

Chapter Five

Five Percent!

November 1861

Not much is recorded in official correspondences for November, 1861. The First Regiment foot companies were still working on the star fort at Fort Union. It is assumed that Companies E & H had returned to Fort Union by this time from their escort to Lemitar. Towards the end of October Captain Barrientos' Independent company had been mustered out after three months service and apparently he really wanted a new one badly, so he began recruiting at once. On the first of November he reported from the Manzano area, "As of now I have thirty-three men in my company and expect to fill it up this week. I will then leave promptly for Albuquerque to receive your orders."¹ Captain Rafael Chacón's Company K had also been assigned to Manzano to search out some bandits who were terrorizing the area, and he noted Barrientos' recruiting techniques. "In Manzano I encountered Captain Barrientos, who was there recruiting his company in a very original manner; it was nothing less than obliging the men to enlist by means of force."² Obviously the idea to recruit in this manner was quite foreign to him. Captain Juan José Herrera, (Co. D, 4th Regiment) who had also been sent there for the same purpose as Chacón apparently was not too diligent in the task. Chacón captured the outlaws and returned to Albuquerque with the prisoners.

In the eastern and mid-western United States the fighting thus far consisted of small sporadic skirmishes, the most notable of which was Ball's Bluff on October 21. Although it was a small conflict it was a spectacular Union defeat. It received great publicity because a Congressman who had volunteered was killed. President Lincoln wept while Congress fumed with rage. They responded by creating the Joint Committee on the Conduct of the War to oversee further Union efforts. The next battle of note was the Battle of Belmont on November 7. Brigadier General Ulysses S. Grant loaded his Union brigade on steamboats and sailed to Belmont, Missouri, where he landed his troops and routed the Rebel garrison there. He destroyed large stores of Confederate supplies and withdrew just as a counterattack was being organized. During the fighting the Confederates lost twice as many men as the Union. Finally, there was a little piece of good news.

In New Mexico, however, things were still watchful. At Fort Union, Lt. Col. Chaves of the 1st NMVI was supervising the regiment's work on the Field Works and was posed with a particular problem. In October, Ruperto Burgoquez, musician of Company C, had been promoted to Principal Musician. Carson had sent orders on Oct. 24th for him to report to the Regimental Headquarters at Albuquerque at the earliest opportunity. Chaves received these orders with some dismay and hastily sent a note to Carson on the 9th of November saying that he did not wish to comply.

I would respectfully state for the information of the Colonel Cmdg., that I have taken the liberty of detaining Mus. Burgoquez here; the reason for so doing this is the fact that there is nobody else in this battalion who can blow the calls; and our being still engaged upon the trenches and building Winter Quarters, it would be nearly an impossibility to get along without him. Hoping that my course in this matter will meet with the Colonel Commanding's approbation.³

¹ John P. Wilson, When the Texans Came (University of New Mexico Press, 2001), Barrientos to Canby 11/1/61, 170.

² Jacqueline Dorgan Meketa, Legacy of Honor: The Life of Rafael Chacón, a Nineteenth Century New Mexican (University of New Mexico Press, 1986), 135.

³ United States National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23, Chávez to Carson 11/9/61.

Unfortunately for Chaves and his battalion, Carson won out and Principal Musician Burgoquez left Fort Union on the 16th, bound for Albuquerque. This letter is interesting because it reveals the sorry state of the First Regiment's field music. However, this was a common occurrence at this early stage of the war; in fact, it was very remarkable to find a good volunteer field music corps. Since the Regulars had formal music schools of instruction at Governor's and Bedloe's Islands, NY, and Newport Barracks, KY, they did not have this problem. Neither did pre-existing Militia and National Guard units who already had their own music. It was most detrimental to the effectiveness of the volunteers that many recruiters all over the country thought that any boy who was too short to carry a musket could be a musician, without testing him for music ability or even inclination. Incidentally, none of the correspondences in this series indicate what instrument Burgoquez played, probably bugle but it could have been a fife.

Meanwhile, Paddy Graydon's Spy Company was now on guard at the Cañada Alamosa, as he had done previously with the remnant of Mink's Company. On the 10th of the month, Alexander McRae at Fort Craig felt it necessary to warn Graydon that he should be careful. "To avoid a misfortune similar to that which occurred to Captain Mink's Company, it will be necessary for you to observe the utmost vigilance, and to watch well not only the movements of the Texan Scouts, but those of the people at the Canada."⁴ But McRae's admonishment came too late. If anyone on this frontier would not be careful it was Graydon and Benjamin Roberts was obliged to inform Col. Canby of yet another altercation with a Texan patrol. "Captain Graydon's Spy Pickets fell upon a party of 13 Texans scouting some 30 miles from this Post on Friday; killed one of them and took one officer and two prisoners. They are now in confinement here." Roberts apparently considered this group to be outlaws rather than scouts and did not hold them as prisoners of war.⁵

In the middle of November Baylor was reporting to Confederate Headquarters in Texas the appearance of smallpox in the area.⁶ Possibly it had moved downriver. Continuing his investigation on the 2nd Volunteer regiment Canby had asked Roberts to compile a report on the officers. Roberts replied in the third person and stated that he had been ordered to do the investigation of the 2nd NMVI and that it was "in order to point out those who deserve advancement..." rather than censure. Then he proceeded to censure three officers. He recommended they should "be dropped." "Captains Román Baca [Co. E] and Gregorio Otero [Co. D] have been on recruiting service some six weeks, without securing a recruit...2nd Lieut. Mexicano, of Capt. Otero's Company D has been AWL [AWOL] and 2nd Lieut. [Diego] Sisnero [Co. H] is incapable of instruction." Then he praised two 'Anglo' officers 1st Lieut. William Brady, Adjutant of the regiment, and 1st Lt. C. E. Cooley Regimental Quartermaster, "are considered officers of merit and are recommended for promotion."⁷ His recommendations may or may not have been accurate but conditions being such as they were at this time these statements would seem to be inappropriate rather than instructive.

This was bad. The commander of the regiment was considered AWOL, the second in command was under official scrutiny, and several officers including company commanders were recommended for dismissal. If Col. Canby had been able to act on these recommendations, things might have become worse for the Second Regiment but, luckily for them, he had bigger problems at the moment. He was still plagued with the immense financial conditions that were crippling the Territory. To his credit he really was trying to put things into better straits. He and Major Donaldson, the District Quartermaster, looked everywhere to borrow money. Canby described his woes in a correspondence to the Paymaster-General on the 18th of November. "SIR:" he wrote, "The military operations in this department have for several months past been

⁴ Wilson, When the Texans Came, McRae to Graydon 11/10/61, 134.

⁵ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Roberts to Canby 11/10/61, 134.

⁶ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Baylor, 152.

⁷ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Roberts to Anderson 11/13/61, 135.

greatly embarrassed, and are now almost entirely paralyzed, by the want of funds in the pay department. The Regulars had not been paid for a year and the Volunteers had never been paid. He admitted that this had created “dissatisfaction” in both elements, and he reminded the Paymaster that he had reported this condition last June and continuously since then.⁸

Unfortunately, Canby wasn't the only one who was embarrassed; the Paymaster-General was just as embarrassed as he was since Confederate General Sterling Price had carried off the cash that was on its way to New Mexico.⁹ Sterling Price was the US commander who had put down the 1847 Taos Rebellion. Oddly enough, Confederate Colonel Baylor in Mesilla was fully aware of the loss of funds for the New Mexico Department and he wholeheartedly hoped that this would cause the New Mexican Volunteers to revolt against the Yankees. Meanwhile, ‘Yankee’ Edward Canby knew the Territory was in trouble. He borrowed money from private investors at 7.3 percent interest, using the personal credit of himself and two of his officers. He even had to make a personal guarantee for the interest. But even this was not enough. Then he started charging fines to suspected Confederate sympathizers. But it wasn't enough. A rumor began to circulate among the soldiers that the US Government was bankrupt. Canby believed, perhaps correctly, that these rumors were the work of “elements of discontent.”¹⁰ Canby had a lot to worry about. As he related above, the Regulars were not very happy and volunteering had dwindled, and worse, he felt the Volunteers already mustered would desert en masse. He was wrong. To be sure there were some deserters, and likely in the Regulars too, and yes, they were unhappy, but the main body of the Volunteer forces was loyal and remained intact.

On November 20th Captain Francisco Abréu and his Company C of the First Regiment were sent to northern New Mexico to build a road for a shorter cut-off for the supply trains coming from Fort Leavenworth. The road through Raton Pass was considered to be a safer route but there was concern that winter snows would close the pass, so it was decided to improve a cut-off trail that led more directly to Fort Union. Another company of volunteers was sent to begin work from the direction of Fort Wise but it was not identified.¹¹ This was possibly Martínez' Company D of the Third Regiment which seemed to be usually deployed in that area. The two Volunteer companies would work towards each other. It is not described how the road was improved.

Throughout the previous months the hostile natives had not stopped raiding the countryside almost at will and by this time Governor Connelly was becoming fairly frantic. In response to the many requests for aid, which were mostly being ignored at this time, Canby laid out a plan to placate the Governor. He hoped to cut out the raiders and send them to reservations and somehow to get the New Mexicans to stop contributing to the vicious cycle of raiding and counter-raiding as well.¹² This seems to have placated Connelly for a while.

On November 26th Lt. Col. Francisco Chaves of the 1st Regiment protested the treatment that the Volunteers were receiving at Fort Union and no doubt everywhere else. His complaints echoed those of Captain Martínez. Part of his complaint was that the quarters assigned to the volunteer officers were “unfit for any officer or gentleman to occupy.” He also charged that the Volunteers had been harassed with disrespect and “insulting language.”¹³ Soon, on November 26, Chaves also filed a complaint against discrimination. He stated that the New Mexicans had been “slighted in every respect.” Chapman responded that “they not been slighted in any respect

⁸ The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Canby to Paymaster-General 11/18/61.

⁹ Chris Emmett, Fort Union and the Winning of the Southwest, University of Oklahoma, 1965, 250.

¹⁰ Emmett, Fort Union, 250.

¹¹ National Park Service, Fort Union, Chapter Five. Fort Union and the Army in New Mexico During the Civil War, www.santafetrailresearch.com/fort-union-nm/fu-oliva-5a.html

¹² Official Records, Canby to Connelly 11/22/61.

