

108 Encls.

85955

OFFICE OF  
Indian Affairs  
Rec. OCT 3

1906

87  
297

Indian School, Carlisle, Pa.,  
Oct. 1, 1906.

Maj. W. A. Mercer,  
Supt.

Submits item for insertion  
in Indian Bill providing for  
cavalry troop of instruction  
at the Carlisle Indian School.

4 incls.

To Supt 10/9/06  
" Secy 10/16/06  
" Asst. Secy 10/18/06

File ✓

File

SPECIAL

I have this day, in a separate communication, submitted draft  
report and no provision for their purchase is necessary.

Very respectfully,  
Major J. H. Gentry,



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

INDIAN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT.

CARLISLE, PA

*J. R. W.*  
Oct. 1, 1906.

The Honorable,

The Commissioner of Indian Affairs,

Washington, D. C.

Sir:

Referring to Office letter (Education) dated the 26th ultimo, from the Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs, suggesting that I prepare and submit a draft of legislation to be added to the Indian Appropriation Bill or the Army Bill designed to carry out plans for a cavalry troop at this school, I have the honor to inclose herewith an item for insertion in the Indian Appropriation Bill which I think will meet the requirements to make the plan effective. It is suggested that this item may be inserted in the bill right after the regular appropriation for the maintenance of the Carlisle Indian school. It will be noted that this draft contains items for the purchase of the required saddle horses, \$3600, forage for such horses for a year, \$4900, stable for horses for cavalry troop, \$8000, total \$16,500. It will be noted that no provision is made in this item for the purchase of the necessary arms and equipments for the proposed cavalry troop. It is assumed that the War Department will arrange to issue these articles to me here for the use of the troop and that there will be no difficulty experienced in this particular. If that Department, which will be indirectly the beneficiary of the proposed training of Indian troops for the cavalry service, will not



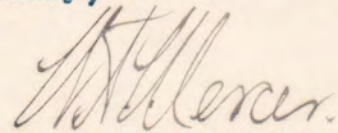
issue the arms and equipments needed I would be at a loss now to suggest a way for meeting the situation as the purchase of the same would mean a considerable outlay and this I cannot see my way clear to recommend at this time.

Of course required rations and clothing for the men as well as beds and bedding, medicines, medical attention, barracks, light, fuel, cooking ranges and cooking utensils will be provided by the school and no provision for their purchase is necessary.

I have this day, in a separate communication, submitted draft of an item to meet the legal objections raised by the Acting Judge Advocate General for the establishment of such a cavalry troop here, for insertion in the Army Bill. This, in my opinion, is the proper place for it, and if it is enacted at all I trust that it will be as an item in the regular Army Appropriation. However, if for any reason the proposed legislation is not made in the Army Bill, the inclosed draft for insertion in the Indian Bill will meet the requirements, but I deemed it advisable to submit it separately in a separate communication.

For your complete information, there are inclosed herewith copies of my letter to the Military Secretary dated April 9, 1906; of your Office report to the Secretary of the Interior, dated May 31, 1906; and of your Office letter to me dated June 20, 1906, all with reference to the proposed cavalry troop at this school.

Very respectfully,

  
Major 11th Cavalry,



service.

Indian youth enrolled at said school for the United States cavalry for temporary use in training a limited and selected number of of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, allowance of forage for the horses so assigned, to the superintendent troop of fifty-seven, and to issue not to exceed the regulation cavalry horses and all arms and equipments necessary for a cavalry and regulations as to their use as he may prescribe; fifty-seven That the Secretary of War is hereby authorized to assign, under

ITEM.

85955



ITEM.

That the Secretary of War is hereby authorized to assign, under such regulations as to their use as he may prescribe, fifty-seven cavalry horses and all arms and equipments necessary for a cavalry troop of fifty-seven, and to issue not to exceed the regulation allowance of forage for the horses so assigned, to the superintendent of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, for temporary use in training a limited and selected number of Indian youth enrolled at said school for the United States cavalry service.



ITEM.

That the Secretary of War is hereby authorized to assign, under such regulations as to their use as he may prescribe, fifty-seven cavalry horses and all arms and equipments necessary for a cavalry troop of fifty-seven, and to issue not to exceed the regulation allowance of forage for the horses so assigned, to the superintendent of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, for temporary use in training a limited and selected number of Indian youth enrolled at said school for the United States cavalry service.



85955

Indian Office,  
Incl. No. 8



ITEM.

For the purchase of sixty saddle horses, three thousand six hundred dollars, forage for said horses four thousand nine hundred dollars, stable eight thousand dollars, total sixteen thousand five hundred dollars, to give mounted instruction to a selected number of Indian youth enrolled at the school for the purpose of training them for the U. S. cavalry service.

Note: The above estimate for horses (@60) is for small <sup>d</sup> cheap - but - best - grade of Indian reservation horses - which are not the best for our purpose - but represents a sacrifice in efficiency in the interest of economy & to increase the probability of favorable consideration - Cavalry horses will probably cost the Army 140 each <sup>d</sup> and that is the kind one really ought to have and should expect - if the Army supplies them. W.A. Menden



ITEM.

For the purchase of sixty saddle horses, three thousand six hundred dollars, forage for said horses four thousand nine hundred *dollars*, stable eight thousand dollars, total sixteen thousand five hundred dollars, to give mounted instruction to a selected number of Indian youth enrolled at the school for the purpose of training them for the U. S. cavalry service.



