

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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Originally Dubbed 'Gigling'

There have been many guesses made by the uninformed over the past years as to how Fort Ord got its name. The military reservation was at one time known as "Gigling" and there was a station on the Southern Pacific by that name. Some folks have said that the land was named for a farmer and others have been known to declare that it was named for a local beverage.

But it is a matter of war department record that the present and official name of the 23,000 acre reservation was chosen in honor of Major General Edward Cresdap Ord who saw service against the Seminole Indians in Florida, fought in the campaign to win California and was an outstanding commander in the Civil War.

Military history of General Ord's family dates back to the Revolutionary War, and his grandfather later was in command of a detachment which quelled the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794.

General Ord himself was graduated from West Point in 1839 and two years later was promoted to first lieutenant for gallantry displayed against the Seminoles.

Commanding a battery of artillery, he came with Lieutenant Halleck and Sherman in the Ship Lexington from New York to California and supported Sherman in his bloodless attack which led to the capture of Monterey. Later in 1854 and 1855, he served on the California Coast Survey and did extensive mapping in this region.

He also participated in battles with the Rogue River and Spokane Indians while on this coast.

In September, 1861, young Ord was jumped from captain to brigadier general of the Volunteers and was ordered east to take part in the war between the states.

During the Civil War, he held many important commands and was commended for bravery in action several times. When he retired in 1880, the Congress made him a major general in recognition of his long and brilliant service.

He died in Havana, Cuba, in 1883 of yellow fever contracted during an extensive business trip to Mexico.

In 1946 a musty old scrapbook containing many of the colorful highlights in the life of General Edward Cresdap Ord, and members of his family, came into the possession of Fort Ord officials and is now preserved at Post Headquarters as a permanent historic record. The book was the property of the General's wife, Mary Ord, as her name appears on the inside of the cover.

Outstanding among the many items of interest saved in the scrapbook was the account of the wedding of General and Mrs. Ord's daughter, Roberta Augusta to General Geronimo Trevino, commanding general of the Mexican army forces in northern Mexico.

The account of the wedding reports that it was regarded as an important milestone in promoting friendly relations between Mexico and the United States. General Ord was at that time in command of the army department in Texas, and the family home was in San Antonio. The marriage took place July 21, 1880. A son was born to the Trevinos and was named "the international baby," in all the announcements. Tragedy soon followed for the young mother passed away.

The second daughter, Lucy Maude Ord, married John S. Mason, the son of General John S. Mason.

Mrs. Ord made her home in San Diego in the later years of her life.