood the Indians one at a time on a wooden barrel then after the noose was adjusted, a soldier kicked the barrel out from under the Indian. When the rope tightened, it failed to snap Chenoweth's neck. The proud warrior hung for a moment then uttered, "I am not afraid of the dead." The soldiers shot him to prevent a slow strangulation. The other warriors faced death with the indifference of their culture.

The remaining prisoners were sent to Vancouver. These Cascade Indians learned the lesson that regardless of the justification for an uprising, the United States Government became vindictive of attacks against its voters. The hostile tribes further from the settlements had not yet grasped this warning.

With this unexpected delay, the command remained at the Cascades until the latter part of the following month. Again in late April Wright expanded his supply lines from The Dalles into the heart of Yakima territory. The column established Fort Naches as their temporary supply base on the Yakima River. The men also constructed a bridge

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<sup>1</sup> Sheridan disagrees with Victor on this point. Victor claimed that the volunteers arrived shortly after Sheridan and participated in the fight. Victor's account of the episode is written from the perspective of a history of the Oregon Volunteers.

across the river. From there, infantry companies scouted the surrounding area to impress the Indians to remain friendly.

Back in January, Lieutenant-Colonel Casey had sailed with his D and H Companies to Fort Steilacoom in Puget Sound. There Chief Kanasket led the Klicitats in an uprising against settlements in that area. He boasted that he could continue the war against him for five years and that no bullet could kill him. Only two skeleton companies of the Fourth Infantry and a few companies of volunteers guarded the settlements which proved wholly inadequate. Consequently the Regulars had constructed a series of static stockades from which the soldiers could operate. In a small engagement on December 4, Lieutenant W. A. Slaughter and four privates of the Fourth Infantry were killed in a surprise dawn attack on their camp at Lemmon's Prairie.

Casey arrived January 30 and assumed command of operations in the area from Captain Erasmus D. Keyes who had only arrived in late November. On February 26 Casey led H Company of the Ninth and Keye's M Company of the Third Artillery out of Fort Steilacoom into the area where Slaughter had been killed. He joined up with Company D's camp on the Puyallup River that day and camped for two days. The next day they marched the eight miles to Lemmon's Prairie.

Keyes, the second in command, became the officer of the guard that night. Captain George Pickett's D Company had the guard mount. Keyes did not post a single walking sentry with a guard mount change at regular two hour intervals as regulations required. Instead he originated the idea of posting three men sentinels in concealed locations where he thought hostiles might attack. One man remained alert while the others slept. A concept commonly practiced today was novel for that day.

Keyes picked Private Charles Kehl for one of the most important picket locations. He instructed the private, "You must take care to-night not to make a false alarm. I am

the officer of the day, and should consider myself disgraced by a false alarm. Be sure that you fire at nothing but an Indian, and be sure also if you do fire that you get him."<sup>2</sup>

A little after 5:00 the cooks had just lit their fires. The sun had still had not come up, but Kehl saw the reflection of light of the barrel of a gun at a hundred yards up the trail just beyond the bend. In a few minutes he recognized five Indians creeping stealthily down the hill. The first one made motions with his hand to the others. Kehl presumed him to be the leader. The sentinel waited until he had a good shot. The shot rang out. Sergeant Newton of M Company yelled out, "We got an Indian!" Keyes was on the spot. Kehl had shot none other than Kanasket.

The round had hit dead center in his back, crippling the warrior's legs. The soldiers dragged him in. He taunted them to kill him, recognizing his helplessness but still defiant. Keyes ordered the men to shut up the chief which they were unsuccessful. Finally Corporal O'Shaughnessy put the barrel of his rifle to the warrior's head and killed the leader of the uprising.

The next day on March 1, the column resumed their march into Indian country. This time Lieutenant August V. Kautz's H Company led out in advance. About midday, two messengers arrived with news from Kautz that his company was trapped on the bank of the White River. They had entrenched behind a pile of dead timber while a larger force of Indians occupied the wooded bluff above. Casey dispatched Keyes with 54 men to Kautz's rescue.

Keyes pushed rapidly for eight miles to a ford on the river. The men fastened their leather cartridge boxes about their shoulders to keep their powder dry and crossed the icy river. The two forces linked up and formed into a skirmish line. Keyes ordered the charge that the warriors answered with one volley fire. It passed over the heads of most of the soldiers then the warriors broke contact. The men pursued them through the

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<sup>2</sup> Erasmus Darwin Keyes, *From West Point to California* (Oakland, CA: Biobooks, 1950) p. 34-35 extracted from *Fifty Years Observations of Men and Events* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1884).

woods for a half a mile at the double time. The warriors finally made a defense in a stand of fallen trees.

In a position of advantage the warriors taunted the soldiers to attack across the 200 yards of open slope. Second Lieutenant McKibbin led H Company uphill to the warriors. As the soldiers came in range of the smooth bore muskets half way up the hill, the Indians opened fire. Several men fell but McKibbin encouraged them on. Keyes finally arrived with his company and the combined force again drove back the enemy. The tired Regulars pursued no further. A hundred men had only suffered two dead and eight wounded. H Company only lost one private killed and two wounded. Kautz had fallen back at the river with a ball through the leg. This was his second wound. The first occurred with Indian fighting in Oregon during 1855.