85955

Indian Office,

Incl. No. 4

1906

Indian School, Carlisle, Pa.,  
Oct. 1, 1906.

Maj. W. A. Mercer,  
Supt.

Incloses item for insertion  
in Army Bill providing for cav-  
alry troop at Carlisle Indian  
school for instruction of Indian  
boys.

4 inclosures.



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
INDIAN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT.

CARLISLE, PA

*J. R. W.*  
Oct. 1, 1906.

The Honorable,  
The Commissioner of Indian Affairs,  
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

Referring to your Office letter (Education) dated the 26th ultimo directing me to prepare a draft of legislation to be added either to the Army Bill or to the Indian Appropriation Bill, necessary to carry out the plans for a cavalry troop at this school, I have to inclose herewith an item designed to meet the requirements for insertion at a suitable place in the Army Appropriation Bill for the next fiscal year.

I deem it proper to explain in connection with this proposed legislation that all the needed clothing as well as the rations for the men will be furnished by the school from the annual appropriation for its maintenance. Besides, I wish to say that all necessary medicines for men, medical attention, barracks, light, fuel, ranges for cooking, cooking utensils and stable for horses will be provided by the school. It is deemed desirable not only that the War Department but the committees in Congress should understand these facts fully as it means a considerable saving in the matter of maintaining such a cavalry organization.

Regarding the legal question raised by the Acting Judge Advocate



General in his indorsement in June last to the Secretary of War, quoted in your letter to me dated June 20, 1906, that under the law the members of such cavalry troop could not be subjected to the discipline of the army or made in any sense a part thereof, I wish to say that under the regulations governing the conduct of the Indian schools ample authority for the maintenance of discipline at this and other schools is conferred, and that at this school the discipline is already thoroughly military in its character and it would be but a short step to apply full military discipline to the proposed cavalry troop in all its details. As for the obligation to subsequently enlist in the cavalry arm of the service, which is another point raised by the Acting Judge Advocate General, I wish to say that it is not deemed necessary to exact any such obligation <sup>in legal form</sup> as the young men who elect to join the troop <sup>with the understanding that they are to enlist,</sup> and who would be permitted to so join would undoubtedly, in almost every case, join the army at the end of the year's training. There would perhaps be a few exceptions but the percentage would be a small one.

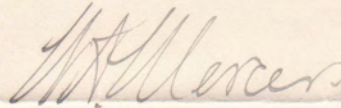
For the complete information of those who will have to pass upon the enactment of the desired legislation there are inclosed herewith a copy of my letter of April 9, 1906, to The Military Secretary, explaining in detail the plans with reference to such cavalry troop at this school, copy of your Office report dated May 31, 1906, to the Secretary of the Interior on the subject, and copy of your Office letter dated June 20, 1906, to me, quoting the in-



dorsement of the Acting Judge Advocate General on the subject.

Attention is respectfully invited to another communication of this date from me on the subject.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "W. A. Mercer".

Major 11th Cavalry,

Superintendent.

JRW-S

3 inclosures.



87/86.  
2

85137

OFFICE OF  
Indian Affairs  
Rec. OCT 1

1906

Indian School, Carlisle, Pa.,  
Sept. 29, 1906.

Maj. W. A. Mercer,  
Supt.

States that draft of legisla-  
tion for cavalry troop at Car-  
lisle will be forwarded about  
Oct. 1st.

Sept. 29, 1906.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
INDIAN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL.

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT.

CARLISLE, PA

Sept. 29, 1906.

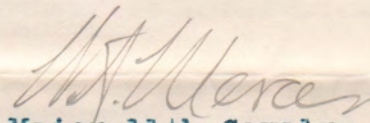
The Honorable,

The Commissioner of Indian Affairs,  
Washington, S. C.

Sir:

Replying to your letter (Education) of September 26th in which you suggest that as promptly as possible I prepare a draft of suitable legislation to carry out a plan for a cavalry troop at Carlisle, to be added either to the Indian Appropriation bill or the Army bill, I have to say that I will forward such draft about Monday next, October 1st.

Very respectfully,

  
Major 11th Cavalry,

Superintendent.

WAM-S



Acting Commissioner.

(Signed) C. W. PARABER.

Very respectfully,

It might be well for you to present them.

If you have any suggestions for overcoming the objections raised,

Office, as they surely will be to you.

Difficulties subsiding in the way are very disappointing to the

Carlisle Indians but of the Army as well, the unfortunate legal

vice as being a most capital one not only in the interest of the

As the plan proposed by you appeared very forcibly to this Of-

be denied for the same reason."

the same basis as his authority to issue property to it, and must

The authority of the Secretary of War to detail noncommissioned

it is proposed to put the property is not that contemplated by Con-

the Army officer detailed as Superintendent of said school rather

difficulty pointed out is not obviated by making the issue to

cavalry horses with the necessary equipment and forage. The

way that is here suggested--that is by the issue to them of fifty

appropriations in the absence of a statute authorizing it, where in

could not, in the absence of a statute authorizing it, where in

in any sense a part of the Army, they

way to subject them to the discipline of the Army or to make them

could enforce discipline, nor could such obligation operate in any

going to enforce discipline, nor could such obligation operate in any

cavalry and horse property which it is proposed the students under-

as is here proposed, the obligation to send them to enlist in the

practices of the Army and maintain out of current appro-

authority of the Secretary of War could without the express

I do not see how the Secretary of War could without the express

Copy of letter by Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Superintendent Carlisle Indian School, dated June 20, 1906, quoting decision of Acting Judge Advocate General, U.S.A., relative to proposed cavalry troop at Carlisle School.