¹³ NPS, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

whatever,” and added that the Volunteers “of your command have never been so well fed, clothed and quartered as at present, and never will be again after they have left the Service of the U. States.” Canby threw another log on the fire when he voiced his opinion that if Volunteer officers “enter the service with the expectation of carrying with them the luxuries, or even the comforts of the home, it is an idea of which they cannot too soon divest themselves.”¹⁴

Of course, Lt. Col. Chaves was not simply talking about luxuries. The New Mexicans were used to a very hard life, especially when on the trail. Even at best, life on the frontier was not easy. Chaves was an educated man; he had been schooled in the east, at St. Louis and New York, and knew the difference between good social treatment and bad. He was concerned about his men and he was basically talking about racial discrimination. But neither Chapman nor Canby ever admitted that. There was an investigation of sorts but no discrimination was found. Even so, not forgetting to remind Chaves that most of the troops would be wintering in tents, Canby ordered Chapman to issue mattresses to the Volunteers.¹⁵ On November 27th a forty-wagon supply train rolled into Fort Union. It was loaded with clothing, camp and garrison equipment, and ordnance.¹⁶ The uniforms for the remaining Volunteer regiments had arrived. New clothing, shoes and camp equipment would greatly help the comfort of the Volunteers.



J. Francisco Chaves, Lt. Col., 1st NMVI

Even as the supply trains were arriving another critical shortage was becoming obvious. Late in November Captain Rafael Chacón wrote a letter to Col. Christopher Carson requesting replacement horses, “My horses are in a dying condition from a want of protection from the inclemency of the weather and from starvation.”¹⁷ The Volunteer’s horses could not be stabled in inclement weather and by starvation Chacón is referring to the fact that the Regulars would not give the Volunteers fodder or forage for their horses even when it was amply available. It is difficult to understand why Canby would allow his mounted forces to be crippled that way. The Volunteers must have reacted vociferously to this treatment but were powerless to change it.

On the 28th of November, Captain Chacón was ordered by Col. Carson to lead 70 men to Mesa Prieta which was considered to be off limits to the Navajos. He was accompanied by Lieutenants Antonio Gallegos of Co. I, 1st Regiment, and Pancho Griego, possibly Francisco Griego of Co. H, 3rd Regiment, and details of their men. Because of the condition or loss of many of the horses the Volunteers were forced to assemble parts of companies in order to put together a decent mounted force. As they had done for the past few months (and centuries past) Navajo raiders were using camps close to New Mexican settlements as bases from which to launch their raids. One raiding party that passed near Corrales with stolen horses was believed to be based at Mesa Prieta. Under treaty the Navajo were required to remain west of Fort

¹⁴ Emmett, Fort Union, 250-251.

¹⁵ National Park Service, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

¹⁶ National Park Service, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

¹⁷ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 134-135.

Fauntleroy. Chacón's orders were to send peaceful natives back to Navajo country and to kill or capture raiders if caught, except for women and children. Chacón's column went to Prieta Mesa but the raiders had fled so he followed their tracks as far as Ojo de San Miguel where the tracks were lost. Eventually a trail was found and Chacón followed it to Zia Pueblo. Some Navajos were hiding in some houses there. Through an interpreter Chacón ordered them to come out. There was no reply, so with his men surrounding the houses, he and his cousins, the Velardes, broke the doors down and went in. There was a brief fight in which Chacón was very nearly killed. The surviving natives surrendered.¹⁸

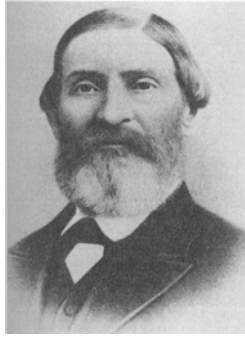
December 1861

On the first of December Col. Canby reported to Headquarters in St. Louis that the only change in the situation in New Mexico was that the Indian attacks had become worse - now New Mexico was beset on all sides by the Navajos (from the west), Mescalero Apaches (from the southeast and east), Kiowas, and Comanches (from the north and northeast). He also noted that his army still greatly lacked supplies. He stated that the consequences caused by the Ladrona raiders usually fell upon the peaceful Navajos. The New Mexicans sometimes perpetrated injuries to the Navahos also for the purpose of plunder, thus complicating the situation. "These acts are not restrained by the moral sense of the community, and so long as these marauders find a ready sale for their plunder and for their captives, it will be impossible to prevent these depredations and the consequent retaliations by the Indians." Canby hinted at the not too distant future when he wrote that the only solution for the Natives would be, "absolute extermination or their removal and colonization at points so remote from the settlements as to isolate them entirely from the inhabitants of the Territory."¹⁹ He was right. The vicious cycle had gone on for centuries and there was no good solution. The New Mexicans had never had the option of implementing either of Canby's plans and probably wouldn't have if they could. When they weren't on the warpath the Natives were good trade partners and at least one Spanish attempt to establish hostiles on a reservation in the 1700s was a deplorable failure. Unfortunately, Canby's words turned out to be all too prophetic, particularly for the Navajos and Mescaleros.

On the 4th of December, Lt. Col. Manuel Chaves of the Second Regiment was formally relieved of his command at Fort Fauntleroy and sent to Albuquerque to be placed under house arrest by Colonel Carson. Carson offered him a choice to stay at his (Chaves') own home instead, but under the same conditions. No charges had yet been preferred. Perhaps Canby was not finished with his investigation. It seems that, perceiving no pardon in sight, Col. Manuel Pino had no choice but to promote Major Jesús M. Baca y Salazar to Lt. Colonel and Captain Manuel D. Pino to Major. Rafael Ortiz y Chaves was then promoted in his place from 1st Lieutenant to Captain of Company A. Captain Andrew W. Evans of the 6th US Cavalry took over command of the three companies of the Second Regiment at the Fort.

¹⁸ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 137-138.

¹⁹ Official Records, Canby to HQ 12/1/61.



Manual A. Chaves, Lt. Colonel, 2nd NMVI

At this time Captain Juan Barrientos, whose command was now designated as Company A of the 5th Volunteer Regiment, was guarding the crossing of the river south of Fort Craig across from the town of Paraje.²⁰ Paraje was located seven miles south of Fort Craig on the east side of the river. The next day, on the 6th, Col. Carson reported that twenty locals in the Fort Stanton area had gone to the fort to see about the crops they had abandoned. They had a fight with Indians and then they saw a party of Texans which left as soon as they were seen.²¹ Most likely they were another Texan scout.

On the 8th of December Canby wrote to Headquarters in Washington DC regarding the situation of his troops. This letter is significant because he describes the arms and equipment of the different forces under his command. First, he was very upbeat about his Regulars, saying “The regular troops are in excellent condition.” They needed some replacements and officers to fill the gaps in the ranks but they were still “well-instructed and disciplined, zealous and loyal.” The Volunteers however, were another matter. He cited that they were “improving slowly,” and were “not efficient,” and never would be “in any reasonable period.” They lacked self-confidence, couldn’t speak English, and did not possess the ability to learn. They were, however, valuable as auxiliaries of “regular troops or volunteers of American origin.” He desperately wanted more Americans in his command. The Regular infantry units were armed with the newest .58 caliber Springfield rifle muskets and the cavalry with the Harper’s Ferry Rifle and Colt’s Navy Pistol. Some had Maynard Carbines and a few carried Colt revolving rifles as an experiment. The Volunteer infantry were issued the .69 rifle muskets some of 1842 and some older. The mounted Volunteer riflemen had older Harper’s Ferry models of .54 and .58 calibers, the musketoon. Some companies had been issued old .69 smoothbores that still had not been re-bored into rifle-muskets. “These arms are all in serviceable condition,” he wrote, “but the troops are imperfectly equipped, as there is a great deficiency of all classes of accouterments,” meaning their leather gear (cartridge boxes, straps, belts and cap pouches) was hodge-podge. The great deficiency meant that many a soldier carried his cartridges and caps in a haversack or pocket. The clothing of the Regulars was adequate and the clothing for two volunteer regiments had already been distributed but “It is reported to be inferior in quality.” The clothing for the remaining two regiments was reported to be in the vicinity of Fort Union.²²

Then Col. Canby proceeded to give the current estimates of the Confederate strength in Mesilla, adding that he thought they were very well armed. He also described that the horses and mules of his Department were not satisfactory for cavalry or draught use, being too light. He echoed the belief of the Union Cavalry officers that the New Mexico horses were not worth anything. This must be the reason the Volunteers were denied fodder wherever they went. Then Canby talked about subsistence supplies, saying that local beef was too expensive, but flour,

²⁰ Wilson, *When the Texans Came*, McRae to Barrientos 12/5/61, 136.

²¹ Wilson, *When the Texans Came*, Carson to Canby 12/6/61, 171.

²² *Official Records*, Canby to Washington DC 12/8/61.

beans and an inferior salt could be obtained, with only beans and salt being plentiful. Next he wrote about money. He described again the “embarrassments” he had experienced “from the want of coin.” Finally, he asked for troops from the east to be sent to New Mexico if and when the Regulars were to be withdrawn and he reiterated that, “The New Mexican volunteers, without the support of regular troops or of volunteers drawn from some other section of the country, cannot be relied on to resist an invasion of the country, if one is attempted.”

An invasion of the country, if one is attempted? It seems that Col. Canby did not consider the occupation of southern New Mexico an invasion and he really believed it was Confederate Territory. But he may have been aware of some incongruousness in his thinking because later, on the 14th of the month, he reported to Washington that he hoped to invade the Mesilla Valley. Still, the Mesilla Valley would be ‘invaded’ instead of ‘liberated.’ But regardless of how he perceived the situation, Canby remained characteristically passive. He also noted that the Department of New Mexico was still desperate for horses and mules. “Our operations are still greatly embarrassed by the want of transportation. The arrival of mules from the East in a few days will probably enable us to overcome this difficulty.”²³ In short, New Mexico needed just about everything except food. Again, on the 14th he stated, “The contractors for supplying horses for the regular and volunteer cavalry have failed entirely, in consequence of the disturbed condition of affairs on the Western frontier. New contracts have been made, and it is hoped that the contractors will prove more successful.”²⁴ He didn’t mention that he could have taken better care of the horses his troops already had. The lack of replacement horses would be almost as much of a problem as the lack of payroll.

About this time the First Regiment received two new recruits sent to them by Col. Canby. They were both from Colorado and had journeyed to Santa Fe to enlist. According to Canby the men were unsuited for soldiering except that they were very good musicians and he advised Carson to use them to create bands for the First and Second Volunteer Regiments. Carson was pleased. Music could entertain and inspire everyone, civilians and troops alike. He wrote a requisition for twelve brass instruments and the musicians themselves made some drums. But suddenly General Order #91 was received. It disallowed individual volunteer regiments to have their own bands. Only one per brigade was allowed now. Suddenly the two musicians were obsolete and Carson had to ask Canby, “Will you please advise me what I had better do with them?”²⁵ One has to wonder, though, why four New Mexico Regiments could not have been considered a brigade, and therefore could have had a band. These two musicians were 2nd Lt. Lucien B. Jewell who became the Band Leader for the First Regiment and Charles Hopping who was perhaps meant to be the Assistant Band Leader. Charles Hopping later served as a bugler for Company G in the 1st New Mexico Cavalry Regiment after the Confederate threat had passed.

