

*Col. Ashburn*

MILITARY RECORD

of

Col. JOHN VAN RENSSELAER HOFF,

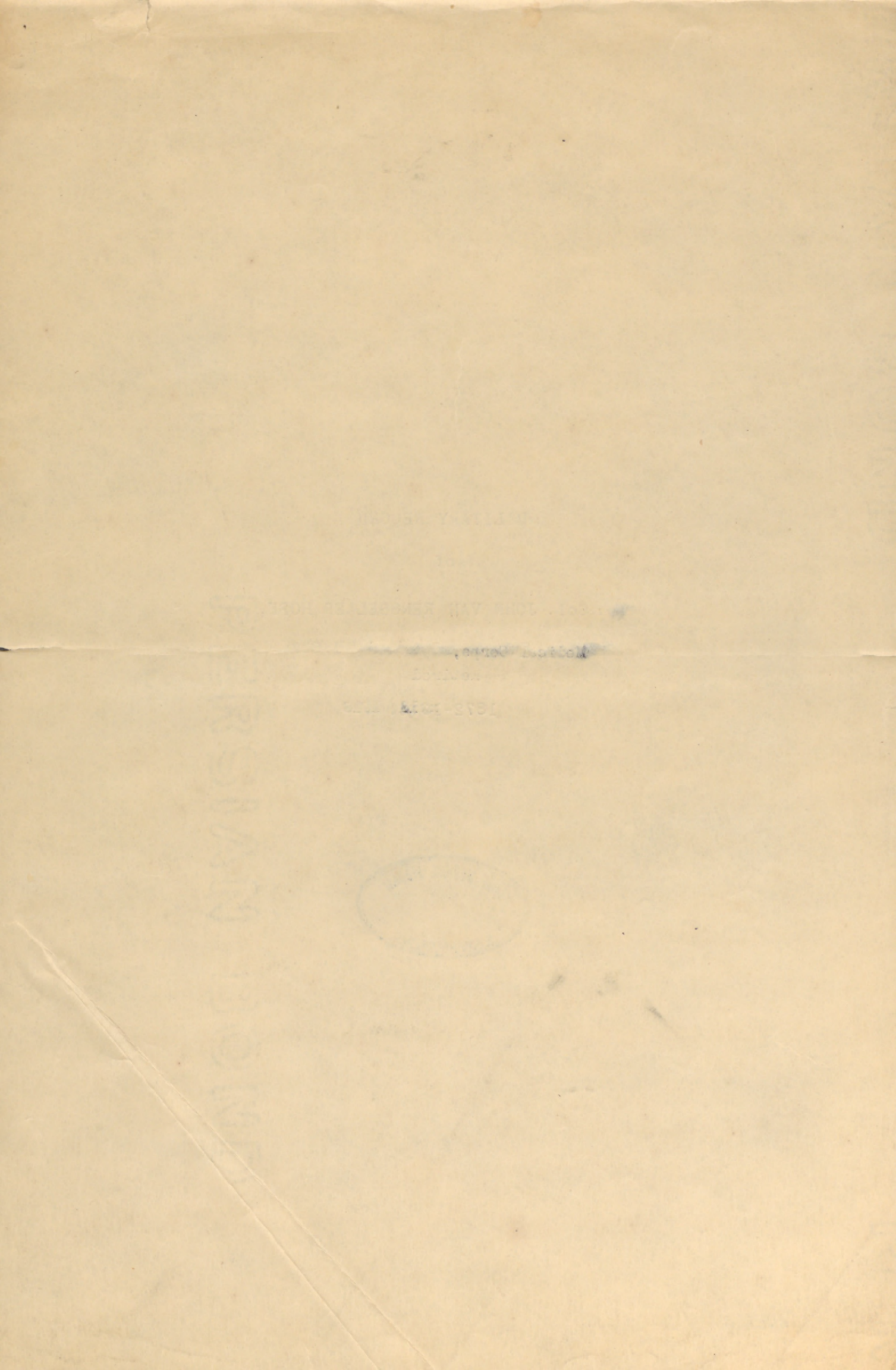
Medical Corps, U.S.A.

Retired

1872-~~1909~~. 1918



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OFFICIAL RECORD  
OF  
COL. JOHN VAN RENSSELAER HOFF,  
U. S. A. *Retired.*

Born 1848.

Mount Morris, New York, April 11, '48.

Literary degrees, 1871-1874.

