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**Review of *The Powder River Expedition Journals of Colonel Richard Irving Dodge* Edited by Wayne R. Kime**

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*The Powder River Expedition Journals of Colonel Richard Irving Dodge.* Edited by Wayne R. Kime. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997. Illustrations, maps, introduction, notes, bibliography, index. xiv + 206 pp. \$28.95.

Richard I. Dodge served in the United States Army from 1848 to 1891. By the time of the 1876 Powder River Expedition, one of several military responses to the crushing defeat suffered at the Little Big Horn, Dodge had reached the rank of lieutenant colonel. At the behest of Brig. Gen. George Crook he accepted the command of the infantry contingent of this winter campaign against Sioux-Cheyenne foes.

The campaign met with some success, and many historians consider it the beginning of the end of the Great Sioux War. On 25 November 1876, a Cheyenne village of Chief Dull Knife was routed by Dodge's cavalry counterpart, the infantrymen only serving in a support role. Crook succeeded in getting his command through inhospitable country and back to winter quarters, but at great cost to his men's health, horses, and morale. Throughout the triumphs and ordeals Colonel Dodge kept private journals.

Editor Kime has done an admirable job in bringing these exceptional—and previously unpublished—journals to print, the contents of which should provide frontier military historians with bountiful food for thought. First, Dodge can write well. A nineteenth-century author of some note, he did not use his private diary for flights of literary show. He wrote clearly, frankly, and sometimes brutally,

especially when the subject was his superior, General Crook. This candor ("I can't state what I see except in this private journal") is doubly refreshing since it serves as a welcome corrective to Lt. John G. Bourke's sycophantic treatment of the same officer and campaign (*On the Border with Crook*, 1891).

Any future biographer of Crook—an examination of this soldier's career is long overdue—will have to consider Dodge's harsh measure of the man. As a commander, "However good a soldier Crook may be, he has no administration ability whatever." Also, "His successes must always be accidents. . . ." Dodge's exasperation with Crook, coated with his wry sense of humor, will appeal to any subordinate toiling for a secretive superior who champions his successes and ignores his failures.

Of course, the journals contain more than snide comments. They present marvelous detail about the everyday life and camaraderie of the Indian-fighting army on campaign. This volume serves as a companion piece to Dodge's Black Hills journals, also edited meticulously by Kime, but easily stands on its own. And even with all the rancor, the problems, and the questionable motives, Dodge admits, and so reluctantly may many readers, "It is a glorious life this soldiering."

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