--COPY--

Education  
50217-1906.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
Office of Indian Affairs,  
Washington.

June 20, 1906.

Major Wm. A. Mercer, U.S.A., Supt.,  
Indian Industrial School,  
Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

Sir:

Your communication of April 9, 1906, to the Military Secretary, proposing a plan for the special training of Indian boys for service in the United States Cavalry, was referred by the War Department to the Secretary of the Interior, and by him to this Office for report.

A most favorable report was made on your recommendations by this Office and submitted to the Department for transmission to the War Department.

I am now in receipt of a communication, by reference of the Secretary of the Interior, from the Acting Secretary of War, enclosing the papers in the case and inviting special attention to the fifth endorsement by the Acting Judge Advocate General, which is as follows:

"Respectfully returned to the Military Secretary.

The Superintendent of the Indian Industrial School at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, proposes to the War Department herein that said school be designated as a recruiting rendezvous for Indian cavalry recruits, with himself as recruiting officer, and that a limited number of Indian students of the school, who will voluntarily obligate themselves to enlist in the cavalry arm of the Service, be placed under special instruction with a view to qualifying them for such enlistment; that to aid in carrying out this plan of instruction the United States shall co-operate by issuing to him for the use of students undergoing such special instruction not less than fifty cavalry horses, with the necessary equipments and forage, and further aid him in the work of instruction with the detail of two or more noncommissioned officers of the Army as instructors, in the event their detail is considered more desirable than employing for that purpose ex-army sergeants out of the Indian School appropriation. His request is referred to this office for information



Major Mercer.

as to

'Whether cavalry horses, equipments and forage can be furnished lawfully to the Carlisle Indian school as suggested within; also whether noncommissioned officers of the Army can be detailed lawfully for duty as instructors at that school.'

I do not think the Secretary of War could without the express authority of statute establish and maintain out of current appropriations for the support of the Army such an agency of recruitment as is here proposed. The obligation to subsequently enlist in the cavalry arm of the service which it is proposed the students undergoing training shall assume is not one with which the Government could enforce compliance, nor could such obligation operate in any way to subject them to the discipline of the Army or to make them in any sense a part thereof. Not being a part of the Army, they could not, in the absence of a statute authorizing it, share in appropriations made by Congress for the support of the Army in the way that is here suggested--that is by the issue to them of fifty cavalry horses, with the necessary equipments and forage. The difficulty here pointed out is not obviated by making the issue to the Army officer detailed as Superintendent of said school rather than to the school itself. The fact remains that the use to which it is proposed to put the property is not that contemplated by Congress in making the appropriation of money necessary for its purchase.

The authority of the Secretary of War to detail noncommissioned officers for duty as instructors at said school rests upon precisely the same basis as his authority to issue property to it, and must be denied for the same reason."

As the plan proposed by you appealed very forcibly to this Office as being a most capital one not only in the interest of the Carlisle Indians but of the Army as well, the unfortunate legal difficulties appearing in the way are very disappointing to the Office, as they surely will be to you.

If you have any suggestions for overcoming the objections raised, it might be well for you to present them.

Very respectfully,

(Signed) C. F. LARRABEE,

Acting Commissioner.

JHD-P



Acting Commissioner.

(Signed) C. P. LARSEN.

Very respectfully,

It might be well to have the present item.

if you have any suggestions for overcoming the objections raised.

Office, as they surely will be to you.

Carlisle Indian part of the Army as well, the unfortunate fact

it is as being a most capital one not only in the interest of the

as the proposed by you appeared very forcibly to this of-

be sent to the same person.

the same as his authority to leave property to it, and must

officers, as the Secretary of War to let it be noncommissioned

from the fact of the Secretary of War necessarily for its purchase

it is to be used to that the property is not that contemplated by con-

then to be a capital itself. The fact remains that the use to which

the property is devoted is not that of said school rather

different and pointed out is not indicated by making the issue to

clearly as with the necessary equipments and forage. The

way that the suggested-first is by the issue to them of fifty

approprate funds by Congress for the support of the Army in the

could not in the absence of a statute authorizing it, more in

in any sense a part thereof. Not being a part of the Army, they

could enforce compliance with such collection operate in any

being training and not one with which the government

generally run of the school. It is proposed the students under-

as is here proposed. The school is to be maintained by the

tractions for the support of the school and the maintenance

authority of statute. I do not think the school could without the expense

85955

100

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Copy of letter by Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Superintendent Carlisle Indian school, dated June 20, 1906, quoting decision of Judge Advocate General, U.S.A., relative to proposed cavalry troop at Carlisle school.

Major Mercer.



--COPY--

Education  
50217-1906.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
Office of Indian Affairs,  
Washington.

June 20, 1906.

Major Wm. A. Mercer, U.S.A., Supt.,  
Indian Industrial School,  
Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

Sir:

Your communication of April 9, 1906, to the Military Secretary, proposing a plan for the special training of Indian boys for service in the United States Cavalry, was referred by the War Department to the Secretary of the Interior, and by him to this Office for report.

A most favorable report was made on your recommendations by this Office and submitted to the Department for transmission to the War Department.

