

SCHOOL OF INSTRUCTION FOR CAVALRY AND LIGHT
ARTILLERY.

APRIL 26, 1886.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

Mr. BRAGG, from the Committee on Military Affairs, submitted the following

R E P O R T :

[To accompany bill H. R. 7192.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 7192) to provide a school of instruction for cavalry and light artillery, and for the construction and completion of quarters, barracks, and stables at certain posts for the use of the Army of the United States, submit the following report:

The committee have carefully considered the purpose and effect of this bill, and believing the same to be a measure long needed and absolutely necessary to the efficiency of the Army, the committee unanimously concur in recommending its passage.

The first section of the bill provides for the expenditure of \$200,000 to establish a permanent school of instruction for drill and practice for the cavalry and light artillery service of the Army.

It is not and never will be the policy of this Republic to maintain a large standing army, eating out the substance and a standing menace to the liberties of the people. This is cardinal doctrine, and all admit its wisdom; but there is a necessity, which all experience has demonstrated to exist, that war, with its train of evils and horrors, sooner or later is the lot of all peoples, and wisdom teaches that a preparation for it, to repel aggression or to defend national rights and honor, is wise statesmanship and true philanthropy in a republic as well as in any other form of government.

To be prepared will avert many a calamity which might otherwise befall us, spreading death, destruction, and ruin while an antidote was in process of preparation.

An infantry soldier may be made in a few months, while it requires very much more time to make an efficient cavalryman and artilleryman.

It seems to this committee, then, that they are best discharging their duty to the American people when they recommend such measures as will tend to make our little army more perfect, well equipped, thoroughly educated and disciplined, and fully up to the highest standard in everything that goes to make success certain in case of conflict, and to have it in hand for use, with an organization subject to expansion to any proportion that probable exigency may ever require, with a full corps of

officers and non-commissioned officers who may rapidly assimilate new recruits to the old soldiers, and inspire all with that *elan* necessary to accomplish great results.

The light batteries in our service have scarcely fired a gun since the war, and that arm, so efficient in the late service, has stood still since the war, and progress, with its steady and unceasing march, has left them far in the rear. This should not be so. We have the men and the means, and we should keep fully abreast with all the improvement and practice of the day.

It seems like trifling with the name of cavalry to send raw recruits unaccustomed to ride even, to regiments to be mounted with saber, carbine, and pistol, to pursue marauding bands of Indians expert on horseback and proficient in the use of the rifle.

A school is needed for both men and horses for cavalry, and a school is needed for batteries, where the range is sufficient for any caliber of piece.

At Fort Riley, where this school is proposed to be located, the Government owns a reservation of over 20,000 acres of land, ample for the operation of the batteries and the cavalry, and its location favorable by reason of railway facilities, for distribution of troops upon the shortest notice to any exposed point.

In an economic view, this measure is desirable, for at Riley we have wood and water in abundance, and forage and supplies can be furnished at the cheapest rates. The expense of maintaining men at such a post and at large posts like Russell and Robinson, as compared with small detached posts, is clearly shown by the table of comparative cost heretofore appended as Exhibit A. From an examination of this table, which has been carefully compiled at Army headquarters, it will be seen that such posts, while calling for a large outlay in the beginning, in a short time save vastly more to the Government than they cost.

The second section of the bill provides for the completion of quarters and barracks at Fort D. A. Russell, in the Territory of Wyoming, and to enlarge and complete quarters and barracks at Fort Robinson, in the State of Nebraska, to a capacity for a garrison of ten companies; and \$175,000 is recommended for these purposes.

The committee find that it will cost to complete Russell about \$75,000 and nearly \$100,000 to complete Robinson, and the bill therefore appropriates so much as may be necessary of \$175,000 for the purposes named.

There has been an growing demand for years past to consolidate our troops on the frontier into larger garrisons, and the abandonment of a large number of small posts. It has been urged, in a military point of view, for strategic purposes. It is quite manifest also that it will reduce the draft on the line for details and thus increase the effective force for the field. It will increase the *morale* of both officers and men, by bringing together larger bodies of men, making drills practicable, and arousing that feeling of pride in the superior efficiency of companies, battalions, and regiments absolutely essential to make good soldiers of both officers and men. Men who have been choppers, teamsters, cooks, servants, and idlers soon become soldiers, and are proud of their buttons, and the letter of their company. Officers find something to do to occupy their time instead of rusting out in sheer idleness, with its certainly attending vices. Large posts may be supplied cheaply with reading matter, and post schools may be supported, thus furnishing mental occupation as well as physical employment.

In an economical view this system should be carried into effect, because of the reduction in the enormous outlays for transportation now

required, and the cheapness, relatively, at which a soldier may be maintained, as shown by tables appended.

It is desirable in a sanitary point of view, for comfortable and suitable hospitals can be maintained, and the sick be better cared for and at much less cost.

The advantages of the school and the maintenance of the two posts named are set forth in the letter of Lieutenant-General Sheridan, made a part of this report; but the committee cannot forbear calling attention, in addition thereto, to the proximity of the reservation of the Sioux and Cheyennes, 18,000 strong, to Fort Robinson.