A. B., M. D., Union University (Schenectady and Albany, N. Y.), '71. A. M., '74.

Matriculant, Medical Department, University Pennsylvania, '72.

M. D., Columbia University (N. Y. City), '74.

Matriculant, University of Vienna, Austria.

Uncommissioned service, 1872-1874.

\*Appointed Act. Asst. Surgeon, June 22, '72, and assigned to duty at Ft. D. A. Russell, Wyo. Remained on duty in the Department of the Platte until October, '73, when, at his own request, his appointment was annulled to enable him to take a post-graduate course in medicine. Service reported as "efficient and reliable" by Joseph B. Brown, Surgeon, U. S. A., Medical Director, Department of the Platte.

Reappointed Act. Asst. Surgeon, May 21, '74, and served in the field with troops during the Sioux troubles of that year until appointed 1st Lt., Asst. Surgeon, U. S. Army, November 10, '74, after competitive examination.

Commissioned service, 1874.

Assigned to duty at Omaha Barracks, Nebr.

On detached service with the 13th Infantry in Louisiana, October, '74, during the political disturbances there.

1875.

Assigned to duty at Ft. Sanders, Wyo., April, '75.

Ft. McPherson, Nebr., October, '75, to October, '76. Of service at Ft. McPherson, Nebr., Major (Bvt. Brig. Genl.) N. A. M. Dudley wrote:

"A neat and model hospital you always kept—ever ready for inspection. The garrison was a very large one most of the time, but you never had any trouble in thoroughly caring for the sick."

1876-'79.

In October, '76, was ordered to Ft. Fetterman, Wyo.,

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\*Under the provisions of law commissioned appointment in all staff corps of the Army was suspended between the years 1869 and 1874.

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U. S. A. Medical Department

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for duty, and in charge of the base hospital of the Powder River Expedition, '76-'77, to which hospital all of the wounded of the expedition were sent. Remained on duty at this post until November, '79.

During service at Ft. Fetterman submitted a report on so-called "Mountain Fever," which is referred to in several standard works on the practice of medicine. Of this report Bvt. Maj. General M. C. Meigs, Qm. Genl., wrote to the Surgeon General May 27, '79:

"I return the report of Asst. Surgeon Hoff on certain cases of Mountain Fever \* \* \*. I congratulate you upon having in your Corps gentlemen so attentive, so skillful and careful in observation and able so well to record and discuss their observations. Such a Medical Corps cannot fail to do well by the Army and to advance the noble science of medicine in the world."

Also submitted a report on coxo-femoral exarticulation for g. s. wound. Published in a note in the Medical and Surgical History of the War '61-'65.

1880-'82.

Assigned to duty at Ft. Monroe, Va., February 6, '80. On detached service with troops at Washington, D. C., at the inauguration and after the wounding of President Garfield.

On detached service at Yorktown, Virginia, Centennial, as Acting Surgeon General of the State of New York, at request of the Governor.

General Headquarters, State of New York,  
November 4, '81.

"The Commander-in-Chief desires to convey hereby his personal thanks \* \* \* to Asst. Surgeon John Van R. Hoff of the Army \* \* \*."

Gen. Geo. B. McClellan wrote in '82:

"Let me here repeat my heartfelt thanks for your skill and kind care \* \* \*."

1882-'86.

Assigned to duty at Alcatraz Island in the Department of California, June 17, '82, and after two years' service there was ordered to Ft. Mason, Cal., and as Attending Surgeon to the Department Commander.

Of the service at Alcatraz, the Commanding Officer, now Brig. General R. T. Frank, U. S. A., wrote:

"Your duties there, exacting and arduous at all times, were made doubly so by reason of its being a prison post,





where from 150 to 200 general prisoners were undergoing sentence. These duties were performed by you with a zeal, ability and efficiency which entitles you to the highest commendation."

While serving in California was appointed Asst. Professor of diseases of the eye, ear, nose and throat, Medical Department, University of California, and to the charge of the clinics of these diseases at the San Francisco County Hospital. During last year in the department, owing to the illness of the Professor, was in charge of all instruction. Under date of January 28, '86, the Dean of the Faculty wrote:

"By resolution \* \* \* the Dean was instructed to convey to you the thanks of the Faculty for the very able manner in which you have conducted the ophthalmic clinic \* \* \*"

Assigned to duty in the Department of the Missouri, March 13, '86. Upon being relieved, Major General Pope, Commanding Department of California, wrote, March 9, '86:

"Dr. Hoff has been stationed at Black Point ever since we have been there, and is not only a most accomplished and efficient officer, but a gentleman of the highest personal character and social standing \* \* \*"

1886-'87.

