

TIDBALL, Thomas Theodore

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TIDBALL, THOMAS THEODORE, born at Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania, October 2, 1826; son of Joseph and Eliza K. (Linn) Tidball; married, Helen M. (Rice) Hill (1835-1917) in Noble County, Indiana, June 3, 1856; daughter, Nellie H. (Mrs. John D. Hall).

Enrolled, age 19, at Mansfield, Richland County, Ohio, May 27 and mustered in June 24, 1846, to serve one year as Private, Captain William McLaughlin's Company A, Colonel Samuel R. Curtis' 3d Ohio Infantry; went with the Company to the Rio Grande and took part in the defense of Camargo, a large depot of military supplies on the south bank of the river 98 miles above Matamoras, when attacked by Mexicans under General Urrea, February 18, 1847; honorably discharged at New Orleans, Louisiana, June 18, 1847, and then returned to Ohio.

Went to California via Cape Horn in 1849-50 where he engaged in mining; returned to the East in 1854 and resided in Indiana until 1857 when he went back to California with his wife and became a farmer and wheat grower in the Salinas Valley.

Raised a Company of 40 men which was enrolled at Santa Cruz, California, October 21, 1861, and mustered in at Camp Union near Sacramento, as Company K, 5th California Infantry on November 22, 1861, of which he became the Captain; additional recruits were obtained and he went to Camp Latham near Los Angeles with about 80 men in the spring of 1862; stationed in Southern California until June, 1862, when he marched to Fort Yuma; the Company was at Gila City on March 19 and at Casa Blanca (Fort Barrett) on March 31, 1863, en route to Tucson arriving there early in April; on May 2, 1863, he received the following order from Colonel David Fergusson, 1st California Cavalry, in command at Tucson;

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CAPTAIN; You will start this evening with your command. The object of your expedition is to chastise Apaches. There is a rancheria of these savages at the Cajon de Arivaya, about twenty miles from Fort Breckinridge. This I wish you to attack and destroy if possible.

I am informed the preferable road to reach the rancheria is that via Canada del Oro. Jesus Maria Elias is well acquainted with this road and the trail. You shall have the twenty-five men selected by yourself from Companies I and K, Fifth Infantry California Volunteers, say ten American citizens and thirty-two Mexicans, with about twenty Papagos from San Xavier. Jose Antonio Baborse, who is Governor of the Papagos, you will find brave and intelligent. Jesus Maria Elias will have charge of the Mexicans. Nine tame Apaches will be sent with you as spies and guides. All will be strictly under your orders.

By keeping well hid during the day and using your guides judiciously you will no doubt surprise the rancheria. All grown males are fair game; the women and children capture and bring here; also such captives as you may find among the Apaches.

Do the best you can while your subsistence will last. Provisions for twelve days have been issued to all the citizens and Indians. You will have to exercise considerable vigor to prevent the Papagos and Apaches (mansos) from killing women and children, and others from plundering when they should be fighting, but all these things will suggest themselves to you. Get as much of the savages' stock as possible. It will be equitably distributed after your return.

That the expedition was a complete success is evidenced by the following;

Orders,) Headquarters,
No. 8.) Tucson, Ariz. Ter., May 12, 1863.

I take pleasure in acknowledging the very gallant and soldier-like manner in which the expedition against the Apache Indians in the Canada de Arivaya was conducted, and the highly creditable result of the attack on those savages, who have been devastating, robbing, and murdering in this Territory and Sonora for centuries. Capt. T.T. Tidball, Fifth Infantry California Volunteers, who commanded the expedition with so much good judgment, may well be proud of it and of the brave men under his command, who marched for five days without ever lighting a fire, maintaining silence, hiding by day and traveling by night, to accomplish their object.

That a handful of twenty-five soldiers and a few brave volunteer citizens should so completely surprise a rancheria of the craftiest savages on the continent, traveling for sixteen hours the evening and night before the battle, over frightful precipices, through gloomy canons

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and chasms heretofore untrod by white men, out of a numerous horde of savages killing over 50, wounding as many, taking 10 prisoners, and capturing 66 head of stock, without the loss of more than one man, is something for emulation to others in future campaigns against Apaches.

We all have to mourn over the brave and generous youth who fell doing his duty. Mr. Thomas C. McClelland, the only one who fell in this brilliant little affair, will long be mourned by those who knew him only to esteem him as a good citizen, a dutiful son, and firm friend.

D. FERGUSSON,
Colonel First Cavalry California Volunteers,
Commanding.

Listed, Territorial Census, May, 1864, at Apache Pass (Fort Bowie).
occupation - Soldier, resident in Arizona 14 months; was in command at Fort Bowie, A.T. from May 19, 1863 until September, 1864; his poor opinion of that Post was expressed in an official letter dated October 27, 1863;

The present site of the post is exceedingly inconvenient for a garrison and seems to have been constructed more with a view to command the spring than from any other advantage it presented. A great amount of badly applied labor has been applied here, and the place is probably not as well adapted for defense as when it was first occupied.