The companies scouted for the enemy through for two more months in the cold rain, both day and night. D and H Companies again engaged the hostiles on the Fifteenth at Connells Prairie without any losses. McKibbin again led a detachment on a scout during the first week in May in which he killed 3 Indians and took 16 prisoner.

On February 5, 1856 Major Garnett had at last been released from court martial duty to join his new regiment. He departed New York with 392 recruits, 5 officers, 4 laundresses and 4 officers' servants for the Third Artillery and Fourth Infantry. He arrived in San Francisco on March 1, picked up Companies B and K of the Ninth at Vancouver and sailed for Puget Sound on the *Columbia* to join Casey.

Companies B and K had arrived at Fort Steilacoom on March 14. Captain Fredrick Dent, twice breveted during the Mexican War and wounded at Molino del Rey, led his B Company along with K Company on March 20 out of the fort on their own scout to engage hostiles. After a month of scouting he surprised the enemy at Nelson's camp on April 25.

The loss of their war chief and the success of the March 1 attack, caused the Klicitats in the Puget Sound area to avoid engagements with the Regulars. They instead

preferred to attack volunteers. Further patrols to the south by Wright would bring a peace by the end of summer.

Garnett left the White River on May 25 to reinforce Wright's command with B and K Companies. They reached Fort Nachess on June 13 and joined A, C, F, G and I. Winder's E Company had remained at The Dalles erecting buildings. In July Wright led an expedition with Companies A, B, C and K through the snow covered mountains and passes between the Yakima and Wenatchee Rivers. The Indians considered the area unsuitable for military operations and were surprised to see the Army. 500 former hostiles surrendered unconditionally.

For the most part Wright did not have to fight the Yakimas but instead entreated with them. Wright knew from previous service in the area the causes of the conflict. The Indians expressed their dissatisfaction with the Treaty of 1855 which took away their lands without their consent. They only wanted peace. He sympathized with the Indians and secured peace.

The majority of the Yakimas settled down to a peaceful season of fishing while the instigators of the uprising fled to the lands of their brethren to the eastern part of the territory. With this resolution, Wright's column remained at Fort Nachess until August. The Regiment then made preparations for the winter.

When the frontier Army was not patrolling against Indians it built forts and roads. In compliance with General Wool's orders, Wright sent his majors that September to establish two forts. Major Garnett led Company C into the Yakima Valley to establish Fort Simcoe. Major Steptoe sailed with Company K to the abandoned Hudson Bay trading post at Walla Walla on the Columbia River. Both took a company of dragoons as customary. Usually the infantry guarded the fort while the mounted troops patrolled after Indians. The majority of the Regiment conducted scouts out of Fort Dalles. They either passed through or rested at the new forts.

Construction was one of the least favorite duties on the frontier. To compound the problem of manual labor, often the Army contracted civilians to work along side soldiers. Unfortunately the civilian laborers made twice the pay performing the same work. This did little to help moral so far from the amenities of civilization. The austerity of frontier life took its toll on the men. Compounded by low moral, the riches of the gold fields and the slim chance of being caught tempted many men to desert.

In June 1857 Captain Dickinson Woodruff's F Company formed part of the Northern Boundary Commission to survey the Canadian border. The infantry generally provided protection for the surveying party and their supply trains as they traced the border through Indian country. This duty occupied that company for nearly three years.

With rising tensions between the Indians and settlers in the Colville region, Major Steptoe proposed to Wright that a detachment conduct a show of force through the lands of the Spokanes, Palouses, Coeur d'Alenes and Nez Perce. The plan approved, Steptoe departed May 6, 1858 with a battalion of 164 men, mostly dragoons. Captain Charles S. Winder mounted his Company E, Ninth Infantry on mules to escort the two twelve pounder howitzers. Not expecting trouble, the column cut back on extra ammunition so they could travel light without the burden of an extensive pack train of mules. The dragoons carried short range musketoons. The Nez Perce he met proved friendly and assisted the crossing of the Snake River. Despite warnings that the Spokanes would try to stop his march, Steptoe rode on.

On May 16, he found his little column surrounded by nearly a thousand hostiles from the Palouse, Coer d'Alenes, and Spokane tribes. They had interpreted his action as an act of war. Not prepared to fight Steptoe pursued negotiation. Meeting with the chiefs, Steptoe tried to explain his intentions of reaching Colville by a short cut and that he came in peace. Although the chiefs' intentions were peaceful, the warriors were enraged. They challenged Steptoe; if he came in peace then why did he carry howitzers?

The warriors said they would not allow the soldiers to pass. Steptoe sized up the situation and chose to withdraw.

The Indians sensing victory followed the column, taunting along the way. The chiefs met again with the major discussing the further deterioration of the situation. They concluded Steptoe that the warriors would not attack that day since it was Sunday. The Indians had become devout Catholics the result of a vision of the Spokane prophet. Talks broke off and the soldiers spent a sleepless night.

On the next morning, the column resumed its counter march.