On leave of absence in Europe from March 29, '86, for one year, studying the sanitary organization of foreign armies and other specialties in his profession.

1887-'89.

Assigned to duty at Ft. Reno, Ind. Ter., April 4, '87.

In the summer of '87, organized the first detachment of the Hospital Corps and company bearers in the U. S. Army, and formulated drill regulations for their instruction, which formed the basis for those now used. The Medical Director (Col. Page) reported, November 18, '87:

"Inspected the hospital and found it in excellent condition. \* \* \* Every part was scrupulously clean, and the discipline of the men of the Hospital Corps was apparently perfect. Witnessed a stretcher drill commanded by the post surgeon, Captain Hoff--tactics instituted by him. Nothing could be suggested by me to improve the efficiency of the service as illustrated by the drill."

December, '87, submitted scheme of organization for the Hospital Corps, National Guard, to the Adjutant General, State of New York.

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December, '87, submitted scheme of organization for the Hospital Corps, National Guard, to the Adjutant General, State of New York.

Surgeon of the command (5th Cavalry) detailed for the first Camp of Instruction, September, '88, Guthrie, Okla.

Recommended the organization of field hospitals, and suggested equipment, February 13, '89.

Surgeon General Moore wrote, March 23, '89:

"I have not had time to make more than a partial examination of your pamphlet on litter drill, etc., but I recognize the industry and zeal required to do so much extra work pro bono publico \* \* \*."

On duty in the field during the opening of Oklahoma Territory to settlement.

1889-'92.

June, '89, assigned to duty as Senior Surgeon at the Cavalry and Light Artillery School, Ft. Riley, Kansas.

August 16, '89, detailed as Chief Surgeon of troops in the field for autumn maneuvers at Chilocco. Major General Merritt, U. S. A., in his report of operations, wrote:

"Special attention is invited to the report \* \* \* of Captain J Van R. Hoff, Asst. Surgeon, the competent chief medical officer during the course of instruction of troops assembled on the Chilocco. This officer is unusually well equipped by cultivation and study and by a warm interest in the subject for practical field training of the Hospital Corps. The field hospital established under his direction was a model of neatness and admirable sanitary arrangements, and the field exercises, such as the care of the wounded in rear of the fighting lines, the establishment of dressing stations and the like, were realistic and instructive."

In report of annual inspection of Ft. Riley, Kansas, '90, the Inspector (Col. Sanger) says of the exercises in bearer drill and first aid:

"The result was very gratifying; the men were well informed and proved to my satisfaction that these lessons are of paramount value to soldiers, and should be considered just as much a part of their professional education as the use of weapons. Captain Hoff, the post surgeon, should certainly be commended for the success he has attained in this field."

November, '90, to January, '91, on duty with the 7th Cavalry during the Sioux Campaign, and at the battle of Wounded Knee Creek, S. D., December 29th. Lt. Col. Dallas Bache, Medical Director, Department of the Platte, in his report of this campaign, wrote:



"The field hospital of the 7th Cavalry, under Captain John Van R. Hoff, Asst. Surgeon, was a type of satisfactory method and completeness, and an example to which I felt safe in referring other medical officers for study and visible proof of efficiency."

Referring to the engagement at Wounded Knee Creek, Col. Bache reported:

"That the work was done at all, that it was well done, was due simply to the ability of the Chief Medical Officer, Captain Hoff, and to the instinct of devotion to duty to which his whole training and example had compelled his men."

In a personal letter, dated Jan. 27, '91, Colonel Bache wrote:

"Let me thank you personally, as I shall officially, for your soldierly precision and invariable readiness."

The regimental commander, 7th Cavalry, Col. (Major General) James W. Forsyth, under date of Feb. 17, '91, recommended:

"That Captain and Asst. Surgeon John Van R. Hoff, Medical Department, be given a brevet of Major for conspicuous bravery and coolness in caring for the killed and wounded in peculiarly dangerous positions in the battle of Wounded Knee, S. D., December 29, '90, and the engagement near Drexel Mission, S. D., December 30, '90. The circumstances surrounding the performance of his duties by this officer in these two fields of action were such as to force the strongest feelings of admiration for his coolness under fire."

Mentioned in orders (G. O. No. 100, s. '91, Hdqrs. of the Army) "for conspicuous bravery", etc. Recommended for a medal of honor.