The quarters, if it is not an abuse of language to call them such, have been constructed without system, regard to health, defense, or convenience. Those occupied by the men are mere hovels, mostly excavations in the side hill, damp illy ventilated, and covered with the decomposed granite taken from the excavation, through which the rain passes very much as it would through a sieve. By the removal of a few tents the place would present more the appearance of a California Digger Indian rancharia than a military post.

While his duty at Fort Bowie was to protect that section of the route used to convey military supplies to the Rio Grande his strategy was to keep constantly on the offensive by harassing the Apaches; on the largest of his raids he was accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel Nelson H. Davis, Assistant Inspector General, and was known as the Gila Expedition; with 1st Lieutenant George A. Burkett, 2d Lieutenants H.H. Stevens and George Dutton (the latter in charge of the pack mules), Assistant Surgeon F.H. Cox and 109

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enlisted men from Fort Bowie he left a Cienega near the eastern base of Mount Graham, on May 13, 1864, and marched north to the Gila River and thence up Bonita Creek for about 20 miles but found no Indians; marching southwesterly over rough country they crossed the Gila and camped near the present site of Pima; the march was resumed down the Gila and then up to San Carlos Creek for about 10 miles where some Apache rancherias were destroyed.

Upon returning to the river his Command marched down the canyon of the Gila and thence up Dripping Springs Wash where Indians were found and severely punished; from there the expedition went over to the San Pedro river and he again sought to surprise the Apaches on the Aravaipa but without success; arrived in Tucson on June 4, 1864, when he reported that;

The total results of our operations are: Indians killed, 51; wounded, 17; prisoners, 16 women and children. Property captured, \$660 in gold coin, 1 mule, 3 horses, 2 Sharps carbines, 1 double-barreled shotgun, 1 Colt revolver, 2 saddles, 2 pairs of saddlebags, 1 bridle, 1 headstall, 2 lances, 4 boxes caps, and 4 powderhorns. Property destroyed, 1 ton mescal, 30 acres of wheat, corn, beans, &c., and a large number of bows and arrows. The only casualty in my command was the accidental wounding of Sergeant Foster.

From Tucson he went directly to the upper Gila Valley and, after delivering the plans for Fort Goodwin on June 12, returned to Fort Bowie; the following remarks were written on the Return of Company K, 5th California Infantry, for August, 1864;

Captain Tidball with 32 men of the Company left Fort Bowie on July 10, 1864, and scouted in a southeasterly direction through the Chiricahua Mountains. On the 16th had a skirmish with Apache Indians and killed a Chief called "Old Plume". Returned to the post August 3 after an absence of 23 days.

Brevet Major and Lieutenant Colonel of Volunteers to date from March 13, 1864, for faithful and meritorious service during the war; marched with the Company in October to Las Cruces, N.M. where it was mustered out on November

27 and he was honorably discharged from the Service, November 30, 1864; on November 8, 1864, the 1st Territorial Legislature adopted the following Concurrent Resolution introduced by Nathan B. Appel, a Representative from Tucson:

WHEREAS, the able and valuable services of Captain T.T. Tidball of the 5th Infantry, California Volunteers, in his various successful expeditions against the barbarous Apaches, merit the highest expression of our approbation, and as the only mode of expressing the obligations that the people of Arizona owe to him; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the thanks of this Legislative Assembly be tendered to the brave and energetic Captain T.T. Tidball, and the officers and soldiers under his command, for his and their efficient and eminently successful campaigns against the hostile Apaches of Arizona.

Returned to California and became County Clerk of Santa Cruz County; was Collector of Internal Revenue for the 2d District of California from July 25, 1868 to January 28, 1870, by appointment of President Grant; afterwards operated a hotel and store at Jolon, a Station on the old stage line between San Francisco and Los Angeles, about 20 miles south of King City and was Postmaster at that place from February 21, 1881 until January 28, 1886; Comrade, Lucius Fairchild Post No. 179, G.A.R., Pacific Grove, California; Member, Santa Lucia Lodge No. 302, F. and A. M. at King City until April 11, 1908, when he transferred to Monterey Lodge No. 217; became an honorary Member, Society of Arizona Pioneers, at Tucson in April, 1886, on recommendation of George O. Hand who wrote:

I do now nominate (subject to the approval of this Society) Thomas T. Tidball formally of Co. "K" 5th Inf. Cal. Vols. for the simple fact of himself & Company going into the mountains near Tucson and absolutely killing a number of Indians estimated at least to have been 80 perhaps more - they were dead.

Died at Monterey, California, January 28, 1913, aged 86; buried under the auspices of the Masonic Lodge in the City Cemetery at Monterey; the Arizona Pioneers Historical Society in Tucson has his photograph in officer's uniform.

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