



U.S. ARMY CASTNER RANGE
NATIONAL MONUMENT

Fact Sheet



Brigadier General Joseph Compton Castner

Upon his retirement on 30 November 1933, Brigadier General Joseph Compton Castner ended his active duty to the United States Army with honor and distinction. Across four decades, he had competently served his country in times of peace and of war. A native of New Brunswick, New Jersey, where he was born on

18 November 1869, Castner exhibited a strong analytical mind as a student, an aptitude he applied at Rutgers College (later renamed Rutgers University), where he was conferred a degree in civil engineering in 1891. Upon graduation, he received a commission as a Second Lieutenant on 1 August 1891 and

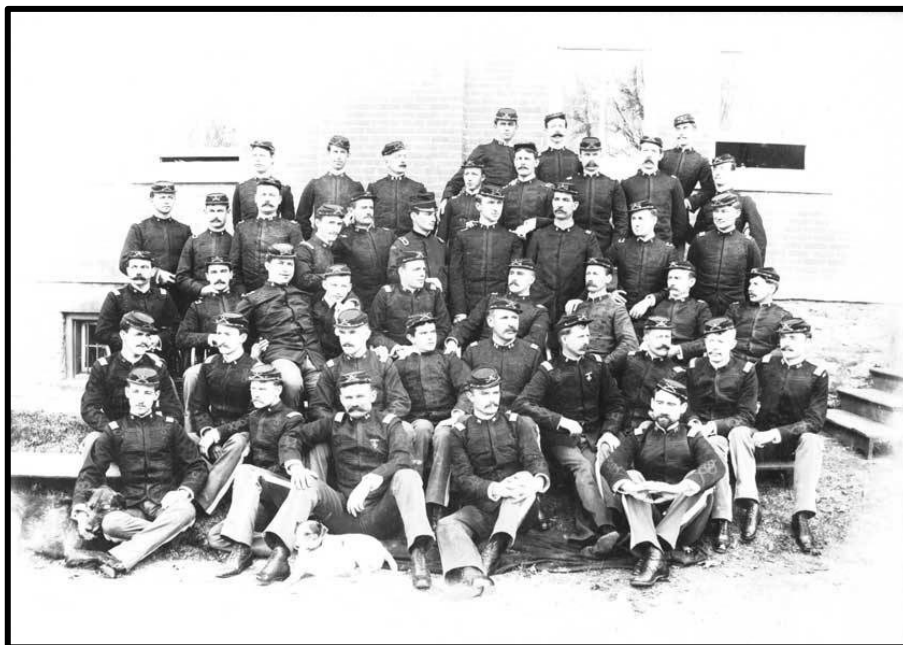
was assigned to the Fourth Infantry. Castner's father, Cornelius Wyckoff Castner

(1831-1904) had served as Captain of Company B, Ninth New Jersey Volunteer Infantry, during the American Civil War. From 1893 to 1895, Lieutenant Castner attended and graduated from the United States Infantry and Cavalry School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

On 28 April 1898, Castner was promoted to the rank of First Lieutenant in the Fourth Infantry, a month after he received orders for detached service in a military expedition of exploration under Captain Ward F. Glenn to the Klondike region of Alaska. In August while in the

backcountry, Castner and two enlisted men became lost and were presumed dead, until they safely arrived in early February of 1899 at Weare, a station at the mouth of the Tanana River. Returning to the Presidio in San Francisco, Castner was detailed as quartermaster and commissary for the Twenty-first Infantry Regiment

during its deployment to the Philippines. Disembarking for Manila on 8 August 1899, Castner entered into an active military theatre of operations for the first instance in his career, and while in the Pacific, he upheld the Army's highest standards of comportment expected by its officers and men. As evidence, on 23 April 1900, he was promoted



US Infantry and Cavalry School Class of 1893-1895 Fort Leavenworth. Brigadier General Joseph Compton Castner is standing at the far left

to the rank of Captain, Philippine Cavalry Squadron, and then Captain, Fourth

Infantry, on 2 February 1901.

In the aftermath of his service in the Philippine Islands, Captain Castner was assigned to Oahu, Hawai'i, in late 1908 to oversee the planning of military housing in support of the War Department's buildup efforts to defend Pearl Harbor. Arriving on 4 December 1908, as construction quartermaster, Castner directed the construction of a temporary cantonment, which soldiers commonly referred to as "Castner Village." In April of 1909, the quarters were named Schofield Barracks,



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in honor of Lieutenant General John M. Schofield,
Commanding General of the Army from 1888 to 1895.

Five weeks after the United States Congress authorized President Woodrow Wilson to declare war against Germany, then-Major Castner was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel of the Sixth Infantry, a rank he held for three months; on 5 August 1917, he was promoted to Colonel, Thirty-eighth Infantry, and assigned to the Fifth Division, which was organizing at Camp Logan in Houston, Texas. On 12 April 1918, Castner was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and assigned to command the Ninth Infantry Brigade; shortly thereafter, the Fifth Division sailed for France to continue training before deployment into sectors occupied by French troops.



Brig. General Castner, circa 1925.

During the American Expeditionary Force's campaign in the Saint-Mihiel Salient, the Ninth Infantry Brigade served in reserve to the Tenth Infantry Brigade, but Brig. Gen. Castner's men endured extensive combat during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. The Ninth Infantry Brigade captured multiple towns and villages in its assault upon the Hindenburg Line in the final two months of the war. Congress awarded Brig. Gen. Castner the Army Distinguished Service Medal in appreciation of his "exceptionally meritorious and distinguished services to the Government of the

United States ...The success of his command was in a large measure due to the splendid training and excellent leadership given it by the Commander."

On 31 December 1921, Brig. Gen. Castner was assigned to command the Second Brigade, First Cavalry Division, at Fort Bliss, Texas. In advance of this assignment, he attended the cavalry school at Fort Riley, Kansas, for three months before his arrival in El Paso on 2 May 1922. Three years later, on 7 June 1925, Castner assumed temporary command of Fort Bliss when Maj. Gen. Robert L. Howze departed El Paso for Columbus, Ohio, to command the Fifth Corps Area. It was during this time when he commanded Fort Bliss, Brig. Gen. Castner acquired and established the artillery range that was later named in his honor. Nine months later, the War Department issued orders naming Castner the commander of American forces in Tientsin, China, where he assumed his duties on 1 July 1926. In early 1929, Brig. Gen. Castner began his final tour of duty, serving at Fort Lewis, Washington, in command of the Third Division, a post he fulfilled until his retirement from active military service on 30 November 1933.

During his four-decade-long career, Brig. Gen. Castner was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, with Oak Leaf Cluster, for his actions on the Western Front, and the Silver Star, for his service in the Philippine Islands. Joseph Compton Castner died on 7 July 1946, and was buried at the National Cemetery in San Francisco, California. His legacy has been remembered and honored with Mount Castner and Castner Glacier in Alaska bearing his name, along with Castner Range National Monument in El Paso, Texas, in recognition of his life and career.