Two companies of dragoons led, followed by the mounted infantry with the pack trains and howitzer and another dragoon company closed as the rear guard. Father John Joseph Augustine Joset, a Jesuit priest in charge of the Coeur d'Alene mission, joined them in an attempt to prevent war. He assisted in the parlay between the major and the chiefs while they rode with the column. The warriors again became restless and harassed the column. Negotiations failed, the chiefs passed on their regrets and rejoined their warriors.

Early that morning, the rear and flank of the column came under fire. The dragoons deployed to repel the threat and protect the pack trains. Steptoe proceeded to march his command to a nearby ridge, only to have the hostiles block his path. In a series of charges Lieutenant David Gregg's dragoons secured the high ground. It took time before the remainder of the column caught up and reached the top. As the Indians drew near the ridge, Steptoe readied the howitzers to make a stand. To remaining companies of dragoons under Lieutenants Oliver H. P. Taylor and William Gaston were still cut off. As the latter two commenced to charge up the ridge, Gregg charged down. The warriors between them suffered between the combined assaults. Finally after three hours fighting the command was reunited.

In need of water, they started down to the river. The dragoons continued their short charges to keep the Indians at bay. By noon, Gaston, a recent arrival to the West, fell mortally wounded in one of those charges. The warriors encouraged by the

lieutenant's death attacked with greater fury. It took the combined effort of Gregg's and Winder's companies to rescue Gregg's demoralized dragoons. Meanwhile hostiles attacked the other flank guarded by Taylor's company. This seasoned veteran officer was also mortally wounded. Lieutenant James C. Wheeler rallied his men and regained the column.

By that time Steptoe saw that further advance was useless. He would have to prepare a defense. He marched his column to a hill top on a long ridge. The men took up prone defensive positions on the hill with the horses and mules picketed in the center. The infantry men aimed one howitzer down the slope while they oriented the other along the ridge. Warriors resumed their mounted assaults which were repulsed each time. The fight lasted for eight hours until dusk. By nightfall, the men had approximately one round per man. Having lost two officers the moral became low. The Indians ringed the besieged soldiers with campfires while they waited for the next day to finish the fight. The situation looked desperate.

Steptoe called a war council with his remaining officers to determine their fate. Steptoe preferred to fight to the last man, but was convinced by his subordinate that the better course of action was to sneak through the encirclement and force march home. To do this the men had to lighten their load and abandon all extra equipment. This meant they had to bury the cannons. Once out of the trap they met the Nez Perce, who helped cover the soldiers' escape. The friendly Indians stopped the pursuing hostiles at the Spokane River and assisted the soldiers across. Without food or sleep the men, fatigued from a day of battle, rode the eighty-five miles to safety in twenty-two hours. This in itself was a feat of endurance recognized by his peers. They reached Fort Walla Walla with the bad news at 2:00 PM on the Twenty-Second of May.

Steptoe had failed to assess the size and seriousness of the threat properly. His previous experience with the peaceful Yakimas in the western part of the territory gave him a false impression on how easy the task would be. The hostile Yakimas had fled to

the eastern part of the territory where they had plenty of allies. These Indian nations had not been defeated nor had they any reason to doubt their superiority. Steptoe's show of force turned out to be an embarrassment for the command. It required retaliation.

In June 1858, General Newman S. Clarke, the new Commander of the Pacific Department, issued Wright his orders; "Attack the hostiles with vigor; make their punishment severe, and persevere until the submission of all is complete." He wanted to bring an end to this crisis.

Augmented with companies from the Fourth Infantry, Second Dragoons and the Third Artillery, which served as infantry, Wright organized his campaign. Major Garnett would lead one column out of Fort Simcoe while Wright would command the other out of Fort Walla Walla. The two well equipped columns would travel north supposedly driving the fleeing warriors between them until they converged just short of the Canadian border.

Evidently disappointed with Steptoe's earlier effort, Wright would not allow the major to redeem himself and participate in the campaign. Steptoe would remain at Fort Walla Walla.

The forts were active with preparations. Men drilled and practiced marksmanship. They had just received their rebored Jager rifles. They needed to learn how to hit targets beyond a hundred yards. The Quartermaster hired packers and handlers for his pack trains of 400 mules. Forty days of supplies had to be purchased and readied for loading on mules.

Veteran frontiersman, William T. "Bill" Hamilton, and his half-breed friend, McKay, passed through on their way to the gold fields. Wright enlisted their help for information. Outfitted as Hudson Bay traders they infiltrated the Indian camps to discover their location, strength and intentions. The combined tribes planned to meet the Army at an open prairie on the Spokane River. They intended to draw the soldiers out, defeat them en masse, killing all the cavalry and taking the "walka-heaps" (infantry) as slaves. This was good news.

Wright would not have to hunt them down. These warriors had never been defeated and were overconfident. Yet the Army had never been able to field more than a few hundred men against them before.