I am now in receipt of a communication, by reference of the Secretary of the Interior, from the Acting Secretary of War, enclosing the papers in the case and inviting special attention to the fifth endorsement by the Acting Judge Advocate General, which is as follows:

"Respectfully returned to the Military Secretary.

The Superintendent of the Indian Industrial School at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, proposes to the War Department herein that said school be designated as a recruiting rendezvous for Indian cavalry recruits, with himself as recruiting officer, and that a limited number of Indian students of the school, who will voluntarily obligate themselves to enlist in the cavalry arm of the Service, be placed under special instruction with a view to qualifying them for such enlistment; that to aid in carrying out this plan of instruction the United States shall co-operate by issuing to him for the use of students undergoing such special instruction not less than fifty cavalry horses, with the necessary equipments and forage, and further aid him in the work of instruction with the detail of two or more noncommissioned officers of the Army as instructors, in the event their detail is considered more desirable than employing for that purpose ex-army sergeants out of the Indian School appropriation. His request is referred to this office for information



Major Mercer.

as to

'Whether cavalry horses, equipments and forage can be furnished lawfully to the Carlisle Indian school as suggested within; also whether noncommissioned officers of the Army can be detailed lawfully for duty as instructors at that school.'

I do not think the Secretary of War could without the express authority of statute establish and maintain out of current appropriations for the support of the Army such an agency of recruitment as is here proposed. The obligation to subsequently enlist in the cavalry arm of the service which it is proposed the students undergoing training shall assume is not one with which the Government could enforce compliance, nor could such obligation operate in any way to subject them to the discipline of the Army or to make them in any sense a part thereof. Not being a part of the Army, they could not, in the absence of a statute authorizing it, share in appropriations made by Congress for the support of the Army in the way that is here suggested--that is by the issue to them of fifty cavalry horses, with the necessary equipments and forage. The difficulty here pointed out is not obviated by making the issue to the Army officer detailed as Superintendent of said school rather than to the school itself. The fact remains that the use to which it is proposed to put the property is not that contemplated by Congress in making the appropriation of money necessary for its purchase.

The authority of the Secretary of War to detail noncommissioned officers for duty as instructors at said school rests upon precisely the same basis as his authority to issue property to it, and must be denied for the same reason."

As the plan proposed by you appealed very forcibly to this Office as being a most capital one not only in the interest of the Carlisle Indians but of the Army as well, the unfortunate legal difficulties appearing in the way are very disappointing to the Office, as they surely will be to you.

If you have any suggestions for overcoming the objections raised, it might be well for you to present them.

Very respectfully,

(Signed) C. F. LARRABEE,

Acting Commissioner.



85955

Indian Office,

Incl. No.

3  
1906

Copy of letter by Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior dated May 31, 1906, indorsing plan for cavalry troop at Carlisle Indian school for instruction of Indian boys for cavalry service.



Education  
39135-1906

Enclosures  
**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,**  
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,  
WASHINGTON. May 31st, 1906.

To The Honorable,

The Secretary of the Interior.

Sir:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt, by your reference, of a letter from Major William A. Mercer, 7th Cavalry, U. S. A., Acting Superintendent of the Carlisle Indian School, to the Military Secretary, War Department, relative to a plan for the special training of Indian boys for service in the cavalry arm of the United States Army.

In accordance with your instructions, I have the honor to report thereon as follows:

The purpose of Major Mercer's letter is to obtain the co-operation and assistance of the War Department in preparing a suitable number of selected Indian boys for the U. S. Cavalry Service, by a course of instruction at the Carlisle Indian School especially adapted to that end.

The average attendance at the Carlisle Indian School, the Acting Superintendent says, is about one thousand, of which number at least six hundred are boys, collected from the various Indian reservations throughout the United States. This school is conducted in the main as others in the Indian Service, but in addition embraces a military organization of a regiment of cavalry (dismounted), with as much of army discipline as is necessary for the proper conduct of the school.

The regiment consists of eight troops of about fifty boys each, armed with the Springfield carbine and organized into two squadrons of



four troops each, with a full complement of field, staff and troop officers. The drill is that of the United States Cavalry Drill Regulations, and though comparatively little time is devoted to military matters, some of the troops put up fine drills, while the regiment marches finely and executes the ceremonies and Butt's Manual, to music, in a way that shows the interest taken by the boys in this training.

This large Indian school has an academic department in which the usual studies are taught, an industrial department carrying fourteen industries, a department of music including instruction in band music, and an athletic department in which the military organization plays a prominent part.

It is proposed to use these four departments as a foundation on which to build and maintain at the school a cavalry troop, mounted and composed of carefully selected young men from the student body who volunteer for military service, and who are physically, morally, intellectually and industrially well fitted for the United States Cavalry, and to give them a year's training as members of the school's mounted troop. It is further proposed to devote their time during this year almost entirely to military instruction under a first class army drill sergeant, with an ex-first sergeant of cavalry in immediate charge of the administration of the troops, provided the Superintendent can secure the services of such trained officers. Otherwise, it may be necessary to ask the War Department for assistance in securing such material. The troop will be organized after the manner of a troop of regular cavalry, with full complement of non-commissioned officers, trumpeters, artificers, cooks, clerks, etc., with rations and clothing issued by the school quartermaster, and meals prepared by the troop cook, the troop in every



Secretary.  
way to be drilled and its affairs administered as a troop of cavalry in the regular service.