On duty as member of equipment board, Medical Department, '91, by which the field equipment was completely remodelled.

In '91 the Inspector (Col. Vroom) reported:

"Major J. Van R. Hoff, Medical Department, is a most energetic and competent officer and thoroughly interested in his work, to which he devotes his whole time and attention."

June 15, '91, was promoted Surgeon with rank of Major.

October 8, '91, submitted a scheme for the organization of a Company of Instruction, Hospital Corps, at Ft. Riley, which was approved and the company organized.

"The field hospital of the 7th Cavalry, under Captain John Van R. Holt, Asst. Surgeon, was a type of auxiliary field hospital and complete, and an example to which I refer in relating other medical officers for study and visible proof of efficiency."

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June 24, '92, directed to revise the drill regulations, Hospital Corps.

October, '92, was relieved from further duty at Ft. Riley, Kansas, and assigned to duty at Governors Island, New York City, as Post Surgeon, Ft. Columbus, Ft. Wood, Sandy Hook Proving Ground, and Attending Surgeon at Headquarters.

On leaving Ft. Riley, the following letter was received:

Headquarters 7th Cavalry,  
Ft. Riley, Kansas, Oct. 20, '92.

Major John Van R. Hoff,  
Surgeon, U. S. Army.

Sir: Owing to the receipt of the order which removes you from further official connection with me, I desire you to know, and take advantage of this occasion to inform you, how great is the value I have assigned to your services while under my command for the past four years.

The untiring and undivided attention which you have given to systematizing and developing the newly organized Hospital Corps, has not only merited an admiration and appreciation on my part commensurate with your complete success in this field, but has attracted the attention and commendation of all.

The degree of this success is fitly shown by the fact that I do not fear a possibility of error when I state that your superior administrative ability and indefatigable devotion to duty has organized a school of instruction for the Hospital Corps complete in all its details, and has established a Medical Department at the post which has no equal in the Army for perfection of equipment in every respect and efficiency in the performance of the duties assigned it.

The remarkable quality of your services and the signal efficiency of your department while with this command in the field near Pine Ridge, S. D., during the Sioux Campaign, '90-'91, is already a matter of record in the War Department, known to all, and need not be referred to here.

In conclusion, permit me to say, I hope in future fields of duty your success may be always equal to your merits, and that the Government may long continue in receipt of your valuable services. I am, sir,

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES W. FORSYTH,

Colonel, 7th Cavalry,  
Commanding.

The Medical Director (Col. Irwin), in a report of his annual inspection, '92, at Ft. Riley, says:

"Everything pertaining to its sanitary police, the drill and discipline of the Hospital Corps and the administration of the Medical Department were found in the most admirable and creditable state. The military bearing and discipline of the men of the Hospital Corps gave





evidence of excellence in every particular, while the execution and prompt discharge of the duties of the medical officers of the station reflect the highest credit on Major John Van R. Hoff, the efficient sanitary officer in charge. The success which has crowned his efforts to drill and suitably educate sanitary soldiers has won for him the admiration and respect of all who witness the brilliant results of his zeal and abilities. His zealous devotion to his varied duties has done much toward removing the erroneous impression entertained by some army people that the sphere of the medical officer is limited to the routine of affording professional service."

June 9, '93, Surgeon General Charles Sutherland, U. S. A., wrote:

"I need not say how much I relied on you in starting the fine School of Instruction at Fort Riley, and how distinguished you made it by your zeal, industry and ability. The Hospital Corps was thereby placed on a fine footing, and if kept in the future on the same high plane will become the finest body in the Army in the matter of drill, intelligence, and usefulness."

1892-'96.

During his service at Governors Island, Major Hoff was also repeatedly in charge of the office of Chief Surgeon of the Department for months at a time. He was detailed as member of many examining boards in his own department as well as generally. He devoted himself, aside from his strictly professional duties, to the placing of his own command in the highest state of efficiency, that it might serve as a model and encouragement to the medical officers of the National Guard, who were constant visitors at his hospital. He commanded the first detachment of the Hospital Corps that ever paraded in New York City, and encouraged by example, advice, and assistance the organization of this important body in the National Guard. The Surgeon General (Sternberg) of the Army said of this:

"It is a subject of just pride to the Medical Department that its officers are so thoroughly conversant with this peculiar feature of their duties as to furnish a perfect object-lesson to our citizen soldiery."

