

LETTER
FROM
THE SECRETARY OF WAR,
TRANSMITTING

Copies of papers relative to the abandonment of Camp Sheridan, Nebr., ordered to take effect May 1, 1881, together with special report as to the number and condition of buildings, &c., at that post.

FEBRUARY 4, 1881.—Referred to the Committee on Military Affairs and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, February 3, 1881.

The Secretary of War has the honor to transmit to the United States Senate copies of papers relative to the abandonment of Camp Sheridan, Nebr., ordered to take effect May 1 next, together with special report as to the number and condition of buildings, &c., at the post.

The reservation is now no longer needed for military purposes, and authority of Congress is respectfully requested to transfer the same to the Secretary of the Interior for disposition under the land laws.

ALEX. RAMSEY,
Secretary of War.

The PRESIDENT
of the United States Senate.

[Telegram.]

ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, September 22, 1880.

General P. H. SHERIDAN,
Chicago, Ill. :

The Secretary of Interior says he is informed that it is proposed to abandon Camp Sheridan, and desires to know if such action is contemplated. Please inform me.

R. C. DRUM,
Adjutant-General.

TOLEDO, OHIO, September 22, 1880.

General R. C. DRUM,
Washington, D. C. :

The rumor about the abandonment of Camp Sheridan is probably founded upon a communication of General Crook recommending it, now in my office. The post cannot be abandoned except by authority of the Secretary of War, and papers are held awaiting his return.

P. H. SHERIDAN,
Lieutenant-General.

ABANDONMENT OF CAMP SHERIDAN, NEBR.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, September 23, 1880.

SIR: Referring to your verbal inquiry, made a few days since, concerning the truth of the rumor of the proposed abandonment of Camp Sheridan, Nebr., I have the honor to inclose herewith copy of telegram of yesterday's date from Lieutenant-General Sheridan, who was called upon to furnish the information desired.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. T. CROSBY,

Chief Clerk for the Secretary of War, in his absence.

The Hon. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE PLATTE,
In the Field, Fort Bridger, Wyo., August 8, 1880.

SIR: I have the honor to submit, for the consideration of the Lieutenant-General, commanding the division, the fact that the two posts of Forts Robinson and Sheridan, now maintained at such great expense, are so close together as to really serve the purposes of but one post. The advantage to be gained by the Interior Department in the surveillance exercised over the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail bands of Sioux Indians are not sufficient to counterbalance the objection of the increased cost of maintenance of both posts, and I would accordingly recommend that, in view of its better accommodations for troops and its more eligible position, Fort Robinson be retained and Fort Sheridan abandoned.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

GEORGE CROOK,
Brigadier-General.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT-GENERAL,
MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSOURI,
Chicago, Illinois.

[Indorsement.]

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSOURI,
Chicago, Ill., September 27, 1880.

Respectfully forwarded for the information of the General of the Army and the honorable Secretary of War.

I coincide with General Crook, the department commander, and recommend the abandonment of Camp Sheridan. Fort Robinson is on the direct route to the Black Hills, and is a large and convenient post, while Camp Sheridan is small, with very little available ground to increase its size. Fort Robinson, on the contrary, is amply sufficient to accommodate a fair-sized garrison without making any additions to it.

In connection herewith I forward a letter from Agent McGillycuddy, at Pine Ridge Agency.

P. H. SHERIDAN,
Lieutenant-General Commanding.

UNITED STATES INDIAN SERVICE,
Pine Ridge Agency, Dak., September 1, 1880.

DEAR SIR: It is rumored that Camp Sheridan, 19 miles from here, is to be abandoned in a few weeks; this would then leave Fort Robinson, Nebr., as our nearest military post, a distance of 63 miles. This I should, for various reasons, very much regret, and unless the necessity for abandoning Camp Sheridan is urgent, I would strongly advise withholding any action toward that end for the present.

It is true Camp Sheridan represents but a small force of two companies, but I think it has a good effect on such Indians here as might be tempted to be turbulent, and the support and good feeling on the part of the commanding officers has had much to do with my success so far.

I have been having a little trouble for the past few weeks on account of Red Cloud and some of the squaw men putting in charges of fraud, &c., against me, but after a thorough examination by the grand jury and an investigation by General McNeil, Indian Inspector, the charges have been declared purely malicious, and without any foundation whatever. Of course, under the circumstances, I have ceased to recognize Red Cloud as chief.

The Indians are standing by me, and holding repeated councils with a view of appointing Young-man-afraid-of-his-horses chief. This is causing a slightly unsettled condition of affairs, but I shall pull through without any trouble.

The Indians are getting on finely; I have them scattered for a distance of 40 miles from the agency, farming and building houses, and putting up hay for the winter.

We now have about 400 houses built, and over 300 wagons on the road between here and the Missouri freighting, and all driven by Indians.