On the 9th of December Fort Union received a new commander. Colonel Gabriel R. Paul. Paul had just been selected by Governor Connelly as Colonel for the new regiment, the Fourth Regiment New Mexico Mounted Volunteers. But apparently this action had not yet been ratified through Regular Army channels. The Fourth Regiment had actually begun recruiting in September at Fort Union. It had six companies totaling about 450 men: Company A - Captain Julian C. Shaw, Company B - Captain Julius, Company C - Captain Alonzo Adams (later Captain John Thompson), Company D - Captain Juan José Herrera, Company E - 1st Lt. George W. Cook, and Company F - 1st Lt. John Carmody. Carmody had transferred from the Third Regiment to the Fourth.

When Col. Paul arrived at Fort Union he immediately began drilling the Volunteers at Camp Cameron, the Volunteer Camp of Instruction near the field works, and he was not satisfied

²³ Official Records, Canby to HQ 12/8/61.

²⁴ Official Records, Canby to HQ 12/14/61.

²⁵ Marc Simmons, Kit Carson and His Three Wives (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, NM, 2003), page 115.

with what he saw. Apparently, the Volunteers didn't know 'hayfoot' from 'strawfoot,' or in this case, 'izquierda de derecha' (left from right), but they were hell at shoveling and construction. Col. Paul noted that while under Chapman's command the Volunteers had received very little time for instruction. This may explain why Canby had written earlier, "The volunteer troops are improving slowly in discipline and instruction." Realizing the need for it Paul immediately petitioned Canby to change that and even went ahead with drilling before he got approval.²⁶ Canby did approve and Paul put the political prisoners at the fort to work in order that the Volunteers could spend more time at drill. Actually, although the new fort was basically defensible, the finishing work would go on for six more months, until June, 1862.²⁷ Sometime prior to this, some Confederate spy must have viewed the structure because a description of the fort was printed in the Mesilla Times on December 12th, 1861, and it was described as, "one of the best pieces of engineering ever done in America."²⁸ It probably wasn't but it was darn good advertising especially in Confederate occupied territory. Work was still continuing on the defenses of Fort Craig also.

Except for Indian raids New Mexico remained quiet for the rest of December, but rumors continued to abound. The Texans were not able to begin their invasion and Canby had not mounted his counter-invasion, so the troops just watched and waited, and those not watching worked or drilled and waited. On the 22nd of December Captain Francisco Abréu's Company C, First Regiment, returned to Fort Union from their road building detail. He stated that they had made a very good road but it is not known if this road was ever used.²⁹ On the 23rd Captain Barrientos was ordered to relieve Graydon on watch in the south near Alamosa. Apparently, at this time the advanced camp was located at Fort Thorne.³⁰ But Graydon was not there. Without orders, he had made a scout south to El Paso. On the 25th Captain Lord of the 1st Dragoons (1st US Cavalry) reported that Graydon's Company had returned from their patrol. "Graydon has just arrived from El Paso. He left there on the night of the 23rd. He says he counted on the 22nd at Harts Mill 900 Mt. [mounted] Men just from San Antonio. 11 Companies, 3 of Lancers, and two of Negros."³¹ The reference to two companies of black troops is inexplicable, but one thing is sure. Paddy was a man of action who did not rely on rumors but rather investigated for himself the movements and strengths of the Texans. One can't help feeling that if Paddy Graydon had been in charge the Union Army would have been half-way to San Antonio, Texas, by now, and there would be hell to pay on the way.

Graydon's report must have energized Canby from his lethargy because on the next day he reported to Donaldson, the Department Quartermaster, "... I have ordered six companies of volunteers to be concentrated at Albuquerque as soon as possible, and can add two or three more if the news by the express should indicate its necessity. ...send an express to Fort Garland with the orders for the company from that place."³² Then he lapsed back into worrisome inaction. On the 28th Canby received more information of the Texans through Col. Roberts' spies in Mesilla. Canby relayed it immediately to Washington. The Texans in Mesilla had been augmented by 1,400 more troops. He had also heard that 2,000 Texans were proceeding up the Pecos River. "The first part of this information is no doubt mainly true," he wrote, "but the second I think doubtful, and circulated by the Texans for the purpose of dividing the force at this point." He

²⁶ National Park Service, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

²⁷ National Park Service, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

²⁸ National Park Service, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

²⁹ National Park Service, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

³⁰ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Roberts to Moore 12/23/61, 139.

³¹ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Lord to Fort Craig 12/25/61, 140.

³² Wilson, When the Texans Came, Canby to Donaldson 12/26/61, 141.

also described how he had beefed up his garrisons at Fort Union, Santa Fe, and Albuquerque though he did not specify where he had found the extra men.³³

By now everyone knew for sure that the Texan invasion of northern New Mexico was imminent, but it was still not known from which direction it would come. Col. Paul at Fort Union increased his defenses by having a well dug in preparation for a siege.³⁴ On the 30th Lt. Col. Roberts ordered that the small towns of Paraje and Alamosa, as well as the advanced camp, be evacuated. He directed that all the townspeople and livestock be sent north. Only Barrientos' company or part of it would remain on picket guard in the area.³⁵

On the 31st of December Canby finally received the report that listed the number of troops under his command and their locations. He had 4,752 men total. According to Governor Connelly's December report 3,500 of these men were volunteers, not counting militia and independent companies. This is quite plausible since the first three regiments had nearly 1,000 men each, and the last two easily had over 500 combined. In addition, the two activated militia divisions, the 1st & 3rd, and the many independent companies could easily mark more than 1,000 men, so this would mean that Canby had in excess of 4,500 New Mexicans in the ranks or ready to go at this time. Because the population of the Territory was about 90,000 people the total percentage of troops per capita was five percent. Since the highest percentage of troops per capita for the entire war in the eastern Union states was ten percent (claimed by two states), this is a very large percentage for the first year of the war, possibly one of the highest percentages in the Union. These figures agree with Canby's Field Abstract because he stated that he had about 1,200 Regulars (apparently he had picked up a couple hundred more from outlying locations), leaving him about 3,500 volunteers. These figures are also consistent with the 'Soldiers and Sailors' database online, which are slightly higher than this, but accounting for duplications for numerous name misspellings the database seems to agree with these figures. Later, the 2nd Militia Division waiting to be activated would add another 500 men to the above figures, making the Nation Guard units in excess of 1,500 men, and bringing the total of New Mexicans to 5,000.

That same day, on the 31st of December Col. Carson sent a warning to Major Luis Baca of the 3rd Regiment to keep a vigilant watch in his sector as a Texan force was expected in that area at any time. This probably refers to the rumor that 2,000 Texans were marching toward Fort Stanton. Major Baca was commander of the advance guard in the Manzano/Abo Pass area at this time.³⁶ Carson was making preparations for a Texan incursion from the east. If they were coming from Fort Stanton there were only two mountain passes they could use, Tijeras Canyon east of Albuquerque (it was known as Carnue or Carnuel Canyon at this time), or Abo Pass east of Socorro. Col. Carson informed Nicodemus, the acting adjutant at Fort Craig, of his plans. If the Texans approached, he would proceed to the mountain range to the east for at least two or three days. He would "make them fight their way through every mountain pass, and over every inch of ground that I can make tenable for a moment, and the country is well adapted for this kind of fighting." He hoped to be reinforced by the rest of his regiment still posted at Fort Union. He would arm every man that he could in the vicinity of Albuquerque but he noted that his stores were "sadly deficient in ammunition" if a drawn out battle should occur. Even with the men he already commanded "I have no fear for the result," since he believed he could raise another thousand men from nearby. On another topic he noted that a corporal of Captain Deus' Company was wounded in the neck while returning as an escort from Cubero and also that Captain Pino had arrived from that place with 146 men of Companies A & C of the 2nd Regiment Volunteers.³⁷

³³ Official Records, Canby to Washington 12/28/61.

³⁴ National Park Service, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

³⁵ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Roberts to Lord 12/30/61, 142.

³⁶ Official Records, Carson to Baca 12/31/61.

³⁷ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Carson to Nicodemus 12/31/61, 173.

The significance of this letter is that Kit Carson did not ask for Regulars to reinforce him, instead he asks only for ammunition and the remainder of his own regiment, Lt. Col. Chaves' Battalion at Fort Union, to join him at Albuquerque. If Carson had no faith in the Volunteers as suggested earlier by Captain Shoemaker's letter, surely he would have asked for Regulars instead; but he didn't. Carson's confidence in himself, the Volunteers, and the populace in general is in direct contrast with almost all of the Federal Regular officers. He didn't panic and retreat as Roberts had done at Stanton. He wasn't paralyzed as Lynde had been in the south or lethargic as Canby was now. He simply planned for defense and he would act on it. Most of the volunteer officers had the same attitude as Carson and they had the same confidence in themselves and their men. The wounded man mentioned above was Corporal Avita. He was in charge of a detachment from Company I that was sent to Fort Fauntleroy escorting a supply train. They were attacked by a Navajo party and he was wounded by an arrow in the throat. One of the natives was killed in the fight.³⁸ The 2nd Regiment was being drawn in to garrison the river towns along the Rio Grande and the Militia Divisions were taking more of the responsibilities previously held by the volunteers. Fort Fauntleroy was still in the process of abandonment with the supplies being secured in storehouses at Cubero. Militia companies of the First and Third Divisions were sent activated to relieve them. The Union forces were slowly shifting south. Unfortunately the withdrawal of troops from Fauntleroy encouraged the Navajos to believe they had forced the army to retreat, and they responded with a wave of Navajo attacks on homes and ranches.³⁹

January 1862

In another spurt of excitement, on the 1st of January, Col. Canby sent a correspondence to Governor Connelly requesting that he activate the remaining State Militia. "There appears to be but little doubt that a considerable force (estimated at 1,200 men, with seven pieces of artillery) is now on the march to this place," he wrote, adding that the rumor of Texans on the Pecos was probably not valid. He wanted all the militia ready to go "when called upon," and that all citizens should "watch the roads" to prevent scouts or raiders from slipping by unnoticed. He advised Connelly that sections of the Militia should be ready to defend Albuquerque or Santa Fe and caches of arms that should also be held in readiness. Local merchants would be refunded by the Army if their stores should be required.⁴⁰

Then Canby quickly wrote another letter, again asking Governor Gilpin of Colorado to send Colorado troops to garrison forts Garland and Wise so he could draw those troops into New Mexico.⁴¹ In response to the rumor mill Colonel Carson called in the last Volunteer company still posted at Fort Fauntleroy, Ricardo Branch's Company B, Third Regiment, and warned the pickets at Abo Pass to be vigilant. Major Luis Baca, also of the 3rd Volunteer Regiment, commanding those pickets had just reported that Agent Labadi with seventy men was scouting the Rio Bonito area and Captain Juan Sarracino, Company G, 3rd Volunteers, was scouting the Pecos River. Baca assured Carson that, "it will be impossible for a force to approach that country without being discovered."⁴² Canby approved of Carson's actions.