Opposing several thousand mounted warriors Wright commanded the largest of the two military columns with nearly 900 men. As senior captain, Erasmus D. Keyes commanded a 400 man battalion with four companies of the Third Artillery serving as infantry under Lieutenant George P. Ihrie, Captain James A. Hardie, Edward O. C. Ord and Francis O. Wyse. Lieutenant James L. White commanded the mountain howitzer company with two twelve pounders. Captain William N. Grier commanded the battalion of 200 dragoons (four companies) of the Second Regiment. Captain Fredrick T. Dent commanded 90 men of Companies B and Winder's E of the Ninth. Thirty-three Nez Perce offered their services as scouts, guides and interpreters commanded by Lieutenant John Mullan of the Second Artillery. Mullan was a topographical engineer who was already familiar with the terrain through which the men were about to march. Surgeon J. F. Hammond headed the medical staff. Lieutenant Philip A. Owen who had married Wright's daughter the year before served as his adjutant. The rest made up the pack train under the command of the Chief Quartermaster Officer Captain Ralph W. Kirkham.

On August 7, Wright sent Keyes ahead with a force of dragoons to erect Fort Taylor as a supply base at the junction of the Snake and Tucannon Rivers. They named the fort in honor of their fallen comrade. Wright's column arrived there on the Eighteenth. they crossed the river on the Twenty-fifth and Twenty-sixth. Keyes described the scene; ". . . the men, baggage, provisions for 40 days, ammunition in boats, of which there was great scarcity, and about 700 mules and horses swimming the rapid stream, with Indians alongside the leaders to keep them headed towards the opposite shore. That was a singular and amusing sight."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Keyes, p. 45

Along the march, the column stopped at a stream. The men discovered a bottle floating in it. Uncertain of the contents, the officers thought the Indians had deliberately left it behind filled with poison. While the officers debated, an Irish sergeant of Winder's E Company walked up, touched his hat and replied, "You may try it on me, Captain."<sup>4</sup>

The Nez Perce scouts rode out and found the hostiles encamped near Four Lakes on the Great Spokane Plain. With the news that they were still celebrating their victory over Spokane, Wright pushed forward, arriving just twenty miles short of that location on the Thirtieth. The warriors appeared in small scouting parties. The next day they exchanged fire with the Nez Perce and set fire to the grass expecting to break up the column while the warrior circled around under the cover of smoke to attack the rear guard. The fire was insignificant and Captain Keyes ordered Winder, Ihrie, Hardie and Dent to deploy in double quick time as skirmishers across the rear and along the sides. Ord covered the front. Within five minutes Keyes had closed up and encircled the pack trains. The warriors then withdrew. The column went into camp.

Knowing the hostiles were waiting for him, Wright had hoped to rest his men on September 1. However a large body of warriors assembled on a nearby hill for a fight. The scouts reported that more lay beyond. Wright dropped off two companies of artillery with one howitzer under Hardie to guard the pack train in camp while the remainder of the command advanced. They reached the foot of the hill. Wright deployed Grier's dragoons around to the right of the hill while Keye's and Dent's companies with the Indian scouts drove the hostiles off the hill. Wright rode up the hill with Keyes' infantry and howitzer crew. The awesome spectacle below made them momentarily forget what they had come for.

Keyes described the scene:

"The natural scenery was interesting, but its effect was wonderfully heightened by the thousand or more savage warriors who were riding furiously hither and thither over

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<sup>4</sup> Brown, p. 73.

the plain or issuing from the woods and valleys. The barbarous host was armed with Hudson Bay muskets, spears, bows and arrows, and apparently they were subject to no order or command. . . Both men and animals were smeared and striped with gaudy pigments and bedecked with feathers and plumes of birds of prey. The skins of bears, wolves, and the buffalo served generally for saddles, and the whole display was enhanced by the frantic gestures and yells of the warriors, who brandished their weapons in defiance."<sup>5</sup>

His adjutant, Lieutenant Lawrence Kipp, also recalled:

"On the plain below we saw the enemy. Every spot seemed alive with the wild warriors we had come so far to meet. They were in the pines on the edge of the lakes, in the ravines and gullies, on the opposite hillsides, and swarming on the plain. They seemed to cover the country for some two miles. Mounted on their fleet, hardy horses, the crowds swayed back and forth, brandishing their weapons, shouting their war cries, and keeping up a song of defiance. . . They were all in bravery of their array, gaudily painted, and decorated with their wild trappings; their plumes fluttering above them, while below skins and trinkets of all kinds of fantastic embellishments flaunted in the sunshine. Their horses, too, were arrayed in the most glaring finery. Some were even painted, and with colors to form the brightest contrast, the white being smeared with the crimson in fantastic figures, and the dark-colored streaked with white clay. Beads and fringes of gaudy colors were hanging from their bridles, while the plumes of eagle's feathers interwoven with the mane and tail fluttered as breeze swept over them and completed their fantastic appearance. . . But we had no time for mere admiration, for other work was at hand."

This diversion was a favorite tactic of the Indians of the Pacific Northwest to draw the soldiers off the high ground and out into an ambush. The taunting had worked numerous times before but they had never encountered the lethal range of the new rifles.

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<sup>5</sup> Keyes, p. 47.

Assessing the situation, Wright then deployed his forces for battle. He sent Lieutenant Robert O. Tyler with the howitzer to join Dent's two rifle companies. Wright ordered Dent to drive into the pines on the right to flush the Indians out onto the plain. They met with vigorous resistance but a discharge from the howitzer broke their spirited attacks. The warriors fled to the hills.