The evidence of his success in this direction is shown by the fact that to-day such an organization is attached to every regiment in that State, as well as in many others.



In '92, Major Hoff was appointed Secretary, Section on Military Medicine and Surgery of the Pan-American Medical Congress, and in August, '93, established a model field hospital in Washington during its meeting there. At this Congress General Sutherland presented a paper on the Hospital Corps, U. S. Army, in which he said:

"To the energy and ability of \* \* \* Major John Van R. Hoff of the Medical Department is due that excellence and high standing."

The Medical Director, Department of the East (Col. Charles Page), in his report of an inspection of the Medical Department, Ft. Columbus, N. Y. H., August 26, '93, wrote:

"At the inspection of the hospital to-day I found it in every respect in most exemplary condition. The administration is admirable and as near perfection as can be. The Hospital Corps detachment is thoroughly instructed and drilled. It presents the most creditable appearance. The surgeon evidently devotes most of his time and much of his talents to the care of his hospital and corps detachment."

Surgeon General Sternberg remarked:

"The above report is a most gratifying one to the Department, and reflects great credit upon Major Hoff."

Col. B. J. D. Irwin, Asst. Surgeon General, U. S. A., under date of July 20, '94, wrote:

"In conclusion, I may now add what I have said to many others, i. e., that in looking into the future I hope to see you the next Surgeon General of the Army, because your abilities and zealous efforts to elevate the standing of the medical officer indicate that you will be the right one in the right place."

October, '94, Major Hoff delivered a course of lectures at the Harvard Medical School on the duties of the medical officer in peace and war.

January 23, '95, Col. Chas. Page, Asst. Surgeon General, U. S. A., wrote:

"To recount your services at the various posts would be a repetition of praise. Suffice it to say that wherever you have been you have devoted your whole talents to the best interests of the service."

Surgeon General Moore wrote:



"I know of no member of the Army Medical Staff who has done as much as yourself in testing all these appliances (of the Medical Department) in field work."

Surgeon General Murray wrote, March 20, '95:

"I was very much pleased to hear from the Surgeon General that you kept up the reputation which you long ago earned of being a model medical officer. I believe you already know why I have taken so much interest in your career in the Corps. I was on the Board before which your father was examined as a surgeon of volunteers at the beginning of the war, and I not only served with him in the field, but afterwards when he came on duty to the Pacific Coast (in the regular establishment). I saw a great deal of him and knew of his desire that you should be carefully and thoroughly educated as a physician and come into the Army. I was, therefore, most gratified at the high place you took in your class, and, both before I was Surgeon General and since, have kept myself well informed in regard to your work and standing in the Corps. I can say with pride and pleasure that in every position in which you have been placed you have done not only your full duty and done it well, but if it were possible for any Army officer to do so, have done more than your duty, for you have always been an advocate for progress and improvement and an enlargement of the work of the Medical Corps, and with an ardor and earnestness which has sometimes almost taken the breath away from some of us old fogies. You have taken hold of and developed new methods and improvements in military medical methods."

September, '94, Chief Surgeon of the Provisional Brigade, U. S. Troops, at dedication of Chickamauga Park, Georgia.

Of the field hospital the Inspector (Col. Volkmar) reported:

"The main field hospital was pitched at the southern end of the line \* \* \*. It was a model in every respect."

1895--Report of Inspector (Col. Hughes) of post and garrison of Ft. Columbus, N. Y. Harbor:

"The instruction of the Hospital Corps detachment in rendering of first aid and in methods of transporting the injured is exceptionally good and thorough. To say that the post surgeon, Major Hoff, supervises the instruction in person is tantamount to saying that all the impetus will be given to it that individual zeal and energy can throw into the work."

1896--Member of a board to revise the drill regulations, Hospital Corps.



1896--Detailed as Medical Inspector, National Guards, New York and Pennsylvania. (See report published in annual report, Surgeon General, U. S. Army.) The then Surgeon General of New York State wrote appreciatively of the--

"valuable work for the Guard in this State, and with a feeling of pride that so competent a surgeon and pleasant a gentleman should have been associated with us \* \* \*."

September, '96, Accompanied the Commanding General of the Army on his tour of inspection of the posts in the U. S.

Col. Chas. R. Greenleaf, Asst. Surgeon General, wrote, November 2, '96:

"You are the future standard bearer of our hopes, and to your good sense and loyalty the rising generation in our Corps will look for their salvation."