At this time the Federals believed that Confederate demonstrations south of Fort Craig were diversions meant to take attention away from the Fort Stanton area.⁴³ Canby let all commands know that he was prepared to move east from Fort Craig if necessary. He now suspected three routes on which the Texans could approach: up the Rio Grande from Mesilla, up the Pecos from Fort Stanton, and up the Canadian River from Texas (pretty much the same routes

³⁸ United States National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

³⁹ El Malpais: In the land of Frozen Fires (Chapter 5), <http://nps.gov/archive/elma/hist/hist5.htm>

⁴⁰ Official Records, Canby to Connelly 1/1/62.

⁴¹ Official Records, Canby to Gilpin 1/1/62.

⁴² Wilson, When the Texans Came, Carson to Nicodemus 1/2/62, 204.

⁴³ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Nicodemus to Carson 1/3/62, 205.

he had always suspected). Suddenly, on the 2nd of January, a large group of Texans made a move on the Union advanced camp at Cañada Alamosa, but it was fruitless and they withdrew. From Fort Craig Canby reported to Donaldson in Santa Fe that, “The object appears to have been the surprise of the outposts at that point.” From spies in Mesilla the Union pickets knew they were coming and were able to fall back, out of harm’s reach. Then he outlined his planned response. But, confusingly, he shifted his focus from the raid on Cañada Alamosa to the reputed Texans on the Pecos, then he shifted back again to the Rio Grande, illustrating he still wasn’t sure of anything. He correctly guessed that the Texans had not mustered as many men as they had originally hoped and the movement up the Pecos was now unfeasible. He finally concluded that he needed a reserve force higher up the Rio Grande at Las Lunas or Peralta which could reinforce either direction.⁴⁴

Of course the Texan force advancing in the southeast was just another rumor, but the news of Texans at Alamosa was not. Canby was right to hesitate before moving east. He now suspected they might come from the south. A few days later Col. Roberts wrote to Canby, who had left Fort Craig for points north, that, Major Baca of 3rd Regiment had sent a message that there were no Rebels in the Fort Stanton area.⁴⁵ There was no attack from the east. On the 7th Canby wrote a letter to Col. Paul at Fort Union, detailing his current strategy. He now situated his Headquarters at Camp Connelly which was located at Polvadera, New Mexico. The Volunteer and Regular companies were spread out among the river towns so that guarding the supply trains and watching for marauding Indians would be facilitated. Canby intended to collect a cadre of 500 Regulars to reinforce any point which might be threatened. It is not mentioned very much in the Official Records but work was still continuing on fortifying Fort Craig. Most of this work was being done by companies of the 2nd Regiment and possibly some militia units. Canby wrote, “The garrison at Fort Craig consists of seventeen companies, of which six are regulars and nine volunteers, having a reasonable degree of instruction and discipline; a sufficient force in my judgment to hold the post against any force that can be brought against it.” The last two companies probably were independent or militia companies. Canby now felt that the Confederates could not muster more than 2,000 men and he could easily assemble his own men in time to meet them. He directed all units to be ready to move on a moments notice. He stated he had asked Governor Connelly to have the militia ready for any emergency.⁴⁶ On the same day Canby sent word to Major Donaldson at Santa Fe that he had told Governor Connelly it was not necessary to activate the militia at this time.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, Captain Lord of the 1st US Cavalry made a scout in force to the Canada Alamosa and reported no Texans there.⁴⁸

A few days later, Canby reported to Washington. As of the 6th of January he had relocated his Headquarters to Belen with a reserve force of three companies of Regular cavalry and three of infantry. He felt that Belen was a better location from which to respond to any of the three possible events. He could assemble about 1,500 men in twenty-four hours. All of the various mountain passes and roads were being watched and he would have advanced notice of any incursion. Fort Craig still contained six companies of Regulars, ten of Volunteers, two of Militia, and one of spies and guides, approximately 1,400 men. In addition, six more Volunteer companies could reach Fort Craig in twenty-four hours. Spies in Mesilla were reporting the enemy’s strength there at 2,100 men excluding two more regiments that were not present at Mesilla, thus he again believed the invasion would come by way of the Pecos.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Official Records, Canby to Donaldson 1/3/62.

⁴⁵ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Roberts to Canby 1/6/62, 174.

⁴⁶ Official Records, Canby to Paul 1/7/62.

⁴⁷ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Canby to Donaldson 1/7/62, 207.

⁴⁸ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Roberts to Canby 1/7/62, 208.

⁴⁹ Official Records, Canby to Washington DC 1/11/62.

Canby was quite nervous, moving his troops and his headquarters this way and that, responding to every rumor as if the Texans could suddenly appear in his backyard without advanced notice – as if they didn't have vast terrain to cross first, and numerous pickets to spot them. The rumor of two more regiments had him believing that the Texans had as many men as he had. This made him incapable of implementing his 'invasion' plan. Also on the 11th, Captain Dodd and his Company B of Colorado Volunteers reached a town in northern New Mexico and one of his men, Private Alonzo Ickis, wrote in his diary on the state of affairs there. They had camped at "hozarqui" [Abiquiu?]. He noticed that the village, which was under martial law did not contain any men. "They are skulking over the mountains to keep out of sight of the Territorial pressman," he mused.⁵⁰ Perhaps the men of the village were hiding. It's possible that this village had already given many men to the Union ranks. Consider the fact that if all the men were enlisted into the Army no one would be left to protect the village from Indians. The Militia Divisions had been originally created for that purpose but now they were being directed against another threat – a threat that was not constantly at their doors - and the men were being forcibly rounded up and sent away to... where were these Texans anyway? They weren't near this village. Forced conscription must have appeared to have been a hostile act, detrimental to the community, not one that would save the Territory. The 1st Militia Division or elements of it were already on duty at Fort Union and the 3rd Division was also active. Only the 2nd Division and perhaps some independent companies had not been called out yet.

Meanwhile, Canby's forces attempted to remove any possible forage from the Confederates if they advanced. Col. Paul at Fort Union was ordered to destroy forage at Giddings Ranch in the east where Captain Pablo Martínez, Company H of the 3rd Volunteer Regiment, was currently stationed.⁵¹ Then Colonel Kit Carson received similar orders for the Fort Stanton area.⁵² But even with a Texan Army on the horizon internal problems would soon beset Canby and Kit Carson was the harbinger. On the next day, January 14th, he warned Canby about imminent trouble, not that Canby could do much about it. Carson had seen letters from the "States" for a Mr. S. Beuthner, stating that several bridges had been destroyed in Missouri, "and that the mails have in consequence been stopped," meaning that the expected payroll was not on the way, and furthermore, would not be arriving until next spring. Carson was worried. "If these reports as to the money are true, it will cause a great deal of dissatisfaction among our Volunteer troops, and I am afraid will produce serious trouble," he wrote.⁵³

Canby immediately wrote to Washington in a desperate attempt to stem disaster.

SIR: The last mail from the East brought information from private sources that the paymaster who was understood to be on his way to this country with funds for the payment of the troops has been detained at Fort Leavenworth, and that no funds would be sent out until spring. Whether this report be true or not, the effect of this circulation through the country at this time will be exceedingly unfortunate, and it is greatly to be apprehended that the volunteer forces already organized will melt away by desertion, and the people of New Mexico will be rendered still more apathetic than they now are, even if the disaffected of both classes are not stimulated into active opposition to the Government.

The Mexican people have no affection for the institutions of the United States; they have a strong, but hitherto restrained, hatred for the Americans as a race, and there are not wanting persons who, from the commencement of their troubles, have

⁵⁰ Nolie Mumey, Bloody Trails Along the Rio Grande (Old West Publishing Company, Denver, 1958), 1/11/62, 60.

⁵¹ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Donaldson to Canby 1/12/62, 209.

⁵² Wilson, When the Texans Came, Canby to Donaldson 1/13/62, 210.

⁵³ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Carson to Canby 1/14/62, 211.

secretly but industriously endeavored to keep alive all the elements of discontent and fan them into flames. The long-deferred payment of the volunteers has given so much plausibility and coloring to their representation as to have produced a marked and pernicious influence upon these ignorant and impulsive people.

*Without crediting these reports, I think it proper to state that, unless measures are taken at an early period to remove these causes of dissatisfaction, the consequences will be in the highest degree injurious to the interests of the Government.*⁵⁴

But Canby's efforts would do no good. The word was out and in a few days it would spread to every military post in the Territory. If the US Army had only missed a couple of payrolls things would have been all right, but the word that was going out now was that the Government never intended to pay them. At this point it was a very difficult rumor to counter. If the Government had been paying New Mexican volunteers throughout the 1850s it would have been easy for them to believe that the mails had been stopped by circumstance not intention (in fact, the 1855 volunteers had not been paid until 1859). This felt like a betrayal. As the man said, "Give them something to rally to, and let them know that they have a Government worthy of their support, and they will teach their would-be masters a lesson." They had sworn service to a government whose agents denigrated them, did not equip or clothe them properly, did not feed their horses, and allowed hostiles to attack their villages with impunity. The duty was harsh and unusual (the digging of forts); and the language of their superiors was foreign and their customs were strange. At this point enlistment must have looked more like slavery than freedom – and men who had not properly volunteered did not need much convincing of that. It had become a matter of trust.

The next day Col. Paul's scouts out on the eastern plains still reported no sign of Texans.⁵⁵ In other locations, at points west and south, the Navajos were still on the warpath, especially in the southern part of the Territory. Nicodemus, the Adjutant-General in Santa Fe wrote to the Navajo Agent, John Ward at Cebolleta near Fort Fauntleroy asking him to gain as much information as he could about the war parties.⁵⁶ He wanted information, not a response. Then the thing Canby feared the most occurred – a mutiny. From Camp Connelly at Polvadera Captain Samuel Archer of the 5th US Infantry sent a report of "a serious occurrence" to Nicodemus at Canby's HQ at Belen. Thirty men of two companies of the 2nd Volunteer Regiment that were returning to their base at Socorro had mutinied. Major Manuel D. Pino, also of the 2nd Regiment had ordered them to return to Fort Craig, an order which they had refused, "stating they had not been paid or clad as they had been promised." Instead the thirty men had absconded towards the mountains. Colonel Miguel E. Pino, commanding the 2nd Regiment, was on his way to Socorro.⁵⁷

On the same day, there was another near mutiny staged at Fort Union in one of the militia companies. But it was quickly subdued by Col. Paul. He thought the officers were to blame though he could not get proof, so he discharged them, reduced the NCOs, and put the enlisted men on hard labor until evening. Then he distributed "all the enlisted men among the other companies of Militia at the post."⁵⁸ The unit is not identified in the correspondence but this could have been Company C of the 1st Militia Division, since that company appears to have been disbanded with the men going to other companies. The militia men had never been promised to be "paid or clad" at all, but perhaps their feelings were similar to the other mutineers. Again, it was a matter of trust.