Wright pointed to Keyes the direction of his attack. Keyes commanded his companies to advance down the plain spread out in skirmish formation. Kipp remembered:

"In the meanwhile, the companies moved down the hill with all precision of a parade, and as we rode along the line it was pleasant to see the enthusiasm of the men to get within reach of the enemy. As soon as they were some six hundred yards they opened fire, and delivered it steadily as they advanced. The Indians acted as skirmishers, advancing rapidly and delivering their fire, then retreating with a quickness and irregularity which rendered it difficult to reach them. They were wheeling and dashing about, always on the run, apparently each fighting on his own account."<sup>6</sup>

To their surprise the soldiers hit the warriors at six hundred yards. The volleys began to take their toll on the warriors who gave up their feints and withdrew. Dent's battalion drove the Indians out of the woods onto the plain and closed in on Keyes's right. When the Keyes' companies reached unbroken ground they made room for Grier's dragoons to pass on the right.

"This was the chance for which the dragoons had been impatiently waiting. As the line advanced they had been behind it, leading their horses. Now, the order was given to mount, and they rode through the company intervals to the front. In an instant, we heard the voice of [brevet] Major Grier ringing over the plain, as he shouted, 'Charge the rascals,' and on the dragoons went, at headlong speed. Taylor's and Gaston's companies were then, burning for revenge, and soon they were on them. We saw the flash of the

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<sup>6</sup> Kipp

sabers as they cut them down. . . Yells and shrieks and uplifted hand were of no avail as they rode over them. A number were left dead on the ground, when once more the crowd broke, and dashed forward to the hills. It was a race for life."<sup>7</sup>

The dragoons had started off handsomely but their ranks began to break up as their horses which had marched without a day's rest tired. The warriors mounted on their fresh ponies encumbered with only a rider, blanket and lariat easily outdistanced the heavier equipped dragoons. Lieutenant Gregg did manage to overtake one of the warriors and split his skull with his heavy dragoon saber. Under the assault from the dragoons the Indian retreat turned into a rout. The dragoons pursued for two miles until their exhausted horses gave out. The following infantry caught up and passed by the dragoons; what Indians could be seen on the distant ridge were dispatched with the howitzer. The pursuit continued for three hours until the soldiers and animals were totally exhausted. Keyes reached the crest of the last hill and could see no more than ten or fifteen Indians. He waited as exhausted artillery and riflemen came up. Then he heard recall sounded. By two o'clock the soldiers returned to camp. The field was littered with muskets, bows, arrows, blankets, skins and trinkets. The warriors had managed to carry off their dead and wounded according to their custom. Without a single casualty the Battle of Four Lakes had avenged Steptoe's disaster. Although the Indian casualties were later discovered not less than sixty killed or wounded, they had fled the field where they had hoped to defeat the Army. Wright and his men had clearly won the day.

Wright rested his men for three days, then at six o'clock on the morning of the Fifth he resumed his march. After moving five miles, warriors began to appear. At first they rode along broken terrain parallel to the line of march. When the soldiers came out onto the Great Spokane Plain, five to seven hundred warriors positioned themselves along the woods on their right for another attack. Wright turned his forces toward the hostiles.

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<sup>7</sup> Kipp.

The Indians set fire to the grass, this time with the wind blowing in the faces' of the soldiers. This tactic was more intended to stampede the animals. The flames leapt high enough to worry the men. They discovered a few hundred yards to their left front a patch of bare rock and short grass. The men herded the animals over to it where the mule drivers put out the fire on the short stubble. Behind the screen of fire and smoke the warriors came out forming a semicircle around the front and flank firing on Wright's column. The remaining soldiers with the dragoons leading then dashed through places where the flames were low and opened fire, driving the Indians back into the woods.

To clear the long strips of pines flanking the plain, the howitzers fired into the trees while the infantry swept the area. Keyes kept one and occasionally two companies in close order while the rest deployed in skirmish order so that the infantry line stretched for nearly a mile. He rode at full speed to see which way the Indians went, then he would commit his reserve.

This process continued for four miles until the infantry men reached the end of the pines and drove the warriors out onto the plain. There Grier's dragoons were waiting and ready. Once again with pistol and saber in hand, they cut down their foe, pursuing them into the next woods. The warriors tried to fight off the soldiers from these position but Wright repeated his combined arms tactics of howitzer, infantry and dragoons . The men had covered fourteen miles in eight hours of fighting with only what water they carried in their canteens. The battle was a feat of physical endurance. Wright placed his force in camp along the Spokane River. The men were exhausted. Keyes described, "I kept my saddle till my tent was pitched; then I dismounted, took a glass of wine, gave orders not to disturb me, and lay down on my back to rest. For half an hour I did not move a muscle, and felt the whole time that if I did move one I should die. At the end of an hour I was restored, and no one had noticed my debility. Never before, or since, was I so nearly finished by the toil of war."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Keyes, p. 50.