Col. Jos. R. Smith, Chief Surgeon, Department of the East, wrote, in '97:

"All duties you performed to the satisfaction of your military commander and myself. I do not wish to be fulsome or chary in praise, so I say no more, save to assure you of my personal as well as official regard, and I wish you advancement and success in your chosen profession."

Reported for duty at Vancouver Barracks, December, '96.

1896--Founded the Alexander H. Hoff Memorial Prize, Army Medical School.

"Resolved, That \* \* \* the faculty (of the Army Medical School) recognizes Major Hoff's interest in the education and professional standing of the members of the Medical Corps of the Army, and considers that his mode of giving it material expression, by instituting the Hoff Memorial Medal, will be fruitful of good results."

March, '98, while in charge of the Chief Surgeon's office, volunteered for active service for the war then impending.

Of Major Hoff's service at Vancouver Barracks, Col. (Major General) Anderson, Commanding Officer, wrote:

"In the twelve years I commanded Vancouver Barracks, I had serving with me a number of the best known and most respected Army surgeons. You were the last, and I will say \* \* \* that in your tour of duty as Post Surgeon you not only made a remarkable improvement in the hos-

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"All duties you performed to the satisfaction of your military commander and myself. I do not wish to be full some or chary in praise, as I say no more, save to assure you of my personal as well as official regard, and I wish you advancement and success in your chosen profession."

Reported for duty at Vancouver Barracks, December, '98. 1898--Founded the Alexander H. Holt Memorial Prize, Army Medical School.

"Resolved, That \* \* \* the faculty (of the Army Medical School) recognize Major Holt's interest in the education and professional standing of the members of the Medical Corps of the Army, and consider that his mode of giving it material expression, by instituting the Holt Memorial Medal, will be fruitful of good results."

March, '98, while in charge of the Chief Surgeon's office, volunteered for active service for the war then impending.

Of Major Holt's service at Vancouver Barracks, Col. (Major General) Anderson, Commanding Officer, wrote:

"In the twelve years I commanded Vancouver Barracks, I had serving with me a number of the best known and most respected Army surgeons. You were the last, and I will say that in your tour of duty as Post Surgeon you not only made a remarkable improvement in the hos-



pital, but inaugurated an absolutely up-to-date and, as it seemed to me, a model method of administration. Your diligence was untiring and your zeal remarkable. As a result of my two years' association with you I came to regard you as a most scientific and efficient Army surgeon."

Major General Otis wrote:

"I was a close observer of the manner in which he performed his official duties, and although am not competent to judge intelligently of his professional acquirements, I had every confidence in them, especially when he took charge of cases of severe illness in my household. As an administrator of affairs and a disciplinarian \* \* \* he has few if any equals in the Medical Department, and his kindly impulses and professional zeal never permitted him to neglect the sick."

1898.

April 31, '98, reported to the Surgeon General of the Army to assist in formulating a field organization for the Medical Department.

May, '98, appointed Lt. Colonel, Chief Surgeon, 3d Corps, and reported for duty at Chickamauga Park, Ga., May 23d. Organized the Medical Department, 3d Corps. (For scheme of organization see Vol. VIII, Transactions, Association of Military Surgeons.)

Became Chief Surgeon, Camp George A. Thomas, July 27, in the midst of a typhoid epidemic. Immediately obtained authority to organize the Sternberg General Field Hospital (500 beds), and afterwards directed the organization of the Alexander H. Hoff General Field Hospital, which enabled the regiments constituting the command to be moved off the ground at an early date.

Relieved from duty as Chief Surgeon, 3d Corps, September 9, '98, and ordered to report to the Surgeon General for duty as Medical Inspector.

Of the work at Chickamauga, the Commanding General, Major General Breckenridge, wrote, in 1898:

"The brunt of the staff work fell upon few, and you had more than your share to bear off, and sustained it not only cheerfully, but in every way to the best interest of the service, and to my great satisfaction. Some expression of appreciation for such continuous and meritorious labors is due us both, and I tender it now with every hope of your high success, as you certainly have won the esteem of all."



September 25, ordered to duty as Chief Surgeon in Porto Rico. Of this, the Surgeon General of the Army wrote:

"The President is extremely anxious to have an officer of rank and experience sent there (Porto Rico) as Chief Surgeon. I had hoped to keep you with me for inspection duty, but this seems to be more urgent, especially in view of the President's earnest interest in the matter."