⁵⁴ Official Records, Canby to Washington 1/13/62.

⁵⁵ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Paul to Donaldson 1/14/62, 211.

⁵⁶ Official Records, Nicodemus to Ward 1/15/62.

⁵⁷ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Archer to Nicodemus 1/16/62, 212.

⁵⁸ NPS, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

For some reason both transfers of Lt. Col. Benjamin Roberts and Lt. Col. Gabriel Paul from the Regulars to the Volunteers were still not official in Canby's mind. Perhaps he needed confirmation from Headquarters in Saint Louis. But most likely it was because he was desperately short of Regular officers. He turned them down, also citing, "Besides this, the prejudice of the Mexican population towards the Americans is so great that if the field officers are taken altogether from the latter class it is to be apprehended that it will delay, if it does not defeat, the organization of these regiments. This is not, perhaps, a good military reason, but it is a necessity, from the character of the people we have to deal with." Canby added, "I have also instructed two or three of the most efficient volunteer officers now in the service that, if they would induce the men of their regiments to enter the service for three years, I would recommend them for commissions as field officers. Colonel Gallegos and Lieutenant-Colonel Valdez are among them, and until I can learn what these men are going to do, I could give no definite answer to your question, even if there were no other obstacles to a favorable answer."⁵⁹

It appears that to gain some loyalty from the natives, Canby was offering commissions as Regular Army officers to Col. Gallegos and Lt. Col. Valdez of the 3rd Regiment if they would convince their men to extend their enlistments. Since Gallegos and Valdez were already field officers of Volunteers, this must be what he means. If this is true, it is unprecedented. The US Army had never considered American 'Mexicans' as anything but support personnel, guides, and auxiliaries before this time. There had never been an official policy against Hispanics joining the Regular Army but it was effectively discouraged on a local level.⁶⁰ Even Col. Loring had offered commissions to the Hispanos before Canby did. As it would turn out, both Paul and Roberts would retain their new commissions, Paul as Colonel of the Fourth Volunteer Regiment and Roberts as Colonel of the Fifth. But this brings up another mystery. Why would Canby start a fifth volunteer regiment when the fourth had not filled up yet? It only had six companies and Roberts' two companies of the Fifth should have been included in the Fourth. There is one possible reason to start a new regiment – so that Canby could make his friend Roberts a full Colonel – but this cannot be known for sure. One of the most striking things about the Union forces in New Mexico was the hodge-podge collection of mounted and foot volunteers, militia, and myriad independent companies. It must have been an organizational and logistical nightmare to control. To be sure, the Regulars were used to having their companies dispersed, and perhaps they continued it by habit, but during the present crisis it must have been a difficulty.

On the 15th of January Confederate General Henry Hopkins Sibley arrived in Mesilla to take command of the Army of New Mexico, as the Texan force would be called. On the 16th Dodd's Colorado Company reached Santa Fe where they were issued new clothing. Private Ickis wrote: "In Santa Fe NM...Have received our uniforms...Blue frock coat, good...Blue pants, poor...Overcoat blue, good...Forage cap... Hat and plume...Draw blankets, shoes, and blouse and shirt...Our company looks better since we got the regs on [regulation clothing]."⁶¹ If there was a shortage of clothing for the 2nd NM Volunteers, there certainly was none for the Coloradans, and since there was no mention of poor quality, it must have come from Federal store. Meanwhile Canby had to deal with the mutineers who said "they had not been paid or clad as they had been promised." On the next day, the 17th, he wrote to Donaldson, his Chief Quartermaster in Santa Fe regarding the "mutiny" in the 2nd Regiment and the militia's refusal to do guard duty at Fort Union. "The men allege that they have not been paid and clothed as they were promised!!" he continued.⁶²

What Canby means by his remark about the men's allegations is puzzling. No one had been paid as of yet so that part was true. But had the men of these two companies been clothed as

⁵⁹ Official Records, Canby to Paul 1/15-16/62.

⁶⁰ National Park Service, Fort Union: Chapter Five.

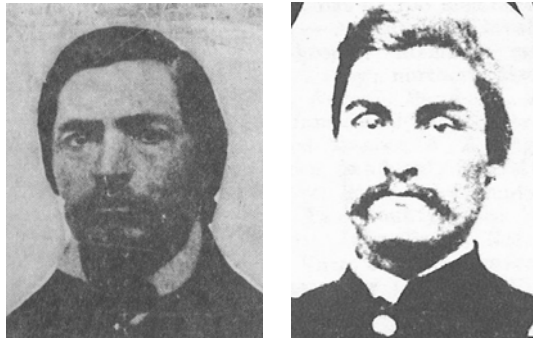
⁶¹ Mumey, Bloody Trails, 1/16/62, 15-16.

⁶² Wilson, When the Texans Came, Canby to Donaldson 1/17/62, 213.

promised - or not? Canby had mentioned earlier that their clothing was “inferior in quality” and they were “imperfectly equipped.” What is clear, however, is that the 2nd Regiment was not helping its image in the minds of the Federals. It was one more strike against them; proof to the Regulars that they would not fight well and taking their cue from Canby, the Regulars desperately wanted to believe it. New Mexico is quite cold in the winter, especially if one must sleep on the ground. It has already been established that the newer companies did not have proper camp equipage, tents, cooking pots, etc. Neither were blankets ever mentioned. Canteens are described as being scarce. And no one has mentioned shoes. So the highest probability is that the volunteers were correct that they had not been clothed as promised – especially in the unpopular 2nd Regiment.

In addition, those companies that had already received uniforms that would not “withstand long wearing” back in September must have been almost in tatters by now. Unless the men received new clothing they would have had to rely on patchwork repairs or civilian replacement clothing. It’s not likely that they ever did receive additional clothing because at this time First Regiment captains were reporting, “Every man on the roll owes for one complete set of clothing...”⁶³ Back East when the Volunteer clothing wore out they always got new ones (eventually). Responding to the crisis Canby quickly sent orders to Col. Pino at the 2nd Regimental Headquarters at Polvadera, reiterating the alleged complaint that “that they have not been paid and clothed as they were promised.” Then he added, “Without stopping to inquire into the correctness of these complaints,” he demanded immediate suppression of the “serious revolt.” Use of excessive force was approved. Mysteriously, Canby added, “Until this is accomplished, no concession or compromise can for a moment be entertained.” Canby also urged Pino to perform an investigation to discover who were the “ringleaders of the revolt.” He also offered additional support if required.⁶⁴

On the same day, along with companies A (Gonzales’) & D (Espinosa’s) of the First Volunteer Regiment, J. Francisco Chaves arrived at Los Lunas as commander of that section of river towns and he promptly received orders to pursue the mutineers. He responded quickly, “I will immediately send out a company of men under the command of Capt. Espinosa [Co. D] & Lt. D. Montoya [Co. I], both of the 1st R.N.M. Vols., and the instruction which I received in your communication will be obeyed to the letter.”⁶⁵ Apparently, a section of Company I (Deus’ Company) was already there, possibly on escort duty.



L-R: Captain Julian Espinosa Co. D, 2nd Lt. Donaciano Montoya Co. I, 1st Regiment

Col Roberts at Fort Craig thought it was time to begin the evacuation of families in the no man’s land between Fort Craig and Mesilla (again). There were no large populations there at this

⁶³ United States National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23 & 25.

⁶⁴ Official Records, Nicodemus to Pino 1/17/62.

⁶⁵ Wilson, When the Texans Came, J. F. Chaves to Nicodemus 1/17/62, 214.

time and they could be accommodated further north above Fort Craig⁶⁶ On the 19th, Canby wrote to Donaldson in Santa Fe that the mutineers were still at large. An officer of the 2nd Regiment had failed to capture them and the two companies sent by Lt. Col. J. Francisco Chaves were hunting them. He stated that he had sent two cavalry companies of Regulars out also and that they would be caught if the mutineers stayed in a bunch.⁶⁷ That same day a New Mexican named Juan C. Armijo, a private citizen throwing a little more fuel on the fire, wrote to Canby, “There is a great sensation among the people, caused by the delay of funds from the States to pay the expenses of the government, especially the volunteers.”⁶⁸

Also on the 20th Captain Santiago Hubbell wrote a letter similar to Rafael Chacón’s in which he described the problems that the mounted Volunteers in general were experiencing. “The volunteers do all the escorting with these horses untill [sic] by escorting and having no forage they have lost allmost [sic] all or have disabled them and it is a general expressed opinion [sic] that a volunteers horse dos [sic] not want more than half-feed to do all the work.”⁶⁹

But Col. Canby was worried about more than just horses. At this point he and other Regular officers were very much afraid that the revolt would spread throughout the entire Volunteer command and might even spread among the civilian population. Things may have looked as if Confederate Col. Baylor might get his wish and the New Mexicans would desert the Union altogether. Canby wrote to Donaldson in Santa Fe, “There is a good deal of excitement in the reputable Mexican population of this part of the country, growing out of the hearing of a pronunciamiento [proclamation] on the part of the militia and volunteers.” But Canby, attempting to spread calm among his officers, indicated that as long as the Regulars were close by they would not openly revolt and he wrote that he had peppered the volunteers with Anglos which would also help against outright mutiny.⁷⁰ If the Hispanos had truly decided to revolt Canby would need a lot more ‘pepper’ than that and he seems to have forgotten that horses also were part of the problem. No doubt remembering that the Militia had defied him before, yet keeping a cool head, Canby described the situation to Headquarters in Washington D.C. giving them an ‘I told you so’ regarding the postponement of the payroll. “The news by that mail was communicated to the Mexican population and volunteers with almost telegraphic rapidity,” he wrote, “and the first result was a revolt in one of the companies of volunteers (militia) at Fort Union, and in two companies of the Second Regiment Volunteers at Camp Connelly...” He was now calling the “mutiny” a “revolt.” Colonel Paul had put a stop to it, he reported. But the second instance, “was not so easily managed.”⁷¹

Captain Aragon of the 3rd Militia Division, now in command at Cubero, reported that Captain Espinosa and Lt. Montoya of the First Volunteer Regiment had passed through the town on the trail of the mutineers on the 20th of January. They had left the same night for “Savolleta” (Cebolleta) along with Lieutenant José María Sanchez and twenty men of Company B, 2nd Regiment, “and one piece of artillery...”⁷² Aragon had taken over command of the Post from Captain A. W. Evans of the 6th US Cavalry on the previous 17th. Evans had been assigned to transfer supplies from Fort Lyon (Fautleroy) to storage at the depot in Cubero and now the work was done. Still on the 20th Col. Canby received an urgent request from Governor Connelly asking again for protection for civilians against the ferocious Indian attacks. Canby wrote back, noting that several regiments of Texans were on the march to the north. Then he stated that the Indian attacks were less critical since they only attacked in small groups while the Texan force

⁶⁶ Wilson, When the Texans Came, 213.

