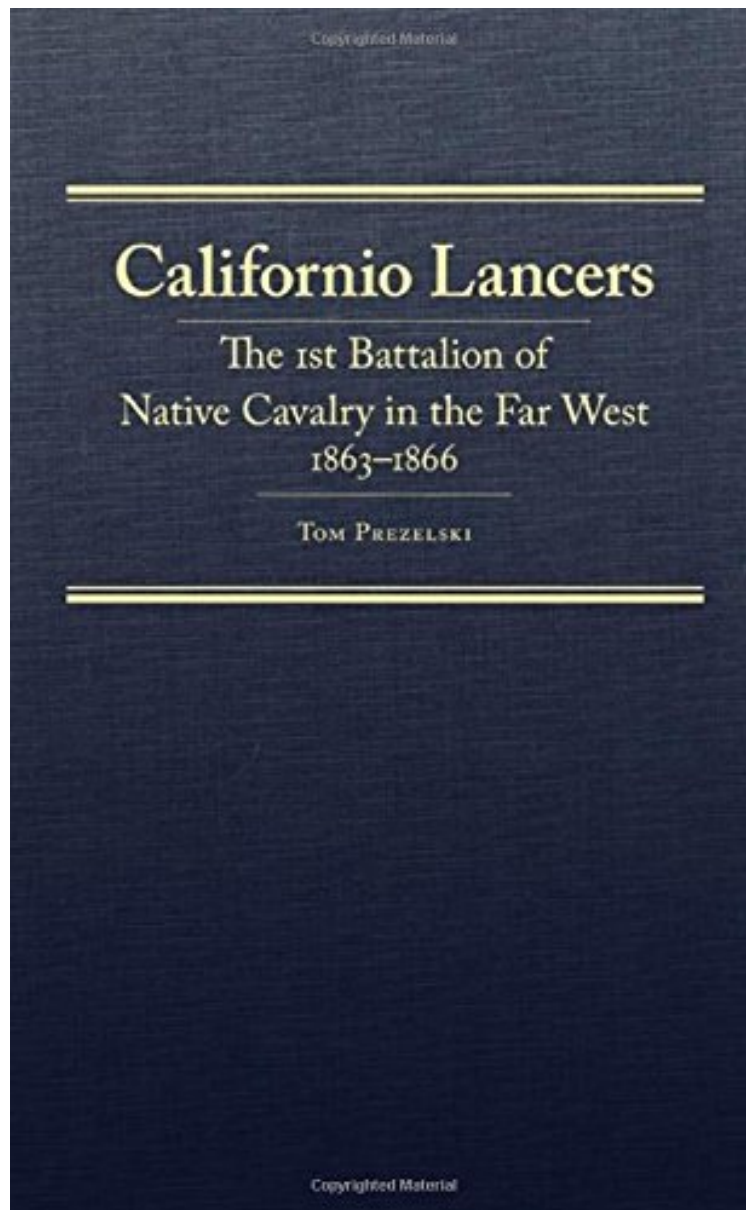


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## Californio Lancers: The 1st Battalion of Native Cavalry in the Far West, 1863–1866 (Frontier Military Series)

*Mr. Tom Prezelski*

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**Mr. Tom Prezelski : Californio Lancers: The 1st Battalion of Native Cavalry in the Far West, 1863–1866 (Frontier Military Series)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Californio Lancers: The 1st Battalion of Native Cavalry in the Far West, 1863–1866 (Frontier Military Series):

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By Customer  
Californio Lancers is a clear, concise account of the brave contributions to the Union war efforts in the southwest by Spanish-speaking natives of Mexican heritage living on California ranches forcibly annexed by the United States from Mexico in 1848. Mr. Prezelski has brought to light a story from the 1860s that provides an illuminative perspective of the prejudices and suspicions that continue to fester in modern times against many loyal US citizens based solely on their racial or religious heritage. The maps are beautifully crafted and the clarity of the illustrations included is remarkable. This handsome, well written, deeply researched volume is a gem.  
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A good read about people/units in the American Civil War don't you hear or read about.  
1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Lincoln's Lancers  
By A. A. Nofi  
A summary of the review on StrategyPage.Com  
'Independent historian Prezelski takes a look at one of the most unique units to ever serve in the U.S. Army, a battalion of lancers that served in California and Arizona. Composed largely of "native" (i.e. Mexican-American) Californios, with a surprising seasoning of men from across Latin America and a few European adventurers, the lancers fought Native Americans, most notably Apaches, chased bandits, helped keep Confederate sympathizers in California under control, and secured the boundary with Imperial Mexico. In telling the story of this unique unit, Prezelski delves into the history of American rule in California, including the unsavory racism of the times, and the state's role in the Civil War. He gives us profiles of some interesting people, most of whom are now long forgotten, notably Andrés Pico, touches upon matters military from recruiting policies to the design and composition of the lance used, to desertion rates in the battalion, and much more. This is an interesting book about an unusual aspect of the Civil War.' For the full review, see StrategyPage.Com

More than 16,000 Californians served as soldiers in the Union Army during the Civil War. One California unit, the 1st Battalion of Native Cavalry, consisted largely of Californio Hispanic volunteers from the "Cow Counties" of Southern California and the Central Coast. Out-of-work vaqueros who enlisted after drought decimated the herds they worked, the Native Cavalrymen lent the army their legendary horsemanship and carried lances that evoked both the romance of the Californios and the Spanish military tradition. *Californio Lancers*, the first detailed history of the 1st Battalion, illuminates their role in the conflict and brings new diversity to Civil War history. Author Tom Prezelski notes that the Californios, less than a generation removed from the U.S.-Mexican War, were ambivalent about serving in the Union Army, but poverty trumped their misgivings. Based on his extensive research in the service records of individual officers and enlisted men, Prezelski describes both the problems and the accomplishments of the 1st Battalion. Despite a desertion rate among enlisted men that exceeded 50 percent for some companies, and despite the feuds among its officers, the Native Cavalry was the face of federal authority in the region, and their presence helped retain the West for the Union during the rebellion. The battalion pursued bandits, fought an Indian insurrection in northern California, garrisoned Confederate-leaning southern California, patrolled desert trails, guarded the border, and attempted to control the Chiricahua Apaches in southern Arizona. Although some ten thousand Spanish-surnamed Americans served during the Civil War, their support of the Union is almost unknown in the popular imagination. *Californio Lancers* contributes to our understanding of the Civil War in the Far West and how it transformed the Mexican-American community.

About the Author  
Tom Prezelski is an independent historian whose articles have appeared in the *Journal of Arizona History*, the *Arizona Daily Star*, and the *Tucson Sentinel*. A former Arizona State Representative, he lives in Tucson, Arizona.