

BARRETT, JAMES

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BARRETT, JAMES, born in County Mayo, Ireland, 1835; came to the United States when young and was educated in New Jersey; never married; enlisted at New York City, age 19, and assigned to Company D, 1st U.S. Dragoons; occupation when enlisted - Coach Maker; transferred to Company D, same Regiment; stationed with the company in Oregon where he was at times on detached service as carpenter and acted as Corporal; honorably discharged at Fort Dalles, Oregon, May 19, 1860.

Enrolled at San Francisco, California, August 10, and mustered in at the Presidio of San Francisco as 2nd Lieutenant, Company A, 1st California Cavalry, August 16, 1861; marched with the company to Camp Carleton near San Bernardino, California, in October, 1861; left Camp Carleton March 1, and arrived at Stanwix Station, on the Gila River, March 16, 1862; from there he reported the capture on March 10, near the Pima Villages, of Captain William McCleave and eight men of Company A by Confederates; left Stanwix April 8 and arrived at Picacho Pass April 15, 1862; the following recount of the engagement at Picacho Pass is compiled from "Records of California Men in the war of the Rebellion" by R. H. Orton:

A reconnoitering party, under Captain William P. Calloway, consisting of his own Company I, 1st California Infantry, a detachment of 1st California Cavalry under Lieutenants James Barrett of Company A and Ephraim C. Baldwin of Company D, and a detachment of Company K, 1st California Infantry under Lieutenant Jeremiah Phelan with two mountain howitzers, was sent out with orders to proceed along the Overland route as far as Tucson,

Upon approaching the Picacho, April 15, 1862, the Indian scouts brought information that a detachment of Confederates was in the immediate front. The detachment of Cavalry was ordered to make a wide detour so as to strike them on the flank while the Captain, with the main party, was to attack them in front. The enemy was not found in the immediate front but, after traveling several miles, rapid firing was heard in advance and, arriving on the spot, it was found that Lieutenant Barrett had located the Rebel pickets and the first information they had of the Union forces was their charging among them. Lieutenant Barrett and two men were killed and three men wounded. These were the first California Volunteers killed during the war. The Rebel loss was two men wounded and three prisoners.

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The graves of the Union Lieutenant and his men may now be seen within twenty feet of the Southern Pacific Railroad as it goes through Picacho Pass. The Union forces remained on the ground that night and, the next morning, the Captain (Calloway), against the protests of his officers, ordered the party to fall back. At Kenyon Station, (15 miles west of Gila Bend), they met the advance of the 'California Column' under Colonel J.R. West on April 26. On the following day all proceeded to the Pima Villages, arriving April 29, 1862, where an earthwork was thrown up about the flouring mill of Mr. Ammi White, who had been carried away prisoner by Captain Hunter a few days before.

The earthwork located near White's Mill (Casa Blanca) On the Pima Indian Reservation was designated as a Fort by the following General Order issued by Colonel James H. Carleton at Fort Yuma on May 10, 1862:

The Post just established by Lieut. Colonel Joseph R. West, 1st California Volunteers, at the Pima Villages, Ariz. Ter., is hereby designated as Fort Barrett, in honor of the memory of Lieut. James Barrett of Company A, First Cavalry, California Volunteers, who fell in defense of his colors near that point on the 15th of April, 1862.

Barrett Post No. 62 (3), Grand Army of the Republic, organized at Prescott, A.T., May 17, 1885, was named for him; the place in Picacho Pass, Pinal County, Arizona, where he and privates George Johnson of Company A and William S. Leonard of Company D were killed is now marked by a stone monument with a bronze plate erected by the Arizona State Highway Department.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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