



# Guarding the Border: The Military Memoirs of the Ward Schrantz, 1912-1917 (Canseco-Keck History Series)

*Jeff Patrick*

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Ward Loren Schrantz, of Carthage, Missouri, entered the U.S. Army in 1912, at a time when military leaders were still seriously debating the future of the horse cavalry. He left active military service in 1946, after the United States dropped the atomic bomb on Japan. Schrantz served capably at a time when the U.S. military was undergoing rapid technological and strategic transformation and, as a journalist and attentive observer, left a vivid personal account of his time in the Army and Missouri National Guard.

Editor Jeff Patrick has woven three undated versions of Schrantz's memoir into a single narrative focused on the sparsely documented pre-World War I period from 1912 to 1917, thus helping to fill a significant gap in the existing literature. Schrantz's memoir is notable not only for the period it covers, but also for its lively evocation of a soldier's life during the U.S.-Mexico border disturbances of the early twentieth century. Schrantz's account demonstrates the perennial contrast between how soldiers were expected to behave and how they actually behaved; it offers colorful and authentic details not usually available from official histories. Patrick also has added an appendix consisting of the letters that Schrantz wrote for publication in his hometown newspaper, the *Carthage Evening Press*.

These documents yield interesting insights into the attitudes and dispositions of U.S. soldiers during this time, as well as the perceptions and opinions of the "folks back home." Students, scholars, and others interested in military and borderlands history will find much to enjoy in *Guarding the Border: The Military Memoirs of Ward Schrantz, 1912-1917*.

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