The Acting Superintendent invites special attention to the fact that Indians are fine rifle shots and the best natural horsemen on earth. Add to these natural qualifications the academic, industrial and military training which can be given at this well equipped Government school, and there should be formed a body of young Indian men that will compare favorably with the average of whites or colored, either in the army or that can be recruited for it.

An obligation will be exacted from each member of this troop, who can be certified after a proper course of instruction to be well qualified, to enlist in the cavalry, thus affording opportunity for that branch of the service annually to get not only a few fine recruits, but young men who should make splendid enlisted soldiers, artificers, musicians, etc., from whom also may be secured much good material for non-commissioned officers.

It is of course not intended to make Carlisle a military school in the usual sense of that expression; nor is it intended that an Indian troop shall be maintained for the army; but the purpose is to train individual Indians who, by natural aptitude or acquired traits of character, are fitted, on the application of a troop commander, to take a place in the army as cooks, blacksmiths, clerks, trumpeters, quartermaster sergeants, or simply as good material for soldiers or non-commissioned company officers.

The Superintendent is not unmindful of the fact that the army tried the experiment of enlisting and making soldiers of Indians, and that it was so far a failure that the plan was abandoned. The one now



Secretary.  
-4-  
suggested, however, does not go to the extent of the previous effort, but aims simply to provide a body of well trained, disciplined, young men that may from time to time be drawn upon for the purposes of the army.

Under the former system of enlistment of Indians in the army, they were recruited on a plan similar to that adopted for white recruits. The Indian is naturally diffident, restive under restraint, undisciplined, peculiarly adverse to ridicule, and therefore to take the average Indian off of a reservation and place him in the army will generally prove a failure; but the plan proposed by the Superintendent is to eliminate all these features from the case, so far as possible, in that the young Indian taken from Carlisle will be well educated mentally, thoroughly trained to discipline, will have a knowledge of military tactics, and be grounded in the necessary work incident to his life, and will enter far in advance of the average white recruit. This will remove the principal handicap to making the Indian a successful soldier.

The whole plan can be carried out, the Superintendent says, by making Carlisle a recruiting rendezvous for Indian cavalry recruits with himself as the recruiting officer and with no additional expense because of such an arrangement. However, if considered more desirable, he suggests that two or more suitable non-commissioned officers could be detailed as instructors instead of subjecting the Indian school appropriation to the expense of hiring ex-sergeants for that purpose.

The part which it is desired the army will take, in addition to encouraging the work, the Superintendent says, is to issue to him a suitable number of cavalry horses - not to exceed fifty - with forage



and equipments, for which as an officer of the army he will be responsible.

Major Mercer has so thoroughly set out and explained his plan that it needs only to be read to be understood. The Commissioner, I am sure, quite approves the general plan, although of course there may be minor details to be worked out.

If you concur, I respectfully recommend that the Secretary of War be informed that the general plan, as outlined by Major Mercer, meets the approval of this Department; and that if his Department looks with favor on Major Mercer's suggestions this Office be so advised, in order that proper steps may be taken at Carlisle to perfect the plan and put it into practical operation.

All the papers, including a copy of this report, are herewith enclosed.

Very respectfully,

(signed) C. F. LARRABEE.

Acting Commissioner

J.H.D.(P)



85955	Indian Office,	1906
	Incl. No. 7	

Copy of letter by Acting Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior dated May 31, 1906, indorsing plan for cavalry troop at Carlisle Indian school for instruction of Indian boys for cavalry service.



REFER IN REPLY TO THE FOLLOWING:

Education  
39135-1906

Enclosures  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,  
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,

WASHINGTON. May 31st, 1906.

To The Honorable,

The Secretary of the Interior.

Sir:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt, by your reference, of a letter from Major William A. Mercer, 7th Cavalry, U. S. A., Acting Superintendent of the Carlisle Indian School, to the Military Secretary, War Department, relative to a plan for the special training of Indian boys for service in the cavalry arm of the United States Army.

In accordance with your instructions, I have the honor to report thereon as follows:

The purpose of Major Mercer's letter is to obtain the co-operation and assistance of the War Department in preparing a suitable number of selected Indian boys for the U. S. Cavalry Service, by a course of instruction at the Carlisle Indian School especially adapted to that end.

The average attendance at the Carlisle Indian School, the Acting Superintendent says, is about one thousand, of which number at least six hundred are boys, collected from the various Indian reservations throughout the United States. This school is conducted in the main as others in the Indian Service, but in addition embraces a military organization of a regiment of cavalry (dismounted), with as much of army discipline as is necessary for the proper conduct of the school.

The regiment consists of eight troops of about fifty boys each, armed with the Springfield carbine and organized into two squadrons of



four troops each, with a full complement of field, staff and troop officers. The drill is that of the United States Cavalry Drill Regulations, and though comparatively little time is devoted to military matters, some of the troops put up fine drills, while the regiment marches finely and executes the ceremonies and Butt's Manual, to music, in a way that shows the interest taken by the boys in this training.

This large Indian school has an academic department in which the usual studies are taught, an industrial department carrying fourteen industries, a department of music including instruction in band music, and an athletic department in which the military organization plays a prominent part.