Although they could see the Indians on the other side, the soldiers were not molested. The soldiers had again driven the warriors from the field who had still failed to enslave the infantry. The Army had only one man wounded while the hostile tribes had lost two chiefs killed and Kammiakin wounded. The Battle of Spokane Plain was another one-sided victory. In two quick victories Wright had taken the fight out of the warriors.

On September 7, Wright resumed his march. They followed the south bank of the Spokane River west. On the Eighth they saw a great cloud of dust in the far distance. As the column neared, they saw a large brown patch of earth in the distance move. After eight miles, Wright halted the train and left a dragoon company with Ord's and Gibson's artillery companies. As they neared they recognized the distant herd of about a thousand Indian ponies. Grier rode his dragoons forward the eighteen miles to overtake the herd.

Upon their capture, Keyes feared that the soldiers could not protect such a large herd against stampede and recapture by their owners. He urged that Wright destroy the herd. The colonel was disposed to save the herd but consented to convene a board of officers for an agreement. They agreed to officers, quartermaster and friendly Indians to select their choice of animals which saved about 200. They executed the remaining 800 horses. It took two days for the soldiers to kill them all. A cruel as it appeared this practice became common since dismounted warriors were least likely to fight. Experience proved there was no safe way to escort a large pony herd without the Indians recapturing them.

The column again marched and crossed the Spokane unopposed on the Eleventh. They arrived at Father Joset's mission on the Thirteenth and waited. Representatives from the tribes visited. By September 17, they held a council and sued for peace. Wright's terms were uncompromising; - unconditional surrender. While Wright may have sympathized with the Indians before this time he did not. They had broken the peace that he had established and considered fair. Wright stated that he would rather fight than negotiate and if the Indians chose to fight, he would annihilate them. The

Indians agreed to surrender. Wright dealt sternly with the Indians and their leaders who participated in crimes and aggression against the government.

The next day the column turned back. With the mission complete, Fort Taylor was abandoned and Wright's command returned to Fort Walla Walla on October 5. Enroute, he recovered the two howitzers buried by Steptoe.

Meanwhile Garnett led out his column of 300 men on August 10. Lieutenant George Crook's company of the Fourth Infantry augmented his three companies; C, G and I, of the Ninth Infantry. His battalion had the task to hunt down the Indians who participated in the murders and incited rebellion.

On the Fifteenth, a detachment under Second Lieutenant Jesse Allen attacked a Yakima camp harboring some of the fugitives. Allen, who had just graduated from West Point in 1855, lost his own life but his men won the fight. They identified the fugitives and hung them. Lieutenant Crook of the Fourth Infantry had a similar success with another Yakima village. He also executed the fugitives. Crook would rise to be one of the great Indian fighters after the Civil War and would command several campaigns with the Ninth Infantry. Garnett's column reached the Canadian border on September 10 without further incident. They turned back and reached Fort Simcoe on the Twenty-third completing a march of 550 miles in a little over a month. Captain Henry M. Black's Company G had conducted an additional patrol which added forty-seven miles to their march.

Colonel Wright had established himself with this campaign as a skilled Indian fighter. His victory was so sound that these Indian tribes never raised arms against the whites again. Wright had the best pick of the officers. He chose seasoned campaigners. This was important in that the Indian War Army was laden with indolence and alcoholism among its leadership.

His commanders had taken advantage of the time available to drill their men to react quickly to any situation. This proved critical in the fluid development of a fight

with hostiles who employed every trick they knew. The firing of the dry prairie grass at the beginning of the Battle of Spokane Plains nearly turned the battle against the whites. The Indians were good at their method of mobile guerrilla warfare. They were initially surprised by the lethality of the long range rifles. Yet Wright's deft skill at employing his three combat arms; mounted, foot and artillery, overwhelmed Indian tactics which had easily confounded the Army before. The 1858 Yakima War established itself as one of the greatest Indian wars prior to the Civil War and established a strong reputation for the Ninth Regiment of Infantry and its commander.

From the close of operations in October 1858 until October 1865, the Regiment garrisoned posts throughout the Washington Territory. Tension rose as England and the United States disputed over the ownership and boundary of San Juan Island in Puget Sound. Captain George B. Pickett occupied the island with his D Company in July 1859. Hostilities seemed imminent with the Americans sorely outnumbered on the island. The two countries avoided war by agreeing to occupy opposite ends of the island. Pickett's company was replaced by H Company in July 1861 after Pickett resigned to join the Confederacy. In 1872, the Emperor of Germany served as the arbitrator and decided in the favor of the United States.

In May 1861, two officers selected one hundred men from the regiment to provide escort from Walla Walla on Lieutenant John Mullen's survey and construction of the road to Fort Benton, South Dakota. This expedition would take fifteen months. Aside from the brief interlude of the 1858 Yakima War, Mullen of the Fourth Infantry had spent the last three years building a road from the Missouri to the Columbia River. Upon completion of the expedition in 1863, Mullen resigned his commission and became a lawyer in San Francisco. These men of the Ninth would miss the Civil War.

When the Southern states seceded from the Union in early 1861, a number of officers from those states resigned their commissions. With the exception of Virginia and Maryland, the Regiment had been recruited from the northern states. The enlisted men,

however, remained loyal to the Union. West Point, therefore, produced most of the officers with Southern loyalties.

