

KEARNY'S DRAGOONS OUT WEST



The Birth of the U.S. Cavalry

By Will Gorenfeld and John Gorenfeld

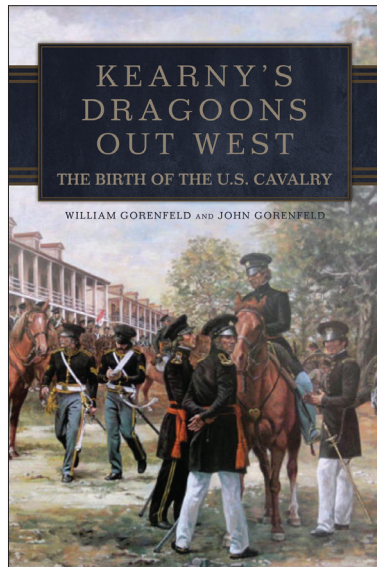
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U.S. HISTORY/MILITARY HISTORY



The formative years of the famed western regiment of horsemen

Having banished eastern Native peoples to lands west of the Mississippi, President Andrew Jackson's government by 1833 needed a new type of soldier to keep displaced Indians from returning home. And so the 1st Dragoons came into being. Will and John Gorenfeld tell their story—an epic of exploration, conquest, and diplomacy from the outposts of western history—in this book-length treatment of the force that became the U.S. Cavalry.

The 1st Dragoons represented a new regiment of horsemen that drew on the combined skills and clashing visions of two types of leaders: old Indian killers and backwoodsmen such as loudmouth miner Henry Dodge; and straight-arrow battlefield veterans such as Stephen Watts Kearny, who had fought Redcoats in 1812 but now negotiated treaties with Indian tribes and enforced the new order of the West. Drawing on soldiers' journals and other never-before-used sources, *Kearny's Dragoons Out West* reconstructs this forgotten, often surprising moment in U.S. history. Under Kearny, the 1st Dragoons performed its mission through diplomacy and intimidation rather than violence, even protecting Indians from white settlers.

Following the regiment up to the U.S.-Mexican War, when diplomacy gave way to open violence, this book introduces readers to future Civil War generals. Colorful characters appearing in these pages include Private Thomas Russell, a young attorney tricked by a horse thief into joining the army; James Hildreth, who authored two books on the 1st Dragoons; and English drill sergeant Long Ned Stanley, whose tenure in the 1st reveals much about American immigrants' experience in 1833–48.

The promises made in Kearny's well-intentioned treaty making were ultimately broken. This detailed and in-depth look back at his legacy offers a glimpse of a lost world—and an intriguing turning point in the history of western expansion.

Will Gorenfeld writes about soldiers, operations, and battles of the pre-Civil War Army out west. His work has appeared in *Wild West*, the *New Mexico Historical Review*, *Missouri Historical Review*, and the collected volume *Battles and Massacres on the Southwestern Frontier*. His son John Gorenfeld is a writer whose work has appeared in the *New York Observer*, the *London Guardian*, and in the book *Armchair Reader: Civil War*.

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