Honorably discharged as Lt. Colonel, Chief Surgeon, U. S. V., November 5, '98, upon disbandment of the 3d Corps.

Early service in Porto Rico was directed to the organization of the Medical Department and improvement of sanitary conditions. (See Annual Report, Chief Surgeon, Department of Porto Rico, '99.) Of this, the Department Commander (Major General Brooke) wrote:

"In all of this work Colonel Hoff showed administrative ability of a high order, to which I desire to bear witness."

1899-1900.

In '99, smallpox being epidemic there. Inaugurated and executed the vaccination of the entire civil population of Porto Rico, since which an annual death rate of 700 from this cause has been reduced to nil.

July 1, '99, organized the Superior Board of Health and, August 9, the Board of Charities, Porto Rico, and the hurricane relief work, which work entailed the feeding of an average of 100,000 people daily for nearly a year. (For details of the work of the Superior Board of Health, the Board of Charities, and the Porto Rico Relief, see appendix to the report of the Military Governor of Porto Rico, 1900.)

The Department Commander (Brig. General Geo. W. Davis), in transmitting report to the Secretary of War, wrote:

"The work committed to the Board of Charities has proved to be one of very great magnitude, for the direct application of the measures for the relief of suffering caused by the cyclone of August 8, '99, was intrusted to this Board. A famine was impending, a direct result of the destruction caused by the storm, which it was at once seen would involve a considerable part of the whole population of nearly a million souls. Therefore, the organization and machinery for applying the bountiful contri-



butions of the people and Government of the U. S. had to be prepared in the shortest possible time and managed ably, or the results to the surviving hurricane sufferers would be disastrous. This report of Major Hoff's tells the story of this work which involved the distribution of over thirty million rations, and cost private contributors and the treasuries of the U. S. and Porto Rico quite a million and a half dollars. It was work for which no member of the Military Government or any resident of Porto Rico had any training or experience or any knowledge, save that gained by reading of similar catastrophes in other lands. Major John Van R. Hoff, at that time Chief Surgeon of the Department, was the President of the Board from its organization to the completion of the work, and deserves mention for his able discharge of duty as the Chief Executor of the Porto Rico Relief. The treatment of the collateral questions of health and charity is also an important contribution to the history of the Military Government of Porto Rico."

Of the relief work in Porto Rico, Major General Ruger wrote:

"The thought occurs to me that while rewards have been so profuse in some directions, services so important as those performed by you \* \* \* should not be adequately recognized by official act. The fault is, of course, \* \* \* the lack of legal authority on the part of the powers that be to properly reward services of an extraordinary kind."

1900.

August 7, 1900, was relieved from duty as Chief Surgeon, Department of Porto Rico, and assigned to duty as Chief Surgeon, China Relief Expedition.

The Commanding General, Department of Porto Rico (General Davis), wrote:

"I congratulate you on the receipt of orders for important foreign service. Their issuance is proof of appreciation by the Surgeon General and the Secretary of War of your exceptional merit and capacity for the most important executive and administrative duties that fall to the lot of medical officers in peace or war. While I congratulate you personally on your good fortune, I regret the loss it entails to me, but I cannot permit you to take leave without saying in this way that I feel under infinite obligations to you for most loyal assistance and thorough performance of duties which were outside the line of your profession, and of a most important character. The year during which you have been at the head of the board controlling hurricane and famine relief work, has been one of great anxiety; for the work involved responsibilities of vast magnitude, greater I believe than was ever before assigned to American officers. The work has been done to my entire satisfaction, and my heartfelt thanks are due to you. Bringing to your new duties the qualities and abilities for systematic organization which you possess to a remarkable degree, I am sure that success is guaranteed." \* \* \*



1901.

Reported for duty at Tien-tsin, China, September 25, 1900, and proceeded to Peking which had already been captured. The necessity for the very considerable reinforcements ordered from home having ceased, the forces were at once reduced to a minimum, and Major Hoff was ordered back to the U. S., where he was assigned to duty in the office of the Surgeon General of the Army, in charge of the Hospital Corps Division and the Medical Supply Depot (reserve field equipment).

Of this the Surgeon General (Sternberg) of the Army stated in his annual report, 1901:

"Major John Van R. Hoff, Surgeon, U. S. A., having made an excellent record as Chief Surgeon in Porto Rico, was selected by me as Chief Surgeon of the China Relief Expedition, but upon his arrival in China hostilities were over, and at my request he was ordered to this city for duty in my office. He was placed in charge of the Hospital Corps Division and of the Supply Depot at the Army Medical Museum, and has performed all the duties devolving upon him with zeal and ability."