Lieutenant Edwin J. Harvie had applied for a leave of absence during the summer of 1860 to visit his home in Virginia. Before his leave expired the Civil War broke out. Harvie resigned from the US Army and was commissioned a Captain of infantry in the Confederacy. He rose to colonel as the Inspector-General assigned to General Joseph E. Johnston's staff with a brief interval on Lee's staff

Lieutenant George Carr, another officer appointed from Virginia, resigned in February to command the Fifty-seventh Virginia Volunteers. Lieutenant John W. Frazier, USMA class of 1849 from Mississippi, resigned in March. He returned home to command the Twenty-eighth Alabama Regiment and was later promoted to Brigadier-General May 1863. Lieutenant Paul Quattlebaum, USMA class of 1857, resigned in June to return to South Carolina to become the Assistant Adjutant General with the rank of lieutenant-colonel.

Captain Charles Winder, USMA class of 1846 from Maryland, resigned his commission in April. He commanded the Sixth South Carolina Infantry at Sumter when the war broke out. He earned the esteem of Stonewall Jackson and in March 1862, and rose with the rank of General to command the Stonewall Brigade and later Jackson's Division. He was killed at Cedar Mountain, Virginia on August 9, 1862. His promotion to major-general was approved after his death.

Captain George Pickett, USMA class of 1846 from Virginia, resigned in June. He rose to the rank of major-general to lead his division in a charge at Gettysburg that would forever bear his name. Captain James Archer of Maryland resigned in 1861 and rose to the rank of general in the Army of Northern Virginia. Major Robert S. Garnett, USMA class of 1840 from Virginia, resigned his commission on May 17, 1861. Brigadier-General Garnett commanded a brigade in Pickett's Division. He was killed in at Carrick's Ford, Virginia on July 13, 1861.

The Ninth lost several of its best leaders. Garnett and Pickett had been instrumental in pursuing hostiles, but probably none were more active than Garnett and Winder. Both lost distinguished themselves as well for the Confederacy but consequently were killed early in the war.

Interestingly when the Civil War broke out, several of the southern officers could not bring themselves to fight against the Constitution which they had earlier sworn to defend. Major Edward J. Steptoe, USMA class of 1837, resigned his commission in November 1861 to return to his home in Virginia. He did not raise arms against the United States and died on April 1, 1865. Similarly Captain Crawford Fletcher from Arkansas and Lieutenant John C. Howard from Texas resigned their commissions in 1861 and did not join the Confederacy.

Many leaders thought the War of Rebellion would end quickly. The War Department called for all available regiments to return to the East. In October 1861, E Company left as the lead element on a steamer bound for the East. However, the War Department became concerned about the loyalty of California to the Union. Far from the reach of the central government, it seemed advisable to leave a Regular Army regiment there. This honor fell to the Ninth. In January, 1862, the 26 privates of E Company were transferred to the Fourth Infantry and the officers, noncommissioned officers and musicians were ordered back to California.

Most of the Ninth Infantry was ordered to California in November 1861 to form the nucleus of the Department of the Pacific. Wright consequently became Brigadier-General of U.S. Volunteers as money was appropriated for the recruiting of California volunteer regiments. Wright's able handling of the Department of the Pacific was instrumental in preserving California for the Union. The Regiment eulogized him with this epitaph,

"Placed in command of the immense Department of the Pacific shortly after the outbreak of the recent Rebellion, he, by his wisdom, so managed the great interests under

his control that the burden of the war was scarcely felt within its borders. Deaf alike to the goadings of rebellious spirits and the frenzied appeals of timid loyalists, he pursued his course with firmness and moderation to the glorious result. Without bloodshed he accomplished the work of the statesman and soldier, protected the honor of his country's flag, and preserved peace."<sup>9</sup>

On July 30, 1865 while enroute to assume command of the Department of Columbia the steamer, *Brother Jonathan*, wrecked and Wright drowned. His loss was felt throughout the Regiment.

Lieutenant-Colonel Silas Casey also became a brigadier-general of U.S. Volunteers in 1861. He served in the Peninsular Campaign and distinguishing himself at the Battle of Fair Oaks, Virginia in 1862. He was breveted as a major-general in March 1865 for his meritorious conduct during the war. He served in Washington, D. C. 1863-65. He compiled from the French "Infantry Tactics" a version for the Americans in August 1862. "Casey's Tactics" became the bible for infantry men.

The War had stripped the Ninth of all its field grade officers. Wright's new responsibilities required him to turn the Regiment over to a subordinate. Major Caleb C. Sibley, USMA class of 1829, transferred from the Third Infantry to become the lieutenant-colonel of the Ninth to replace Casey. In April 1864, he became the colonel of the Sixteenth Infantry.

Major A W. Bowman served as Wright's Inspector General from 1864 to 1865 and commanded the Regiment after Sibley's transfer and Wright's death. He had graduated from West Point in 1841 and had been breveted during the Mexican War. Unfortunately he was captured with the Third Infantry at the outset of the Civil War but was released in 1862. Prisoner exchanges occurred regularly on the grounds that the soldiers would not fight against their former captors. Bowman was sent to California to serve with the Ninth in June 1862.

