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Review of Sagebrush Soldier: Private William Earl Smith's View of the Sioux War of 1876.

Thomas W. Dunlay

University of Nebraska-Lincoln

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journal of the campaign of General George Crook against the Sioux and Northern Cheyennes in the fall of 1876, culminating in the battle on the Red Fork of the Powder River.

Private Smith was a young trooper in Colonel Ranald Mackenzie's Fourth Cavalry Regiment. His version of events is often misspelled and seldom vivid, but in his matter-of-fact way he tells us a great deal about the underside of the frontier army, about bullying sergeants, drunken officers, marching and camping in sub-zero weather, combat with the Cheyennes, and burying comrades in frozen ground. The battle described here has never received the attention given the fight on the Little Big Horn, but it was an important stage in the defeat of the northern plains tribes.

Sherry Smith has chosen to do far more than edit Private Smith's journal, however. Using other accounts by Indian and white combatants she has presented a remarkably complex picture in a short book. Aside from the hostile Cheyennes, for whom the campaign was a major disaster, she tries to understand the motives of a group even more neglected than the white enlisted men, the army's Indian scouts, who were of the greatest importance in the army's success.

There are no heroes in this book; Crook, Mackenzie, and other leaders of the Indian-fighting army appear with their warts showing. Private Smith himself, who eventually deserted, noted that "not a word of lots of privits" that died was said. Like most wars experienced firsthand, this one was long on human folly and suffering and short on glamour. Sherry Smith's fine book gives us a new and intimate glimpse of this particular tragedy.

THOMAS W. DUNLAY
Center for Great Plains Studies
University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Sagebrush Soldier: Private William Earl Smith's View of the Sioux War of 1876. By Sherry L. Smith. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989. Preface, illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. xviii + 158 pp. \$18.95.

It is only in recent decades that the Trans-Mississippi Indian wars have become the subject of considerable scholarly as well as popular investigation and writing. It is even more recently that such study has gone beyond indignation at the fate of the Indians themselves. Sherry L. Smith's book is an attempt to understand both sides, and in particular those generally unheard participants, the enlisted men of the regular army. William Earl Smith was the author's great-grandfather, and a major part of the book is his