With the expectation that Fort Robinson and Camp Sheridan would be connected by telegraph, I have just completed my line through to Sheridan, and have an operator and battery in operation. We also have the poles erected between here and Rosebud Agency, a distance of 120 miles, and will begin stringing the wire in a few days. From Rosebud it will be an easy matter to run a wire down to Fort Niobrara, a distance of 40 miles. In this way we could have the two important agencies in connection with the posts, which is very important, and also with the outside world.

The poles are partly cut for the line between Robinson and Sheridan, a distance of 43 miles, but if Sheridan is abandoned, of course work will stop on that portion of the line, and I will be cut off from connection, besides losing 19 miles of line already constructed. This would be unfortunate, for I have been working for the past year and a half on this telegraph business.

I would therefore respectfully request that you will consider the above and advise me of the outlook for the future.

Yours, truly,

V. T. MCGILLICUDDY,
United States Indian Agent.

General P. H. SHERIDAN, U. S. A.

Report in matter of proposed abandonment of Camp Sheridan, Nebraska.

ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE, November 18, 1880.

The present post of Camp Sheridan, Nebr., was established in September, 1874, on the east bank of the West Fork of Beaver Creek (a tributary of White River, into which it empties about 12 miles further north), and about one-fourth of a mile from the Spotted Tail Agency, as established just prior to that time.

In March, 1874, the post of Camp (now Fort) Robinson was established on the north bank of the White River, near the Red Cloud Agency, 43 miles to the southwest of Camp Sheridan.

In 1877, the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail bands of Sioux were removed to near the Missouri River, and subsequently to their present agencies, Pine Ridge (Red Cloud) and Rosebud (Spotted Tail) in Dakota.

The removal of the Indians from the vicinity of these posts has led to a consideration of the question of the maintenance of either or both of them, but no definite conclusion appears to have been reached until General Crook, the department commander, under date of August 8, 1880, submitted for the consideration of the Lieutenant-General, commanding the division, the fact that the two posts of Fort Robinson and Camp Sheridan, now maintained at such great expense, are so close together as to really serve the purposes of but one post, remarking that the advantage to be gained by the Interior Department in the surveillance exercised over the Red Cloud and Spotted Tail bands of Sioux Indians is not sufficient to counterbalance the objection of the increased cost of maintenance of both posts, and he accordingly recommended that, in view of the better accommodations for troops and its more eligible position, Fort Robinson be retained and Camp Sheridan abandoned.

About this time the Interior Department made inquiry as to the proposed abandonment of Camp Sheridan, and the Lieutenant-General, in response to telegraphic inquiry of the Adjutant-General, reported that the post could not be abandoned except by authority of the Secretary of War, and that General Crook's recommendation was held awaiting the Secretary's return.

Subsequently, the Lieutenant-General forwarded General Crook's report for the information of the General of the Army and the Secretary of the War, coinciding with the department commander, and recommending the abandonment of Camp Sheridan, remarking that Fort Robinson is on the direct route to the Black Hills, is a large and convenient post, while Camp Sheridan is small, with very little available ground to increase its size, and that Fort Robinson, on the contrary, is amply sufficient to accommodate a fair-sized garrison without making any additions to it. He also forwarded at the same time a communication, dated September 1, 1880, from the Indian Agent at the Pine Ridge Agency, who referred to the rumored abandonment of Camp Sheridan, and stated that he should very much regret such abandonment for various reasons (some of which he gives), and unless the necessity therefor was urgent he would strongly advise withholding any action toward that end for the present.

The matter having been presented to the General of the Army by telegraph, he replied from Portland, Oreg., October 1, 1880, approving the abandonment of Camp

ABANDONMENT OF CAMP SHERIDAN, NEBR.

Sheridan as recommended by the Lieutenant-General. The matter does not appear, however, to have been presented, as yet, to the Secretary of War for his decision, as usual in such cases.

[Under date of November 14, 1876, the President declared a military reservation at Camp Sheridan, which was extended by his order April 28, 1879, and further enlarged by Executive order dated December 10, 1879, for the purpose of supplying wood and timber for use of the post. The area of enlarged reservation is 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ square miles.]

[Indorsements.]

ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, November 18, 1880.

Respectfully submitted to the General of the Army.

R. C. DRUM,
Adjutant-General.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
Washington, D. C., November 18, 1880.

I approve perfectly of the abandonment of Camp Sheridan.

W. T. SHERMAN,
General.

Let Fort Sheridan be abandoned and report made to Congress that it is no longer needed for military purposes, and recommend that the reservation be returned to the public domain.

By order of the Secretary of War.

H. T. CROSBY,
Chief Clerk.

WAR DEPARTMENT, November 22, 1880.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY, ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, December 2, 1880.

SIR: Referring to your indorsement of September 27, 1880, upon communication from Brigadier-General Crook, commanding Department of the Platte, I have the honor to inform you that the General of the Army approves of the abandonment of the post of Camp Sheridan, Nebr., and the Secretary of War has authorized its abandonment and directed that report be made to Congress that it is no longer needed for military purposes, with recommendation that the reservation thereat be returned to the public domain.