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<sup>9</sup> Brown, p. 100.

The Ninth garrisoned the forts around San Francisco while the volunteers fought Indians. The Regiment established its headquarters at the Presidio. In effect the volunteers guarded the frontier while the Regular Army guarded the loyalty of the cities.

With the Regiment essentially out of the war, the rapid expansion of the Army created a number of promotion vacancies in the volunteer ranks for officers willing to give up their slots. Many veteran officers advised against it. While the lure of rank came fast in the volunteers, some warned that there may not be vacancies waiting for them when the Army reduced to its prewar strength. Nonetheless, a number of junior officers jumped at the opportunity.

Some of the officers did not have to travel very far. Captain Henry Black gave up command of his G Company to become colonel of the Sixth California Volunteers. Lieutenant Charles O. Wood became the lieutenant-colonel of the Eighth California Volunteers while lieutenant W. H. Jordan became one of the majors. Captain Thomas English became the lieutenant-colonel of the First Washington Territory Infantry. Many other officers did make their way back East to join the War.

Lieutenant August V. Kautz, USMA class of 1852, left the regiment to command an Ohio Cavalry Regiment in 1862. He earned six brevets to major-general of the US Volunteers and became the commanding general of a Cavalry Division in 1864. He became a brigadier-general in the Regular Army in 1891 and retired the next year.

Captain Frederick Dent had married his West Point classmate's, Ulysses S. Grant, sister. He was promoted to major of the Fourth Infantry in March 1863. When Grant became General of the Army in March 1864, Dent joined his staff as the Aide-de-Camp. He earned two brevets to Brigadier-General by 1865 for his conduct at the Battle of the Wilderness and Petersburg. He remained as Grant's Aide-de-camp through 1869 then he joined Sherman's staff until 1872. Kautz and Dent had distinguished themselves on the frontier with the Ninth. Both benefited well from their career gambles during the Civil War.

Fortunately not all the officers had to give up a Regular Army vacancy to get into the war. With the organization of nine new Regular Army regiments of eighteen companies in 1861, a number of officers found promotions.

Captain Dickinson Woodruff transferred to the newly organized Twelfth Infantry as a major. Lieutenant David McKibbin, USMA class of 1852, became a first lieutenant in the Fourteenth Infantry in 1861. He resigned his position to command the 158th Pennsylvania Infantry in November 1862 then the 240th Pennsylvania in April 1865. The young officer who had served so gallantly against hostile Indians in Washington Territory earned three brevets to brigadier-general by 1865. After the Civil War he returned to the Regular Army and retired a Major in 1875.

Second Lieutenant Charles G. Harker, USMA class of 1858, joined the Fifteenth Infantry as a first lieutenant. He made captain by October but received a colonacy of the Sixty-fifth Ohio Infantry in November. By September 1863, he became a brigadier-general of volunteers but was killed at the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain in June 1864.

Lieutenant Henry Douglass, USMA class of 1852, and Lieutenant James W. Forsyth, USMA class of 1856, accepted captain slots in the Eighteenth Infantry in May 1861. Douglass was breveted for gallantry at the Battle of Murfreesburo, Tennessee in December 1862. The appointment of Captain James Van Voast, USMA class of 1852, as the colonel of Eighth California was revoked. He had been the first quartermaster officer of the regiment but finally found a vacancy as a major in the Eighteenth in December 1863.

Lieutenant Hugh G. Fleming, USMA class of 1852, transferred to the Nineteenth with the promotion to captain. Captain Pinkney Lugenbeel also accepted one of the major vacancies in the Nineteenth.

In effect the Ninth Infantry lost all its field grade officers, captains and some of its best lieutenants to the Civil War. Frontier duty provided little opportunity for glory. Consequently it had plagued the Army with indolence and alcoholism. Fighting hostile

Indians proved to be some of the hardest duty and yet no officer West of the Mississippi was breveted for his merit. There was little incentive to do well. Yet the organization of the Ninth in 1855 provided promotions for a number of officers who had distinguished themselves in earlier conflicts. All the field grade officers and some of the captains had earned several brevets. Almost all the officers had seen action during the Mexican War of 1848. Such inspirational leadership set the standard for the command.

The Ninth arrived in Washington Territory as a Regiment to resolve the Indian problems there. Wright was given command of the Department and his own field grade officers led the operations during the first campaign in 1856. Again in 1858, Wright took the field. This time he had time to recognize the talents' of officers of the other regiments like Captains Keyes and Grier. This time the Ninth with help concluded the Indian Wars in the Pacific Northwest. Not until the former allies, the Nez Perce, tried to flee to the Canadian border did any hostilities reoccur. The Ninth Regiment of Infantry had played the pivotal roll in this victory.

The Civil War stripped the Regiment of its seasoned leaders. Five years of garrison duty outside San Francisco changed the nature of the Regiment. It had grown soft. When the Regular Army would have to take over the Indian Wars in 1866, few of the Ninth's leaders had any experience nor incentive to conduct such hard work. The Yakima Wars of 1856 and 1858 provided one of the high points in the history of the Ninth Infantry.