It is proposed to use these four departments as a foundation on which to build and maintain at the school a cavalry troop, mounted and composed of carefully selected young men from the student body who volunteer for military service, and who are physically, morally, intellectually and industrially well fitted for the United States Cavalry, and to give them a year's training as members of the school's mounted troop. It is further proposed to devote their time during this year almost entirely to military instruction under a first class army drill sergeant, with an ex-first sergeant of cavalry in immediate charge of the administration of the troops, provided the Superintendent can secure the services of such trained officers. Otherwise, it may be necessary to ask the War Department for assistance in securing such material. The troop will be organized after the manner of a troop of regular cavalry, with full complement of non-commissioned officers, trumpeters, artificers, cooks, clerks, etc., with rations and clothing issued by the school quartermaster, and meals prepared by the troop cook, the troop in every



way to be drilled and its affairs administered as a troop of cavalry in the regular service.

The Acting Superintendent invites special attention to the fact that Indians are fine rifle shots and the best natural horsemen on earth. Add to these natural qualifications the academic, industrial and military training which can be given at this well equipped Government school, and there should be formed a body of young Indian men that will compare favorably with the average of whites or colored, either in the army or that can be recruited for it.

An obligation will be exacted from each member of this troop, who can be certified after a proper course of instruction to be well qualified, to enlist in the cavalry, thus affording opportunity for that branch of the service annually to get not only a few fine recruits, but young men who should make splendid enlisted soldiers, artificers, musicians, etc., from whom also may be secured much good material for non-commissioned officers.

It is of course not intended to make Carlisle a military school in the usual sense of that expression; nor is it intended that an Indian troop shall be maintained for the army; but the purpose is to train individual Indians who, by natural aptitude or acquired traits of character, are fitted, on the application of a troop commander, to take a place in the army as cooks, blacksmiths, clerks, trumpeters, quartermaster sergeants, or simply as good material for soldiers or non-commissioned company officers.

The Superintendent is not unmindful of the fact that the army tried the experiment of enlisting and making soldiers of Indians, and that it was so far a failure that the plan was abandoned. The one now



suggested, however, does not go to the extent of the previous effort, but aims simply to provide a body of well trained, disciplined, young men that may from time to time be drawn upon for the purposes of the army.

Under the former system of enlistment of Indians in the army, they were recruited on a plan similar to that adopted for white recruits. The Indian is naturally diffident, restive under restraint, undisciplined, peculiarly adverse to ridicule, and therefore to take the average Indian off of a reservation and place him in the army will generally prove a failure; but the plan proposed by the Superintendent is to eliminate all these features from the case, so far as possible, in that the young Indian taken from Carlisle will be well educated mentally, thoroughly trained to discipline, will have a knowledge of military tactics, and be grounded in the necessary work incident to his life, and will enter far in advance of the average white recruit. This will remove the principal handicap to making the Indian a successful soldier.

The whole plan can be carried out, the Superintendent says, by making Carlisle a recruiting rendezvous for Indian cavalry recruits with himself as the recruiting officer and with no additional expense because of such an arrangement. However, if considered more desirable, he suggests that two or more suitable non-commissioned officers could be detailed as instructors instead of subjecting the Indian school appropriation to the expense of hiring ex-sergeants for that purpose.

The part which it is desired the army will take, in addition to encouraging the work, the Superintendent says, is to issue to him a suitable number of cavalry horses - not to exceed fifty - with forage



and equipments, for which as an officer of the army he will be responsible.

Major Mercer has so thoroughly set out and explained his plan that it needs only to be read to be understood. The Commissioner, I am sure, quite approves the general plan, although of course there may be minor details to be worked out.

If you concur, I respectfully recommend that the Secretary of War be informed that the general plan, as outlined by Major Mercer, meets the approval of this Department; and that if his Department looks with favor on Major Mercer's suggestions this Office be so advised, in order that proper steps may be taken at Carlisle to perfect the plan and put it into practical operation.

All the papers, including a copy of this report, are herewith enclosed.

Very respectfully,

(signed) C. F. LARRABEE.

Acting Commissioner.

J.H.D.(P)



85955

Indian Office

6

Arch. No.

1906

Copy of letter by Major W.A. Mercer, Supt. Carlisle Indian School, to The Military Secretary, dated April 9, 1906, giving plan for proposed cavalry troop at Carlisle school.

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*Major W.A. Mercer*

*Secretary of War*



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
UNITED STATES INDIAN SERVICE  
INDIAN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL  
CARLISLE, PA

April 9, 1906.

*Copy*

The Military Secretary,  
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

So far as the co-operation and assistance of the Army is necessary for preparing suitable Indian boys for the U. S. Cavalry Service and for opening at Carlisle, to the Indian youth who so desire, service in the Army as an additional occupation, I have the honor to invite your attention to and request your favorable consideration of, a plan outlined as follows:

The average attendance at Carlisle for the fiscal year is about 1000 Indian youth, and of these, about 600 are boys from 12 to 24 years of age. The physical training is thorough and the athletic department embraces a military organization of a regiment of cavalry (dismounted) along the lines of the regular service, with so much of the army discipline as is necessary for the proper conduct of the school. There are eight troops of about fifty boys each, armed with the Springfield carbine and organized into two squadrons of four troops each, with full complement of field, staff and troop officers; medical officer, chaplain, signal corps, hospital squad and a military band of 53 members. The drill is that of the U. S. Cavalry Drill Regulations and though there is comparatively but little time devoted to military matters, some of the troops put up fine drills, while the regiment marches finely and executes the ceremonies and Butts Manual, to music, in a way that shows the interest taken by



the boys in military matters.

