

A MILITARY CIRCULAR OF 1812.

[A copy of the following circular, issued by Governor Harrison a few months after the battle of Tippecanoe, was found a few years since among some papers of John B. Dillon. Mr. Dillon, in his history of Indiana, makes use of extracts from it, but does not publish it in full.—*Editor.*]

GENERAL ORDERS FOR THE MILITIA.

HEADQUARTERS, VINCENNES,
16th April, 1812.

As the late murders upon the frontiers of this and the neighboring Territories leave us little to hope of our being able to avoid a war with the neighboring tribes of Indians, the commander-in-chief directs that the colonels and other commandants of corps should take immediate measures to put their commands in the best possible state for active service. The field officers who command battalions will visit and critically inspect the several companies which compose them and make a report in detail of their situation, particularly noting the deficiencies in arms, ammunition and accoutrements, and such measures as the laws authorize must be immediately taken to remedy those deficiencies. The commander-in-chief informs the officers that the most prompt obedience and the most unremitting attention to their duty will be required of them—the situation of the country calls for exertion on the part of the militia, and the officers must set the example to their men. If there are amongst them any who have accepted appointments for the mere motive of gratifying their vanity by the possession of a commission to which a title is annexed, without having the ability or the inclination to encounter arduous service, in justice to their country and to their own fame they should now retire and not stand in the way of those who are more able or more willing to encounter the fatigue and dangers incident to actual service in the Indian war. From the specimen which the commander-in-chief has had of their conduct in the field he has every reason to be proud of them, nor does he believe that there are better militia officers to be found anywhere those of Indiana, but in a crisis like the present they should be *all good*.

The field officers are to see that proper places are appointed

for the rendezvous of the companies upon an alarm or the appearance of danger, and will give orders relatively to the mode of their proceeding in such exigencies as the situation of the companies respectively call for. When mischief is done by the Indians in any of the settlements, they must be pursued, and the officer nearest to the spot, if the number of men under his command is not inferior to the supposed number of the enemy, is to commence it as soon as he can collect his men. If his force should be too small he is to send for aid to the next officer to him, and in the meantime take a position capable of being defended, or watch the motions of the enemy, as circumstances require. The pursuit must be conducted with vigor, and the officer commanding will be held responsible for making every exertion in his power to overtake the enemy. Upon his return, whether successful or not, a particular account of his proceedings must be transmitted to the commander-in-chief and a copy of it to the colonel of the regiment.

The commander-in-chief recommends it to the citizens on the frontiers of Knox county, from the Wabash eastwardly across the two branches of the White river, those on the northwest of the Wabash and those in the Driftwood settlement in Harrison, to erect blockaded houses or picketed forts. It will depend upon the disposition of the Delawares whether measures of this kind will be necessary or not upon the frontiers of Clark, Jefferson, Dearborn, Franklin or Wayne. Means will be taken to ascertain this as soon as possible and the result communicated. The Indians who profess to be friendly have been warned to keep clear of the settlements, and the commander-in-chief is far from wishing that the citizens should run any risk by admitting any Indians to come amongst them whose designs are in the least equivocal. He recommends, however, to those settlements which the Delawares have frequented as much forbearance as possible towards that tribe, because they have ever performed with punctuality and good faith their engagements with the United States, and as yet there is not the least reason to doubt their fidelity. It is also certain that if they should be forced to join the other tribes in war, from their intimate knowledge of the settlements upon the frontiers they would be enabled to do more mischief than any other tribe.

By the commander-in-chief.

A. HURST, *Aid-de-camp*.