These Indians, many of them, were in the Custer massacre, and are among the worst of their species, and have had a taste of white man's blood. If we wish to encourage outbreaks and the wholesale slaughter of defenseless men, women, and children, we cannot better do it than by having a handful of men at Robinson; but if we desire to prevent it give Robinson a garrison of sufficient size to cow down the savages by certain and immediate punishment.

It is necessary, as will be apparent upon a moment's reflection, that before the small posts can be abandoned and the troops be concentrated in larger bodies, there must be some place provided in which they may live in those inclement latitudes.

The committee in this bill hope to inaugurate the system which shall effect the good results hereinbefore described, and therefore give their hearty recommendation to it.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES,
Washington, D. C., March 31, 1886.

Hon. E. S. BRAGG,

Chairman Military Committee, House of Representatives:

SIR: In reply to your letter of the 2^d instant, requesting my views on House bill No. 7192, I have to state that I have long considered that it would be advantageous to establish a central depot to which recruits for the cavalry and light infantry service could be sent for drill and instruction before joining their respective regiments. It also is advisable that the horses purchased for military service be brought together where they can be properly cared for and trained to the use for which they will be required, before being sent to their final destination, thereby saving the great expense which now occurs from the hire of stabling in cities.

These two objects can well be combined at the same post, the horse broken and the recruit instructed in its proper management. Moreover, horses now condemned as unfit for further use have to be sold for lack of a proper place for their care and recuperation, but at which, if available, many could, after a moderate period of rest and care, be again rendered servicable. Fort Riley, in its fine climate, its ample reservation, and the moderate cost (less than at almost any other post in the Army) with which both troops and animals can be maintained, enjoys an unequalled advantage as a location for a post for those above enumerated objects.

The necessity for a school for the practical instruction of our light artillery has never been so great as at the present time. Abroad the material of field artillery and its employment and service in action have very greatly advanced during the last decade, while in our Army, with very few exceptions, the guns and equipments are just what we had at the close of the rebellion. Within the next year or so, however, steel breech-loading rifled guns and metal carriages will have been introduced, and if proper instruction can be given, this branch of our service can be brought to a good state of efficiency. This will require that four or five of the light batteries be assembled for maneuver, for battalion and battery drill, and for target practice, necessitating an extent of ground for this purpose which can be obtained at no one of our posts except Fort Riley, which contains a reservation of 21,000 acres. Of course if recruits and batteries are assembled at Fort Riley, additional stables and barracks and quarters will be required, and the sum mentioned in the bill for their erection is none too large.

With reference to the completion of the barracks and quarters at Fort D. A. Rus-

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sell, I would invite attention to my remarks of February 17, 1886, on House bill No. 4367, from which I extract as follows:

"Fort D. A. Russell is three miles north of the Union Pacific Railroad and in the suburbs of the city of Cheyenne. It is about midway between Chicago and San Francisco, and is connected by two direct railroads with Denver. It was established in 1867, and since that time has had, and still has, geographical advantages of location which will make it the rendezvous for troops, for equipment and distribution for a long time. I consider Fort Russell a permanent post."

Fort Robinson is situated in the northwest corner of Nebraska, very near to the southern limit of the great Sioux Reservation and but a few miles from the extension of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. The nearest military post—Fort Laramie—has now lost much of its military importance, while the location of Fort Robinson will make it a prominent point for many years to come. The concentration of troops and erection of the barracks and quarters necessary for their accommodation is therefore a wise military measure. For these reasons I heartily recommend the enactment of the various measures contemplated by this bill.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

P. H. SHERIDAN,
Lieutenant-General

EXHIBIT A.—Cost of supporting infantry and cavalry at the posts named, respectively

	Infantry.			Cavalry.		
	100.	500.	1,000.	100.	500.	1,000.
Fort Assinaboine.....	\$19,009 20	\$95,046 00	\$190,092 00	\$39,587 90	\$197,939 50	\$395,879 00
Fort Snelling.....	11,681 45	57,907 25	115,815 50	22,557 00	112,785 00	225,570 00
Saving at Snelling.....	7,427 75	37,138 75	74,277 50	17,030 90	85,154 50	170,309 00
Fort Rice.....	13,596 25	67,981 25	135,962 50	29,729 25	148,646 25	297,292 50
San Antonio.....	10,931 75	54,658 75	109,317 50	22,754 10	113,770 50	227,541 00
Saving at San Antonio..	2,664 50	13,322 50	26,645 00	6,975 15	34,875 75	69,751 50
Fort Gaston.....	25,020 75	125,103 75	250,207 50	58,075 50	290,377 50	580,755 00
Presidio of San Francisco...	11,209 15	56,045 75	112,091 50	28,221 80	141,109 00	282,218 00
Saving at San Francisco.	13,811 80	69,058 00	138,116 00	29,853 70	149,268 50	298,537 00
Fort Elliott, Tex.....	17,939 75	89,698 75	179,397 50	39,317 80	196,589 00	393,178 00
Fort Riley, Kans.....	10,789 40	53,947 00	107,894 00	16,395 80	81,979 00	163,958 00
Saving at Fort Riley....	7,150 85	35,751 75	71,503 50	22,922 00	114,610 00	229,220 00