In addition to its academic department, the school has an industrial department of fourteen industries, a department of music, including instruction in band music; and an athletic department. It is proposed to use these four well organized and efficient departments as a foundation upon which to build up and maintain at the school a cavalry troop, mounted, composed of carefully selected young men from the student body who volunteer for military service and are physically, morally, intellectually and industrially well fitted for the U. S. Cavalry, and to give them a year's training as members of the school mounted troop; their time to be entirely devoted to military instruction, under a first class ex-army drill sergeant and with an ex- first sergeant of cavalry in immediate charge of the administration of the troop, which will be organized in like manner to a troop of regular cavalry, with a full complement of non-commissioned officers, trumpeters, artificers, cooks, clerks, etc.; rations and clothing to be issued by the school quartermaster, meals prepared by the troop cook, and in every way the troop to be drilled and its affairs administered, as a troop of cavalry in the regular service,--and to this end to be quartered together in a separate dormitory, and, under the general supervision of the Superintendent of the school, be trained in the duties of a cavalry soldier in garrison and field, and with special training in scouting, military sketching and outpost duty. As our Indian boys are fine



rifle shots and the best natural horsemen on earth, and as our industrial training here is good, we can add to the Indian's natural soldierly accomplishments, young men with additional qualifications, as band musicians, cooks, blacksmiths, bakers, tailors, painters, teamsters, farmers, carpenters, printers, draftsmen, telegraph operators, photographers, harnessmakers, steam fitters or plumbers, shoemakers, farriers, wagon makers, tinsmiths, clerks and accountants, and some with a good knowledge of Spanish and French--all athletes, of excellent moral character and intelligence--for the members of the troop will be picked men, and with an education which carries them as far as the first grades of the public high school, with an occasional volunteer from an average of about ten boys who are attending Dickinson College (which practically adjoins our school grounds), its law school, its preparatory schools, or the commercial school of Carlisle;--having finished the regular academic and industrial courses here.

The training will, of course, include an obligation to enlist in the cavalry and the army thus has an opportunity to get yearly a few very fine young men who will not only make splendid soldiers, but will embrace much good material for non-commissioned officers.

Adjoining the school grounds and under lease to the school is an open field of slightly rolling ground, 21 acres in extent, which can be used for mounted drill,--the same drill ground that was used by the U. S. Cavalry when Carlisle was a cavalry post. The school



will have a new hospital building this year and the present one will make a fine barracks for a troop of about 60 men, with range, kitchen, dining room, water and steam complete. There is a school farm adjoining the campus of 270 acres and the adjoining country is topographically diversified and will afford splendid opportunity for minor tactics and small military problems or field exercises, scouting, signaling, marching and camping. We have rivers, plains, woods and mountains within from 5 to 30 minutes march.

Our school ration is assimilated to the army ration, likewise our clothing, and both can be made to conform to the army requirements in every necessary particular with no additional cost to the school. Guard duty, military discipline, punishments and medical attendance can all conform to the customs of the regular service, and as our boys will have already had four years or more of school discipline and training, a year's finishing touches will give the army, not recruits but good soldiers.

I shall now try to answer such questions as, I imagine, have suggested themselves to you by a perusal of the above:

1. It is not intended to make of Carlisle a military school, nor is it intended that an Indian troop shall be maintained in the army, but that the individual Indian be sent to a white troop as needed and, say, upon application of a troop commander who wants a cook, a blacksmith, a clerk, a trumpeter, a quartermaster sergeant, or simply good material for soldiers or non-commissioned officers. That the demand for our Indian boys will far exceed the supply is a



foregone conclusion. Having been a troop commander and regimental adjutant, I know what is needed. I also know what good material we have here, and I believe that every regimental adjutant and every troop commander in the service will be glad to get our boys, selected and trained as indicated above.

2. I am, of course, aware that the army tried the experiment of enlisting and making soldiers of the Indians. I am also aware of the causes of failure, but as my plan of making a limited number of soldiers of the selected Indian youth is so different from the plan tried by the army of maintaining Indian organizations, in advocating the former no consideration is given the latter, as the two systems will not admit of comparison.

3. The reasons we cannot get the same results by having the Indian young men enlist in the various troops directly upon completing the school course here and thus save the organization of a special troop as set forth above, are: 1st, they will not so enlist, because, being of a sensitive nature, particularly adverse to ridicule, they must be relieved of the, to them, most objectionable features of the recruit period, which the proposed preliminary training here among their own people will obviate, and which is found necessary in fitting them for all other occupations. 2d, Ignorance of what a soldier's life is and consequent lack of interest in the army as a means of livelihood; also a pride to hold their own from the start with the white soldier, and to that end it is necessary to remove as much of the existing handicap as possible.



The proposed year's training here will remove all later objections based on misunderstanding and enlighten them as to the advantage for them, of a soldier's life, and open up to them later, if they so desire, avenues for the application of the industrial training received here.

4. The Indian being a natural horseman, will not, to any great extent, enlist in the infantry, but his love for a horse makes the cavalry service attractive to him and is really the only branch of the service he cares for or can be induced to enter.

5. The whole plan could be carried out by making this a recruiting rendezvous for Indian cavalry recruits, with myself as recruiting officer, and with no additional expense because of such an arrangement. This could be all the more consistently done because of the fact that the school grounds belong to the War Department and are simply loaned for Indian education. If considered more desirable, two or more suitable non-commissioned officers could be detailed as instructors instead of the Indian school appropriation being subjected to the expense of hiring ex-sergeants for that purpose.

