

INTRODUCTORY

This little 170-page military biography has been presented to the Cavalry Public with neither Introduction nor Foreword. This is intended to supply the omission.

In fact, those interested in seeing it put before the Military Public feel fortunate in even seeing it put in print in any shape. This has been done mainly through the courtesy of the Chief of Cavalry and the Editor of the Cavalry Journal.

In these days most military biographies tell of the activities of Generals who have successfully handled brigades, divisions, corps, or armies in battle. However, just as in the days of Bobby Burns, "The rank is but the guinea's stamp, the man's the gold for a' that."

This narrative relieves the monotony somewhat, for Bernard never commanded more than a regiment in action and a small regiment at that. In fact, most of his field service—that in which he excelled—was in command of a small troop and acting independently.

The reader, if a novice in such matters, must not be deceived by the thought that the command of a troop in the field means little else than riding at the head of a column of some 50 or 60 mounted men in column of twos. The Troop Commander under circumstances described here must at one and the same time be his own Intelligence Officer, Quartermaster, Commissary, Engineer, Veterinarian, and oftentimes physician and surgeon as well.

The West, in those days, was generally but little known, and sometimes, as in Middle Idaho in 1879, *entirely unexplored*. When maps existed they were of the most general character, frequently misleading, and, as a rule, of but little value. The Troop Commander, under such circumstances, must have what we call "a good eye for country," and frequently, if not usually, be his own guide.

The foe—the Indian—was nearly always more poorly armed than the troops; he had no base of supplies, but lived on the country. His knowledge of the country was almost perfect. His training as a warrior began when he was old enough to handle a small bow and arrow, and was continuous to manhood. Hunting and warfare, either with other tribes or the whites, was the business of his life. Only when he had taken a scalp was he regarded as a full-fledged warrior.

He was not a good shot at long range, and such matters as drift, windage, the effect of light and moisture on the trajectory, were to him a closed book. He had to be economical of ammunition, and would with the utmost of patience sneak up on his objective, whether man or wild game, until near enough to be