

OVERTON, JAMES WASHINGTON

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OVERTON, JAMES Washington, born at Fort Madison (Bow Lake), Lee
County, Iowa, August 11, 1843; son of/ James Washington
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 Warners 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 re-
mainder 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 H, 1st Battalion of Veteran Volun-
teer 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

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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 adequately 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 remembers 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 therefore 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 Hegley 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.

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SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Orton, R.H. - Records of California Men in the War of the Rebellion.
Sacramento, 1890, p. 366.

The Adjutant General of the Army - Military service records.

U.S. Veterans Administration - Pension and Soldiers Home records.
S.C. 150,550.

The Alta California, San Francisco, March 3, 1869, p. 2, c. 4.