⁶⁷ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Canby to Donaldson 1/19/62, 214.

⁶⁸ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Armijo 1/20/62, 214.

⁶⁹ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 139.

⁷⁰ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Canby to Donaldson 1/20/62, 215.

⁷¹ Official Records, Canby to Washington DC 1/20/62.

⁷² Wilson, When the Texans Came, Aragon 2/1/62, 221.

was very large, approximately 4,000 men. It would be unwise to spread out the Union troops to guard against the marauding savages. Then he said, sarcastically, that he would do something for the citizens as soon as Connelly raised a force of his own for that purpose. Canby would not be able to arm or clothe that force (neither could Connelly and Canby knew that). But he could give some ammunition and rations, “and it must be distinctly understood by all who engage in this service” that the Militia force would not be allowed to capture “plunder or captives.”⁷³ The incident with Manuel Chaves and his brother Román Baca was still very much in his mind. Incidentally, as an example of a personal consequences of the incessant Indian raids, when Manuel returned home from the war he found that Navajos had stolen all his livestock, leaving him impoverished.⁷⁴ Meanwhile Col. Roberts at Fort Craig sent Canby an express to inform him that two companies of Texans were seen by the Alcalde (mayor) at Canada Alamosa and he believed them to be the advanced guard for the Texan Army. Apparently not all of the citizens had evacuated yet. The Alcalde also reported that the Texans all wore white scarves on their left arms indicating they intended to fight at night. Then Roberts requested that all of the Regulars be sent to Fort Craig immediately because “I have lost confidence in the volunteers since you were here.”⁷⁵

Meanwhile, Kit Carson and other Volunteer officers were anxious that with problems in the ranks, Indian attacks, and approaching Texans, they needed all the leadership they could get. A request signed by many officers as well as Kit Carson himself was sent to Colonel Canby asking him to release Lt. Colonel Chaves from house arrest, for which charges had still not been preferred.

*The undersigned officers of the Volunteers and Militia of New Mexico would respectfully call your attention to the case of Lt. Col. Manuel Chaves, 2nd Regt. N. M. Vols., who has for two months been under arrest on unknown charges. For years past Lt. Col. Manuel Chaves has been well-known as a loyal citizen, an honorable man, and he has repeatedly proved himself a brave and efficient officer. In our opinion the cause in which we are all so deeply interested is every day losing the services of a man who is one of its strongest and ablest supporters.*⁷⁶

No one could have known at this time that it would be Chaves who would direct the final blow at the Battle of Glorieta Pass that would destroy the Confederate hopes in New Mexico; however, they sensed they were missing the vital services of a very capable New Mexican. Because of this request, Canby wrote a special order on the 21st of January releasing Chaves to serve with his regiment. Things were hot. The Volunteers were bristling with dissatisfaction and rumors of dissatisfaction, the citizens were very angry, and the Territorial Council was fuming. They passed a resolution to muster more men including Pueblo Indians to campaign against the hostile natives. Canby wrote to Donaldson, “I have learned by this evening’s mail that the Legislature is greatly exercised at the Indians depredations & is talking loudly about the sacrifices the people of New Mexico are making to sustain the government of the United States and fight an “imaginary evil when the real evil is at their doors &c &c.” Despite Canby’s ranting the Council did have a point. For seven months now, the Texan threat had seemed dormant. And even if they were massing troops to invade northern New Mexico, the hostile Native Americans had been raiding constantly with very little interference from the Army. To Canby, the Indian attacks were of lesser importance but to the citizens a whole lot of little attacks added up to a very big one. To

⁷³ Official Records, Canby to Connelly 1/21/62.

⁷⁴ Ralph Emerson Twitchell, Military Occupation of New Mexico (Arno Press, New York, 1976), 306-307.

⁷⁵ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Roberts to Canby 1/21/61, 217.

⁷⁶ Marc Simmons, The Little Lion of the Southwest (First Swallow Press/Ohio University Press, 1996), 173.

them Canby was concentrating on Texans that had not arrived yet while the Indians were definitely there. Continuing his letter, Canby also noted that, "Roberts is a good deal concerned about some apprehended trouble with his volunteers, but I do not think it will amount to anything."⁷⁷ He still had confidence in the Regulars. But the Regular Army officers were on edge everywhere, so were the Volunteers and the populace as well. The best thing that could happen to get everyone's mind off their other problems would have been a Texan invasion, but that wouldn't occur for almost another month.

Meanwhile, Captain Juan Barrientos, Company A, 5th Volunteer Regiment, asked Col. Canby for lances for his company. This must have been a refreshing change from the topic of the day. Lances had been the traditional main weapon for mounted troops in New Mexico since the earliest days and the older Volunteers would have been familiar with their use. Canby had seen Mexican lancers during the Mexican War and he thought it was a good idea.⁷⁸ Soon, lances would be in action but oddly enough, they would be Texan lances. Finally, Canby had had enough griping about the Indian attacks. Perhaps admitting that he had indeed committed some negligence he immediately wrote another letter to Donaldson stating that, "As soon as the present emergency has passed, I will turn all the available force into the Navajo Country, and in the mean time will do all that I can without disseminating our force to a dangerous extent."⁷⁹ It seems at this point that he really did want to address the Indian problem but he felt that he couldn't.

Amidst the general hysteria a humorous incident occurred in which Captain Rafael Chacón arrested his commanding officer, Colonel Kit Carson. Captain Chacón was Officer of the Day (OD) at the post in Albuquerque. The OD, Officer of the Day, was in charge of the post guard, and the guard music for a 24 hour period. Then another officer would take over as OD at the changing of the guard. At this time, the men on guard duty were particularly nervous and alert since the Texans, or even collaborators and spies, were expected anywhere at anytime. Chacón had received orders that day to arrest anyone out of their quarters after Tattoo. Tattoo is the evening signal for all soldiers to be in their quarters. Suddenly, one night, Chacón heard shots from the direction of Barelás which he refers to as the new plaza of Albuquerque. He formed his company and marched them towards the disturbance and found nothing except another crowd of soldiers who were also coming to investigate the shots. He arrested them all including Kit who was in the crowd. Kit protested that the commanding officer could not be arrested, but the Regular officers agreed that as OD Chacón had the authority. Chacón told them they were all under arrest but could remain in their quarters. He wrote in his memoirs, "Very early in the morning, Colonel Carson ordered his adjutant [Lt. Eben Everett] to call me in order to know if I was going to file charges. I went and told him, 'no' owing to the extraordinary circumstances of expecting the enemy at any moment. I later sent word to the lieutenant of the guard that the other officers were free, along with their men."⁸⁰ Imagine, Kit was saved by the Texans.

Finally, Col. Canby was sure the Texan force would come from the south. He had received intelligence on the disposition of the Texans massing for the invasion and on the 25th of January he sent to Washington a detailed description which he had obtained from spies. General Sibley was already with the army. Two Texan regiments, the 1st and 2nd were just north of la Mesilla. They had six pieces of artillery with them. They were in bad shape, subsistence-wise, and had had about 200 horses lost to raiders. According to the spy they carried lists of prominent capitalists of northern New Mexico that they could plunder.⁸¹

In response to this information Canby issued orders to collect as many Regulars, and Volunteers at Fort Craig as possible without leaving the rest of the Territory entirely defenseless.

⁷⁷ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Canby to Donaldson 1/21/62, 217.

⁷⁸ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Canby to Donaldson 1/22/62, 217.

⁷⁹ Wilson, When the Texans Came, Canby to Donaldson 1/22/62, 218.

⁸⁰ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 140.

⁸¹ Official Records, Canby to Washington 1/25/62.

Elements of the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Volunteer Regiments marched south in five columns. In addition, part of the First and all of the Second Militia Divisions would be sent there also. On the 23rd of January, Col. Carson, heading the Third Column, started for the assembly point with four companies of the 1st Regiment; B, C, I, & K. At Las Lunas they were joined by Lt. Col. Chaves with Companies A & D. On the 24th the Column arrived at Belen.⁸² The remaining companies of the Regiment, companies E, F, G, and H under Major Morrison, were ordered to leave their post at Fort Union and also march to Fort Craig. Carson and his men rested at Belen for two days. While there, it was discovered that Navajos had killed a group of Penitentes (a religious group). Three companies of the First including Chacón's were ordered to hunt them down. They brought along a couple of guns which were used quite effectively. The natives were caught on the aptly named Ladrone's Hill. A short battle ensued, a few natives were killed and the rest fled with the New Mexicans in pursuit. During the chase, the artillery set up on the hill and fired shots over Chacón's head, killing more natives at long range.⁸³ Apparently the artillery instruction they received at Fort Union had rendered them good service.

Meanwhile, Espinosa and Montoya were still hunting for the mutineers. Captain Francisco Aragon at Cubero reported that they had caught three of the deserters and passed through Fort Fauntleroy on the 25th of the month and were headed for Albuquerque. From there they would turn south to follow their Regiment to Fort Craig. Captain José D. Sena with his Company B of the 2nd Regiment also left Cubero that same day on his way to Fort Craig.⁸⁴ It's likely that Espinosa, Montoya, and Sena caught up with the Third Column sometime during the march.

Late in January Col. Canby wrote a reply to a request that urged him to move upon the Texan threat to the south. Even though troops already were on the move he wrote back a little peevishly, "...I wish it to be said distinctly that I will move when I get ready to move; and that will be when I know that the country behind me is secured from a revolutionary movement."⁸⁵ Contrary to his coolness otherwise, this letter indicates that he actually was in apprehension of an outright revolt. In his mind he feared that the Volunteers, Militia, and the general populace of New Mexico would rise up and rebel. Mentally, this put him in a very precarious state.

The Second Militia Division was finally activated on the 25th of January by order of Militia Major General O. P. Hovey. Canby had requested the activation of the remaining Militia units and Connelly responded by putting Hovey into action. In his diary Major Charles Wesche reports that he was to act as commander of the 2nd Division in place of Col. Nicolás Pino for the time being. Wesche ordered the Captains to collect their companies and march to the capital city. Meanwhile, the first columns marching south reached Fort Craig about the last week of the month and set up a tent encampment for Volunteers and Militia east of the fort near the river. It was called Camp Carson, presumably because Kit would be its commander. Col. Carson and the Third Column left Belen on the 26th, resuming their march south.