The General of the Army accordingly desires that you cause a special report to be made at an early date, showing the number, location, and condition of the buildings, &c., at Camp Sheridan; also, whether or not there is a cemetery at the post, and if so, its location, the number of interments, and general condition; also, whether, in your opinion, the cemetery tract should be retained or the bodies removed.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. C. DRUM,
Adjutant-General.

Lieut. Gen. P. H. SHERIDAN,
Commanding Military Division of the Missouri, Chicago.

[Indorsements.]

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSOURI,
Chicago, Ill., December 6, 1880.

Respectfully referred to the commanding general, Department of the Platte, for the report called for by the General of the Army.

By command of Lieutenant-General Sheridan.

WM. D. WHIPPLE,
Assistant Adjutant-General.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE PLATTE, ENGINEER OFFICE,
Fort Omaha, Nebr., December 11, 1880.

Respectfully returned with a tracing embodying all of the information called for within that is in possession of this office.

The cemetery on Beaver Creek, about one-fourth of a mile below (north of) the post, contained only three graves in 1876; the number added since that time is not known.

W. S. STANTON,

Captain of Engineers, Chief Engineer of Department.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE PLATTE,
ASSISTANT ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Fort Omaha, Nebr., December 14, 1880.

Respectfully referred to the commanding officer, Camp Sheridan, Nebr., who will please return these papers with the necessary information relating to buildings, cemetery, &c., and with such remarks in the matter as he may desire to make.

By command of Brigadier-General Crook.

R. WILLIAMS,
Assistant Adjutant-General.

HEADQUARTERS CAMP SHERIDAN, NEBR.,
December 23, 1880.

Respectfully returned to the assistant adjutant-general, Department of the Platte, with the following information relating to the buildings, &c., at this post:

Officers' quarters.—Seven sets, framed and lined with brick; good condition.

Barracks.—Three sets, lined with brick; very fair condition, but need new flooring and ceiling overhead.

Hospital.—Originally built for kitchen to barracks, and not very suitable for the purpose, but in fair condition.

Laundress' quarters.—Four sets, one of frame, in fair condition, the other three of logs, and in poor condition.

Stables and corral.—These are temporary structures, built of logs and slabs, and in poor condition.

Bake-house.—Frame, and condition good.

Blacksmith shop and saw-mill.—In one building, a frame shed, and in poor condition.

Quartermaster storehouses.—Two, frame, and in good condition.

Commissary storehouses.—Built of logs and in good condition.

Guard-house.—Framed and in good condition.

Cemetery.—Not inclosed; ten graves in all, but only three of soldiers and two of soldiers' wives. About sixty yards of fence will inclose that part of the cemetery containing the bodies of soldiers and women. The bodies, however, can be very easily transferred to Fort Robinson.

W. T. GENTRY,
Major, Ninth Infantry, Commanding Post.

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE PLATTE,
Fort Omaha, Nebr., December 30, 1880.

Respectfully returned to the assistant adjutant-general, United States Army, headquarters Military Division of the Missouri, inviting attention to the indorsements of the chief engineer officer of the department and the commanding officer Camp Sheridan, Nebr., 7th and 9th, respectively, hereon.

As stores have been accumulated at Camp Sheridan for the use of the garrison during this winter, and as the break-up of the post during the winter will be attended with hardship and will involve hauling these stores away, I think it would be better not to attempt the breaking up of Camp Sheridan until the spring, unless the troops composing the garrison are required for service elsewhere.

GEORGE CROOK,
Brigadier-General, Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MISSOURI,
Chicago, Ill., January 6, 1881.

Respectfully returned to the Adjutant-General of the Army.

Directions have been given General Crook to break up and abandon this post on the 1st of May next.

P. H. SHERIDAN,
Lieutenant-General, Commanding.

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY,
Washington, January 11, 1881.

Respectfully submitted to the Secretary of War, together with the previous papers relative to the abandonment of this post.

Attention is respectfully invited to the indorsement of the Lieutenant-General, show-

ing the date fixed for breaking up Camp Sheridan, also to the information contained herein relative to the cemetery at the post and the interments therein, with a view to a decision, if deemed advisable, relative to the disposition to be made of the bodies upon the abandonment of the post, in order that the same may be included in the report to Congress.

W. T. SHERMAN,
General.

Let the bodies be transferred to Fort Robinson, as suggested by the post commander in the 9th indorsement.

By order of the Secretary of War.

H. T. CROSBY,
Chief Clerk.

WAR DEPARTMENT, *January 20, 1881.*

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY, ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
Washington, January 22, 1881.

SIR: Referring to your indorsement of the 6th instant, returning, with reports from the department commander, &c., letter of December 2, 1880, from this office, relative to the abandonment of the post of Camp Sheridan, Nebr., I have the honor, by direction of the General of the Army, to inform you the Secretary of War directs that the bodies interred in the post cemetery be transferred to Fort Robinson, as suggested by the post commander in his indorsement of December 23, 1880.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. C. DRUM,
Adjutant-General.

Lieut. Gen. P. H. SHERIDAN,
Commanding Military Division of the Missouri, Chicago.