OVERTON, JAMES WASHINGTON

OVERTON, JAMES Washington, born at Fort Madison (Bow Lake), Lee County, Iowa, August 11, 1843; son of and Margaret Ann (Luther) Overton; married at _______ on ________, 18____:

Came to California in 18__, enrolled, age 18, at Nevada City, Nevada County, California, August 10, and mustered in at the Presidio of San Francisco, August 23, 1861, to serve 3 years as Private, Captain Henry A. Green's Company G, 1st California Infantry; occupation when enlisted - Miner; went with the Company by sea on the Steamer Senator and arrived at San Pedro September 18; stationed at Camp Wright, near Warner's Ranch in San Diego County, from October 23, 1861 until March 19, 1862, when the Company left for Fort Yuma, marched across the desert and arrived 8 days later; left Fort Yuma July 20 and marched up the Gila and on to Tucson, arriving August 8, 1862.

The Company left Tucson on December 2, 1862, for the Rio Grande and reached Mesilla on the 20th; stationed in New Mexico during most of the remainder of his service and actively participated in scouts and campaigns against hostile Apaches; the company was in action near the San Francisco River, A.T., July 25, 1864, when 3 Apaches were killed, 6 captured, and 19 head of beef cattle taken; honorably discharged at Fort Craig, New Mexico, August 31, 1864; reenlisted September 20, and mustered in at Fort Craig, N. M., November 9, 1864, as Private, Company B, 1st Battalion of Veteran Volunteer Infantry; honorably discharged April 3, 1866.

Enlisted, January 10, 1869, at Camp Lowell, near Tucson, Pima County, A.T., to serve 3 years as Private, Company H, 21st U.S. Infantry; listed, U.S. Census, 1870, at Tucson, occupation - Soldier; honorably discharged at
Camp Crittenden, A.T., January 10, 1872; reenlisted at Fort Bowie, A.T.,
October 2, 1873 to serve 5 years and assigned to Company F, 23d U.S. Infantry;
honorably discharged at Fort Riley, Kansas, on Surgeon’s certificate of
disability, March 22, 1877.

After the close of the Civil War Congress greatly reduced the size of
all the armed forces and then failed to appropriate sufficient money ade-
quately to maintain the officers and men in military service. The following
extract from a letter printed in the San Francisco Alta California, written
by a newspaper correspondent at Tubac, A.T., on February 1, 1869, describes the
conditions that existed in Arizona at the time when Overton began his service
in the Regular Army.

I should like to call the attention of those of my readers who seem
to expect the troops, now stationed in Arizona, to follow up, punish
and exterminate the Indians, to the fact that out of sixty men hardly
twenty on an average are for service in the field. There exists a
general order issued by the War Department, prohibiting the employment
of civilians almost entirely, and therefore about ten per cent of the
men at a military post are employed as butchers, bakers, carpenters,
blacksmiths, laborers and teamsters.

Consider also that the general health of the troops in this Territory
suffers greatly, especially in the summer months. The undersigned re-
members that once out of eighty enlisted men, twenty five were so
affected by chills and fever as to be entirely unfit for duty; and this
at a post which was considered one of the healthiest in all Arizona.
A great many, mostly Infantry, are stationed in small detachments at
picket posts, mail stations, farms, etc., for protection, and can there-
fore not be partaking in an offensive campaign against the Apaches.

After completing his service in the Regular Army he returned to
Arizona and in 1886 was a Member of Negley Post No. 35, Grand Army of the
Republic, at Tucson; admitted from Chico, Butte County, California, to the U.
S. Soldiers Home at Sawtelle, near Los Angeles, on November 29, 1904, where
he died on February 11, 1914, aged 70; buried, Soldiers Home Cemetery.
Sources of Information


The Adjutant General of the Army - Military service records.
