

SATISFIED that an epic march of infantry had just been completed under his command, Colonel P. St. George Cooke expressed his pleasure to his men of the Mormon Battalion in a written order:

Order Number 1

Headquarters Mormon Battalion

Mission of San Diego, January 30, 1847

The lieutenant colonel commanding congratulates the battalion on their safe arrival on the shore of the Pacific Ocean, and the conclusion of the march of over two thousand miles. History may be searched in vain for an equal march of infantry. Nine-tenths of it has been through a wilderness where nothing but savages and wild beasts are found, or deserts where, for want of water, there is no living creature. There, with almost hopeless labor, we have dug deep wells, which the future traveler will enjoy. Without a guide who had traversed them, we have ventured into trackless prairies where water was not found for several marches. With crowbar and pick and ax in hand we have worked our way over mountains which seemed to defy aught save the wild goat, and hewed a passage through a chasm of living rock more narrow than our wagons. To bring these first wagons to the Pacific, we have preserved the strength of our mules by herding them ever over large tracts, which you have laboriously guarded without loss. The garrisons of four presidios of Sonora, concentrated within the walls of Tucson, gave us no pause. We drove them out with their artillery, but our intercourse with the citizens was unmarked by a single act of injustice. Thus, marching half naked and half fed, and living upon wild animals, we have discovered and made a road of great value to our country. Arrived at the first settlement of California after a single day's rest, you cheerfully turned off from the route to this point of promised repose to enter upon a campaign, and meet, as we believed, the approach of the enemy; and this too, without even salt to season your sole subsistence of fresh meat. Lieutenants A.J. Smith and George Stoneman, of the First dragoons, have shared and given valuable aid in all these labors. Thus, volunteers, you have exhibited some high and essential qualities of veterans. But much remains undone. Soon you will turn your strict attention to the drill, to system and order, to forms also, which are all necessary to the soldier.

By order of Lieutenant-colonel P. St. Geo. Cooke,

P.C. Merrill, Adjutant⁵¹