Still in Santa Fe on the 29th, Major Wesche began a collection of arms, horses, mules, and horse furniture. He also made requisitions for clothing and commissary supplies. However, they were denied clothing and almost everything else. The Territory still had no money and Governor Connelly had to order the Militia officers to purchase what they needed at their own expense "Forage, Fuel, Clothing, Camp and Garrison Equipage."⁸⁶ It was already understood that the militiamen would provide their own clothing, horses, mules and wagons but even this was a great hardship for many. Major Wesche incurred considerable personal expense by equipping his

⁸² United States National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

⁸³ Meketa, *Legacy of Honor*, 141.

⁸⁴ Wilson, *When the Texans Came*, Aragon 2/1/62, 221.

⁸⁵ *Official Records*, Canby to Donaldson, 1/25(?) /62.

⁸⁶ Ed. Jerry D. Thompson, "The Civil War Diary of Major Charles Emil Wesche," *Password* Vol. XXXIX, No. 1, 1994, 43.

own Division, for which he was never recompensed. The 2nd Division mustered ten small companies but one was eventually incorporated into two others. Records are sketchy but the Division seems to have had about 300 men and about 130 of them (in two companies) were infantry. Dodd's Company of Colorado Volunteers reached Fort Craig on the 31st of January. Private Alonzo Ickis wrote in his diary that they had arrived at Camp Carson. He noted that it was "a pretty camp" and that "Kit is here with his regiment of greasers," and in addition, "two companies of Pino's regiment of cerahoes [sic - carajos]."⁸⁷ Even though the Coloradans had just arrived in the Territory, it seems that the reputation of the 2nd Volunteer Regiment had already been engrained in their minds. This indicates that most of the Regulars had already pegged the 2nd NM Regiment for failure and the Coloradans had heard about it from them. Col. Canby's propaganda had worked. Speaking of the Colonel, he also arrived at the fort on the 31st.

Meanwhile, in California, Colonel James H. Carleton received orders from his superior, Brigadier General Wright, commander of the California Military District, to begin preparations to march to the relief of New Mexico.⁸⁸ James Carleton was a native of Eastport, Maine. He joined the Army as a young man and was made a 2nd Lt. of the 1st Dragoons in 1839. Just before the Mexican War he was promoted to 1st Lieutenant. Then he was promoted to Captain during the War and quickly brevetted to Major for meritorious conduct at the Battle of Buena Vista. Carleton became a full Major early in 1861 and then became a Colonel of the 1st California Volunteers on August 7th. His command was preparing to march to New Mexico.

February 1862

Col. Carson and the Third Column arrived at Fort Craig on the 1st day of February and settled in at Camp Carson.⁸⁹ While Carson's battalion was on its march south the company commanders had heard a rumor that the Army intended to remove the unfit horses of the Regiment without supplying replacements and without paying for the use of the horses as promised. This was a matter of deep concern to the Captains whose companies were mounted: Gonzales (A), Espinosa (D), Deus (I), and Chacón (K). On the 5th of February these four Captains wrote a letter to the Regimental Adjutant, Lt. Eben Everett, stating that it was Canby's intention at the time of their enlistment to keep the best horses in service at the agreed upon evaluation. Unfortunately for most of the men, that evaluation was only about half of what they had actually paid for their mounts. In addition, the unsuitable horses would be given no more forage for subsistence; nor would any compensation be given for their use - and half the horses had already been rejected by this time. Upon enlistment the men had been promised \$12 per month for the use of their horses plus forage and most of the men expected to pay their debts from that stipend. The letter also noted that the volunteers had constantly been refused forage for their mounts even when it was amply available, as noted earlier by Captains Chacón and Hubbell. They wrote, "We would ask, is it just that our men should lose their horses when the fault has been a want of forage when there has been plenty in the country, and no fault of their own?"⁹⁰ This action meant that captains who had financed horses for many of their men would become financially destitute.

On another level, one has to understand how New Mexicans felt about their horses in order to comprehend the magnitude of the situation. Unable to dispose of them, were they supposed to shoot the ones that had served them for long hard months? Fearing desertions and great dissatisfaction in the ranks, the Captains pleaded for assistance. Col. Carson wrote a letter seconding their plight, but he was a little more direct. "This course will bring much

⁸⁷ Mumey, Bloody Trails, 1/31/62, 68. The author was not sure of the meaning of the word carajos and thought it might have meant 'stupid ones.' It actually is a dirty word meaning 'pricks.'

⁸⁸ Official Records, Wright to Carleton 1/31/62.

⁸⁹ United States National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

⁹⁰ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 142.

dissatisfaction and I fear will result badly and I would respectfully but urgently ask the Department Commander that he will, if consistent with the interest of the service, change his present intention in this matter”⁹¹

On the same day Captain Aragon of the 3rd Militia Division, still at Cubero, sent a letter which demonstrates the plight of the Militia. They were running out of clothing and equipment and had no means at all to re-supply, while a nearby Sutler, the avaricious Dr. Kavanaugh, sat on his wares and demanded payment. Almost all of his men were barefoot and lacked clothing and “other necessary articles for life.” At this point Aragon thought he and his men were to be paid for their service and that clothing could be drawn against that. He did not know they wouldn’t be paid but apparently Kavanaugh knew it.⁹² Apparently, they had been lied to.

This was the same Francisco Aragon who had set the constables out to round up his company last summer. To be sure, morale could not have been good in his unit. Not only had some of them been pressed into service without even a promise of pay or an issue of clothing, but here they were in a frontier outpost in January without shoes or other much-needed items. It’s possible that some of the Volunteer companies were in similar straits, and especially the ones that mutinied. Given the attitude of the Federal Regulars towards them it’s conceivable that the Second Regiment did not receive all the supplies it needed. Perhaps Col. Carson’s reputation benefited the First Regiment in that regard and Canby also seemed to appreciate the Third Regiment to a degree; yet even aggressive mounted companies (notably Chacón’s and Hubbell’s) were being denied the forage they needed.

Two days later, on February 3rd, Major Wesche left Santa Fe with three companies of the 2nd Militia: Company A, foot, with Captain Antonio Sena, Company B, foot, commanded by Captain José E. Duran, and Company C, mounted, under Captain Ramon Sena y Rivera. Wesche was joined on the way by two more companies, Company D, commanded by Captain Velasquez, and Company E, led by José Merced Sánchez.⁹³ Ahead of them, Governor Connelly, with other Militia troops, probably of the First Division, arrived at Fort Craig on the 4th. On February 5th Major Morrison’s battalion of the First Volunteer Regiment also arrived at the fort.⁹⁴ The First Regiment was now completely assembled. On February 7th the Confederate forces finally began to move north with Col. Green’s Fifth Regiment and Teal’s artillery in the vanguard. That same day the rejected horses of the First Regiment were removed from the men and the acceptable mounts were allocated among two companies leaving the two other companies dismounted. Deus’ and Chacón’s companies were to remain mounted and Gonzales’ and Espinosa’s became foot companies. Eleven of Espinosa’s men deserted and, “Many years later Captain Espinosa’s grandson still spoke of the terrible financial drubbing his grandfather had experienced as a reward for his patriotism to his new government.”⁹⁵

As the remaining mounted companies, Chacón and Deus found themselves to be constantly on patrol, and with the Texans known to be advancing, nerves were very jittery. A humorous incident occurred that night when Chacón camped in the small abandoned village of Paraje, seven miles below Fort Craig on the east bank. Cats left behind by the inhabitants scared his guards and they instinctively fired into the wailing, promptly ending a supposed surprise attack.⁹⁶ The next day, on the 8th, Carson’s First Regiment passed in review at Fort Craig and Alonzo Ickis noted as much in his diary. The maneuvers of the New Mexicans must have met a

⁹¹ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 143.

⁹² Wilson, When the Texans Came, Aragon 2/1/62, 222.

⁹³ Thompson, Civil War Diary, 41.

⁹⁴ United States National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 23.

⁹⁵ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 143.

⁹⁶ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 144.

measure of approval because he grudgingly wrote, "If these greasers will only fight we are all OK."⁹⁷

Paddy's Graydon's first company had already mustered out in early February and immediately he began recruiting a new one and by the 9th had assembled about 85 men, most of whom may have also been from the Lemitar area. On the 12th, Chacón and Deus were sent on patrol again; Chacón on the west side of the river and Deus on the east. Chacón went as far as the small village of Padercillas which was a mile or so below Paraje, Deus' destination. Deus, who was first to return to the fort, reported that Chacón and his company had been captured, which of course was not true. Chacón had divided his company into two platoons and was reuniting them, not meeting up with Texans, as Deus thought he had seen in the moonlight.⁹⁸ No one knew it at the time but the Texan advance group was only about twenty miles south of the fort. Canby had not sent his scouts far enough and now he was blind. The Texans were advancing in small units and could have been easily ambushed piecemeal, but Canby never thought of it. Throughout this period the weather was reported as unseasonably cold with sporadic snow and hail and one can only imagine the suffering of both Texan and Union men alike due to the elements.

The next day, on the 13th, a patrol led by Major Wingate, including a company of the 5th US and Captain Dodd's Coloradans, met with a Texan probe a few hours south of the fort.⁹⁹ At last, Col. Canby knew for sure that Sibley's force was in the area and advancing, and he had a very good appraisal as to their total strength of about 2,600 men. He reiterated that he still had "no confidence in the militia and but little in the volunteers."¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, he mustered his men, ineffectual as he thought some of them were, and marched out to meet the threat. But nothing came of it. It was just a patrol and the Confederate body of troops wasn't there. Due to his lack of scouts Canby didn't know exactly where they were. His lack of confidence made him hesitant and indecisive and he gave the enemy ample time to consolidate their forces. Captain Deus was completely convinced by now that Canby was a coward and a traitor.¹⁰¹ In contrast to Canby's pessimism Governor Connelly wrote to William Seward the US Secretary of State, "I have no fears as to the results here." His sentiments echoed those of Col. Carson earlier. "We will conquer the Texan forces, if not in the first battle, it will be done in the second or subsequent battles. We will overcome them."¹⁰² Like Carson it appears he had no qualms regarding the capabilities of the New Mexicans "to second us in this matter."

Despite Canby's feelings about the New Mexicans, it was a fact that two thirds of his men at Fort Craig and more than three quarters of his overall force was New Mexican; and except for a few small contingents of Regulars, New Mexicans were now the only ones watching the rest of the Territory. Outlying patrols from the remaining portion of the Third Volunteer Regiment were still maintained at Fort Union, stations on the northeastern plains, and at Abo Pass. The bulk of the Fourth Volunteer Regiment and portions of the First Militia Division and all of the Third Militia were also providing garrisons at the various forts and depots as well as patrols and escorts in the central and northern parts of the Territory. If Col. Canby had not had the support of the New Mexicans all of this would not have been possible. The mutiny of the 30 men and the recalcitrant company in the 1st Militia did not speak for the bulk of the Volunteers and although many took it as proof of their general unreliability, it was not true. There is a difference between being unhappy and being disloyal. Some Americans had rebelled for less. To name a few, there

⁹⁷ Mumey, Bloody Trails, 2/8/62, 72.