June 17, '01, was detailed as member of the faculty of the Army Medical School.

1902.

January 1, promoted Deputy Surgeon General, U. S. A., with rank of Lieut. Colonel, ~~this day, to which date this record extends.~~

Society of the Dragon.

Sons of the Revolution.

Society of *WV* Wars.





## AUTHOR OF--

The Most Practicable Organization for the Medical Department, U. S. A., in Active Service.

Outlines of the Military Sanitary Organization of Some of the Great Armies of the World.

Military Sanitary Organization on the Lines of Communication and at the Base.

A Scheme of Military Sanitary Organization.

Some Suggestions for the Organization and Interior Economy of a State Medical Military Sub-Depot in War Time.

Etc., etc.

President of the Association of Military Surgeons, U. S.

Member of the New York Academy of Medicine.

Society of the War 1812. New York.

Loyal Legion, U. S. (by inheritance).

Society of the Dragon.

Sons of the Revolution.

Society of Colonial Wars.



Reorganized the field equipment of the Medical Department.

Formulated a scheme for the accumulation of reserve equipment for five army corps and carried it into effect as far as practicable.

Detailed Chief Surgeon, Maneuvers of 1902, Fort Riley, Kansas, where the present field equipment was assembled by Colonel Hoff and used for the first time in the form now prescribed in regulations.

Relieved from duty in Surgeon General's Office and assigned to duty as Surgeon, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

1903- '05 Detailed as instructor in military sanitation in the General Service and Staff College, Fort Leavenworth.

Reestablished the course in "Care of Troops".

Suggested and promoted the introduction of the teaching of military hygiene in the garrison and service schools; also the requirement that company officers should pass in this subject in the examinations for promotion, all of which was adopted.

Detailed as Chief Surgeon, Maneuvers at Fort Riley, Kansas.

January 19, 1905, promoted Colonel, Assistant Surgeon General U.S. Army.

Detailed as military observer with the Russian Army in Manchuria.

Decorated with the Russian order of St. Anne.

1906 Detailed as Chief Surgeon, Department of the Missouri.

Professor of Military Sanitation, University of Nebraska, and of the Maneuver Camp at Fort Riley.

1907. Chief Surgeon, Department of Luzon, and of the Philippines Division.

Suggested and consummated the organization of Company "D", Hospital Corps; suggested the training of 3% of the Native Scouts in hospital work and their use as an adjunct to the Hospital Corps, which was carried into effect; also the organization of an active field hospital in each Department of the Philippines Division, authority for which was obtained from the Secretary of War.

Received the degree of L. L. D.

Jan. 1, 1908. Chief Surgeon, Philippines Division, accomplished the detail of Privates

Jan. 1, 1908. Chief Surgeon, Philippines Division, accomplished the detail of Privates

Received the degree of B. S. D.

the Secretary of War.

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1910 - 1912 Chief Surgeon, Department of the East and Eastern Division.

On Colonel Hoff's return from the Philippines, he made effective in the Departments of the Lakes, the East and the Eastern Division the suggestions of the Surgeon General of the Army looking to the reduction of non-effectiveness from venereal diseases thus materially increasing the strength of the fighting line and diminishing the cost of the sick list.

April 11th, 1912 Retired from active service, having reached the age of 64 years.

1913 Appointed by the President of the United States a member of the War Committee of the American Red Cross. Member of the Executive Committee of the D. C. Chapter Red Cross.

1916 Volunteered for active Duty during mobilization on the Mexican Border. Assigned to active duty in the Office of the Surgeon General U. S. A.

1918 Peremptorily relieved from active duty, with reprimand Aug. 2nd, 1918.

Totally regenerated <sup>in</sup> a letter under date of December 20<sup>th</sup> 1919 signed by the Secretary of War  
Newton D. Baker.

"Awarded Distinguished Service Cross for Extraordinary Heroism" etc. December 20<sup>th</sup> 1924

34 years after the recommendation. General Hospital on Staten Island named "Hoff Hospital" by act of Congress in New York

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*Handwritten notes:*  
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1924  
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Presented the First Aid Packet adopted

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*Handwritten notes:*  
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MILITARY RECORD

1872 to 1902.

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Col. JOHN VANRENSELAER HOFF,

Decorated in 1891, 1898, 1901,

U. S. Army.