6. I believe that the plan as outlined would receive the favorable indorsement of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and have reason to hope, likewise that of the Secretary of the Interior and the President.

7. If the plan works well as to Carlisle students other suitable Indian youth who so desire can be sent here for this special training



and subsequent enlistment, from the other large non-reservation or reservation Indian schools.

8. There are many other reasons why this plan should be adopted which I shall be glad of an opportunity to explain orally.

9. The part it is desired for the army to take, in addition to the encouragement of the work, is to issue to me a suitable number of cavalry horses--say, not to exceed fifty--with forage and equipments, for which I, as an officer of the army, will be responsible.

Examples of recent successful enlistments of a few Carlisle boys in the army and navy can be given.

One was first sergeant of a company of the 9th Infantry during its China campaign and participated with great credit in its fights. The two boys who went to the navy have received advancement to responsible positions, and last May I sent five of our band boys to the 7th Cavalry Band, and the colonel, adjutant and chief musician all speak and write most favorably of them, while Sergeant White, the regimental drill sergeant, told me that in 28 years experience he had never handled more satisfactory mounted recruits. All are now in the Philippines and enjoy the service. One has been made a non-commissioned officer and all have participated with credit in the mounted athletic contests, and no word of them other than praise has reached me. Believing it desirable to have more of them in the army I would like to see opened up to them a convenient and attractive avenue to the cavalry service.

Having carefully studied the problem for more than a year from



every available standard. I believe the plan outlined above can be carried to a most successful conclusion, to the lasting benefit of the Indians and of the Army.

I communicate direct with you with the knowledge and consent of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

Very respectfully,

(Signed) W A Mercer

Major 11th Cavalry,

Superintendent.

WAM-S



85955

Indian Office

Incl. No.

✓ 1906

Copy of letter by Maj.W.A.  
Mercer, Supt. Carlisle Indian  
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dated April 9, 1906, giving plan  
for proposed cavalry troop at  
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Very respectfully,

Major 11th Cavalry,

Superintendent.

WAM-S



Carlisle Plan  
of  
Military Instruction



M E M O R A N D U M .

Referring to the Commissioner's suggestion concerning appropriate legislation for carrying out the idea of making Carlisle a recruiting station for Indian soldiers, Major Mercer, the Acting Superintendent, recommends that the following item be added to the Indian Appropriation act :

" For the purchase of 60 saddle horses, \$3,600 ; forage for said horses, \$4,900 ; construction of a stable, \$8,000 ; total, \$16,500 ; to give mounted instruction to a select number of Indian youth enrolled at the school, for the purpose of training them for the United States cavalry service."

In commenting on this item Major Mercer says that the estimate of \$60 apiece for horses is to enable him to purchase small but cheap best grade of Indian reservation horses, which, although not best for the purpose, and representing a sacrifice in efficiency in the interests of economy, he suggests, <sup>in order</sup> to increase the probability of favorable consideration; that cavalry horses will probably cost the army \$140 each, which is the kind he thinks really should be furnished and which he would expect to be furnished if the army supplied them.

The Acting Superintendent also suggests an item to be added to the Army Appropriation Bill, as follows :

"That the Secretary of War is hereby authorized to assign under such regulations as to their use as he may prescribe, 57 cavalry horses and all arms and equipments necessary for a cavalry troop of 57; and to issue not to exceed the regulation allowance of forage for horses so assigned , to the Superintendent of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School at Carlisle, Pennsylvania, for temporary use in training a limited and selected number of Indian youth enrolled at said school <sup>whom may derive benefit</sup> for the United States cavalry service."

In my opinion these two items seem to cover what is desired; but I assume that the second item will be submitted to the War Department .



If that Department approves and recommends its insertion in the Army Appropriation Act it will render unnecessary the following in the proposed item in the Indian Appropriation Bill :

For purchase of saddle horses, \$3,600, and forage for horses, \$4,900.

The item of \$8,000 for the erection of a stable unquestionably should go into the Indian Appropriation Act.

In event either item becomes a law, the required rations and clothing for the men, as well as beds, bedding, medicine and medical attention, light, fuel, cooking ranges and cooking utensils will be provided by the school and no provision for their purchase would be necessary.

The Superintendent also suggests, if the second item cannot be inserted in the Army Appropriation Bill, that the first item will meet the requirements of the case if enacted into law in the Indian Appropriation Act.

Referring to the original correspondence in this matter, it appears that included in the original request to the War Department for 50 cavalry horses with necessary equipments and forage, there was also asked as a further aid to the Superintendent in the work of instruction, that two or more non-commissioned officers of the army be detailed as instructors, in event their detail is considered more desirable than employing ex army sergeants out of the Indian school appropriation. The Acting Judge Advocate General said that the authority of the Secretary of War to detail non-commissioned officers for duty as instructors at said school rests upon precisely the same



basis as his authority to issue property to it, and must be denied for the same reason; namely, that there is no express authority of statute to issue and maintain out of current appropriations for the support of the army such an agency of recruitment as is proposed at Carlisle.

If it is still desirable to have these non-commissioned officers, why could not a clause be added to the clause proposed by Major Mercer to the Army Appropriation Act, as follows :

"and that the Secretary of War is authorized to detail one or more non-commissioned officers of the army as instructors at the Carlisle Indian School" ?