⁹⁸ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 144.

⁹⁹ John Taylor, Bloody Valverde: A Civil War Battle on the Rio Grande February 21, 1862 (University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 22.

¹⁰⁰ Official Records, Canby 3/1/62.

¹⁰¹ Daniel B. Castello, Captain Charles Deus on the Frontier (self-published, NMSU Library, MSC 3475, Las Cruces, NM), 28. Written at Deus' dictation - a manuscript memoir located by Tim Kimball.

¹⁰² Official Records, Connelly to Seward 2/6/62.

was a mutiny in the 69th NY Militia which was only a thirty-day unit. Two companies rebelled because they hadn't been paid before their 30 days were up. Another early war mutiny developed in the 13th, 21st, and 79th NY Regiments because they didn't like their conditions. At least they had clothes, not to mention the fact that they had been paid as well. When seen in this light, the New Mexicans were amazing. Their endurance under hardship and their ability to continue their duties under that hardship was remarkable. In addition to Carson and Connelly there were other American born people in New Mexico who did not feel at all the way Canby and many of the Regulars did. On February 12th James L. Collins the editor of the *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette* wrote a letter to William Dole, the US Commissioner of Indian Affairs saying, "The Mexicans have turned out with a spirit that is truly commendable, the best and most influential Mexicans [in] the territory are here and will take part in the battle."¹⁰³

Meanwhile, Captain Santiago Valdez of Company H, First Volunteer Regiment, had been having health problems and had tendered his resignation earlier in the month. He could not aptly perform his duties and he had decided to resign. His resignation was confirmed on the 15th.¹⁰⁴ He was replaced by Edward Bergman who was the 1st Lt. of that company. Also by the 15th, Major Wesche had four companies of the 2nd Militia Division at Fort Craig, companies A, B, C, & E. Company D had been incorporated into C & E by Governor Connelly the day before. The 2nd Division infantry companies were ordered to camp in the post corral while the mounted companies were placed at Camp Carson.¹⁰⁵ There must have been some reason for this, since one would think the horses should be in the corral and the infantry in the camp. Canby's force had nearly reached full strength although a few more Militia companies would continue to trickle in.



Edward Bergman, Captain Co. H, 1st NMVI

On the 16th of February a Confederate garrison of 12,000 men at Fort Donelson in Tennessee, fell to General U. S. Grant's forces. It was an unconditional surrender. He had already taken Fort Henry on the 6th and was moving into the heart of the South, using a combination of land troops supported by ironclad river gunboats. Donelson was a spectacular victory that threw Gen. Grant into the limelight and gave some hope to the North. Further east things had not gone that well. But although Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee would dispute the fact for some time, Gen. Grant had proven that the Confederates were not invincible.

That same day in New Mexico Gen. Sibley's force, completely assembled now, was spotted crossing the river to the west bank south of Fort Craig. At about one o'clock in the afternoon the Confederates drew up in line of battle still south of the fort, hoping to draw the Federals out of the formidable looking fortifications. Col. Canby aligned his force in front of the fort to meet them but stayed well under cover of the fort's cannons. The Rebels did not advance, except for two companies who were seen to be moving to occupy a hill west of the fort, but

¹⁰³ Taylor, *Bloody Valverde*, 14 & 148, note 14.

¹⁰⁴ United States National Archives, Compiled Service Records, E522 U5 Roll 25.

¹⁰⁵ Thompson, *Civil War Diary*, 42.

Chacón and Graydon got there first. Other than that, Canby didn't move either. Instead, he ordered Chacón, Grayden, and Deus to ride along the enemy line in an attempt to provoke a battle, but except for firing a few shots, the Rebels did not take the bait. They did not want to advance into the range of the fort's cannon, some of which were actually 'quakers' (fakes – logs painted black). Confederate General Sibley reported that they were attacked by some “very well mounted” companies.¹⁰⁶ Captain Chacón states that his men fired three shots each and a man was killed and another wounded from Deus' company. He believed these were the first shots fired in the Valverde Campaign. Captain Deus remembered that there was, “Considerable firing on both sides” and that one man, “the baker of Deus's company, was killed.”¹⁰⁷ After the rebels withdrew Chacón found fresh graves at that site indicating they had killed six Texans.¹⁰⁸

The Union men chafed under Canby's restraint as they watched the Texans withdraw. Using the Volunteers as an excuse for inaction, Canby reported that he spent the next several days operating so the Volunteers would not be required to “maneuver in the presence of or under the fire of the enemy.”¹⁰⁹ He was already using them as a crutch to explain failure. In reality, for the next two days, both sides were paralyzed by a severe sandstorm, not inept volunteers. On the 19th the storm cleared and Gen. Sibley moved his army back to the east side of the river. Many of Canby's men could not understand why he did nothing and let them cross “in full view of every Union soldier at the fort who cared about witnessing the crossing, and no one attempted to prevent them. Why this was so, no one, either a regular or a volunteer, could discover.”¹¹⁰ Several more mounted companies of the 2nd Militia Division arrived on the 19th and the last one on the 20th. Col. Canby ordered Col. Nicolás Pino to command the infantry portion of the Division and Lt. Col. Jesús María Baca y Salazar was appointed to take charge of the mounted portion.¹¹¹ This seems to indicate that Wesche was not actually in charge of the mounted battalion, although his reports appear to be written that way. On that day Gen. Sibley, still remaining on the east side of the river, moved his column north opposite Fort Craig. This area was composed of a series of basaltic ravines oriented north/south which provided cover for his column. Col. Canby reported that on the 20th the enemy had moved northward behind a ravine. Infantry could reach them though cavalry and artillery movement would be very difficult. By 4pm it was possible to attack them. Most of the union troops were already across the river and advancing on the Confederates. Preparations were made and skirmishers “thrown forward” for the purpose of drawing enemy fire. But Pino's 2nd Regiment had ruined his plans because they were “thrown into such utter confusion by a few harmless cannon-shots” and they could not be put back into line. “This and the near approach of night rendered it inexpedient to continue the attack.” To distract the enemy and cover the retreat Colonel Roberts made a “demonstration” with all the cavalry. Actually they rode to the top of a distant hill without actually threatening anyone. Canby then then reported he had positioned his troops so the Texans could not cross at the fords and move toward the fort during the night. All the other troops were withdrawn back to the fort.¹¹²

What we have here is an explanation by Col. Canby that he would have attacked the Confederates in the ravine but the inadequacy of the 2nd Volunteer Regiment prevented him from executing his plan. Clearly, Col. Miguel Pino's Regiment was already his scapegoat. Not

¹⁰⁶ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 194.

¹⁰⁷ Daniel B. Castello, Captain Charles Deus on the Frontier (self-published, NMSU Library, MSC 3475, Las Cruces, NM), 28. Written in the third person at Deus' dictation - a manuscript located by Tim Kimball.

¹⁰⁸ Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 163.

¹⁰⁹ Official Records, Canby 3/1/62.

¹¹⁰ Hon. J. Frank Chaves [Lt. Col. Jose Francisco Chaves of the First New Mexico Volunteer Infantry], “Historic Valverde” Albuquerque Daily Citizen, June 21st, 1890.

¹¹¹ Thompson, Civil War Diary, 42.

¹¹² Official Records, Canby 3/1/62.

everyone agreed with Canby's assessments regarding the confusion of the Volunteers. Captain Rafael Chacón reported that his company in a force of about 600 Union cavalry (Col. Roberts' "demonstration") took possession of the some heights in order to keep the Confederates from setting their cannons there. It was believed that they might have been able to shell Fort Craig from that location. The Texans fired artillery at their position but only a few men were wounded by flying rocks. Chacón does not mention any Volunteer confusion.¹¹³ Major Wesche who was with the same group stated, "The rebels fired some seventy-odd cannon shots, most of them went over our heads, none did harm us."¹¹⁴ He doesn't mention any confusion either, and presumably they could see a lot from that hill. Lt. Colonel J. Francisco Chaves of the 1st Volunteer Regiment states unequivocally that the "utter confusion" of the 2nd Regiment never occurred at all.

When our troops were within range of the enemy's guns they began firing upon us, and there was no confusion among the New Mexico Volunteers to amount to anything. One private of the 3d United States Cavalry had his jaw broken by the gravel thrown up by the ricochet of a six pounder shot and Gen. Canby's horse was wounded in the hock of one of the hind legs. The union troops were constantly advancing, except when ordered to halt, and they never fired a single shot at the enemy. For some inexplicable cause all the regulars were withdrawn from the field that evening, and ordered to Fort Craig, and the 1st and 2nd New Mexico Volunteers were ordered back to the edge of the mesa, near the river, where they passed the night.¹¹⁵

It would seem that Col. Canby's judgment was not just biased or prejudiced, but rather completely skewed. He appears to have been more interested in watching the 2nd NM fail than in actually attacking the Confederates. Captain Charles Deus (I/1st NM) related that he "was particularly disgusted with the outrageous action of the retreat made by Canby."¹¹⁶ He was right. A man like Kit Carson would have watched the Rebel approach very carefully and executed a few ambushes on their columns as well as raids on their wagon train and livestock to weaken them. Then he would have been at the basaltic ridge before they were. A man like Paddy Graydon would have simply shot any skeddaddlers and slammed right into the enemy's flank or rear. With almost anyone else in charge the Confederates would not have gone this far unmolested.

Speaking of Graydon, it was on this night that he is said to have made his famous 'mule bomb' attack. He supposedly tied dynamite to two mules, lit the fuses and sent them off towards the Confederate camp. As the story goes, however, the mules turned around and Graydon was forced to run for his life. The resulting explosion caused the Texan mule and cattle herd to stampede and the New Mexicans rounded them up. This hilarious story is very much in keeping with Paddy's reputation but Lt. Col. J. Francisco Chaves reports that there was no such explosion that night. The livestock had strayed toward the river and "were not stampeded at all by any of our men, but they came to the river of their own accord, and our outlying pickets drove them into the fort."¹¹⁷

Sources for the mule bomb story are sketchy so we'll probably never know for sure if two US mules sacrificed their lives for their country on that night. What is sure is that a number of livestock defected to the Union Cause (in reality, they were just thirsty). And if Graydon actually did try the attack, well, good for him. At least someone was doing something.

¹¹³ Meketa, *Legacy of Honor*, 166).

¹¹⁴ Thompson, *With the New Mexico Militia*.

¹¹⁵ Chaves, *Albuquerque Daily Citizen*.

¹¹⁶ Castello, *Captain Charles Deus*, 28.

¹¹⁷ Chaves, *Albuquerque Daily Citizen*.