

## SERIES 2, VOLUME 7 VOLUME OVERVIEW

The month of November 1861, covered in this volume, starts off with major changes. It witnesses two key players leave their positions, one in Missouri and one in Washington, and presents their successors, as well as a new department.

In the previous volume, it was made clear that a move to oust Maj. Gen. John C. Fremont was underway, and President Lincoln had sent Gen. Samuel R. Curtis two letters, one to be delivered to Fremont and the other to Maj. Gen. David Hunter. A condition was placed on the delivery of the letters—that if Fremont was in a battle or had won a battle or was in the presence of the enemy in expectation of a battle, those letters were not to be delivered. However, despite these conditions, and the fact that Fremont was in the field, *in the presence of the rebels in expectation of a battle*, he received the letter, and on November 2, in a telegram to Hunter, he relinquishes command of the Western Department.

Before Fremont received word he was to relinquish his command, he directed Gen. Ulysses S. Grant to prepare to march at an hour's notice, to make demonstrations along both sides of the Mississippi River; he ordered Gen. John Pope to march as quickly as possible to Springfield; he signed an agreement with Rebel (MSG) Maj. Gen. Sterling Price to confine the war to the field and not arrest or force people from their homes merely for political opinions, authorizing representatives of both commanders to negotiate the exchange of prisoners; and he ordered Grant to send a force from Cape Girardeau and Bird's Point to assist in driving Rebel (MSG) Gen. M. Jefferson Thompson into Arkansas. After relinquishing his command, Fremont informs his troops and asks them to offer the same “cordial and enthusiastic support” to the new commander that they had offered him. Fremont then writes to Hunter that the advance guard of the rebels will reach Wilson's Creek in the evening, and he should push his division forward so he (Hunter) could assume command. Hunter assumes command on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November, but he is soon to be replaced.

At the same time that Fremont was being relieved, the commanding general of the U.S. Army, Lt. Gen. Winfield Scott, retired, but not before signing orders on November 1, to remove Fremont of his command with the Western Department and order him to General Headquarters in Washington. On that same date, Maj. Gen. George McClellan succeeded to the position of U.S. Army commanding general. A week later, he ordered Gen. Samuel R. Curtis to arrest the paymaster, Maj. James H. Phinney, whom Curtis had accused of absconding with all the money, and if necessary to accomplish this order, to arrest Fremont, as well, since it was reported that Phinney had left with the general and gone to St. Louis. McClellan also orders Hunter to arrest Gen. Justus McKinstry and send him to the St. Louis Arsenal. He orders Curtis to seize all public books and papers belonging to McKinstry and arrest the former quartermaster's chief clerk and cashier. He orders Curtis to arrest Franz Kappner, an officer under Fremont, who wrote a critical piece for a newspaper in opposition of Fremont's removal. Curtis is to keep him in custody until the arrival of the new department commander (Halleck, not Hunter—but more on that below), and to do the same to any who gives Curtis trouble, allowing for no interference or insubordination, responding with “vigorous measures to preserve discipline and perfect quiet.”<sup>1</sup> He further orders Curtis to distribute the Legion Body Guard (Fremont's Body Guard) among other regiments or disband them entirely and secure all their arms. By special orders, McClellan dismisses Fremont's staff and all officers who were appointed by Fremont without the president's approval, effective from the date the general was relieved of command.

Once Hunter takes command of the Western Department, he orders Gen Curtis to assume command of all the posts in Missouri in the immediate neighborhood of St. Louis. He also orders him to remove the current provost marshal and replace him with someone he trusts, protect the telegraph wires and railroads, and relieve Col. Chester Harding, Jr. at Pacific Station, replacing him with Col. William Vandever. Hunter replaces Gen. McKinstry with Gen. Samuel D. Sturgis as commander of the 5<sup>th</sup> Division and orders McKinstry to St. Louis and to report to the adjutant general of the Army by letter. He also informs Rebel (MSG) Maj. Gen. Price that he does not recognize the latter's agreement with Maj. Gen. Fremont and will not issue the “joint proclamation.” A day after McClellan's order to Curtis regarding Fremont's Body

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<sup>1</sup> See (FLP: Ser 2PS-Nov#24.5)

Guard, he directs Curtis to order them into Benton Barracks and confiscate their arms, horses, and equipment and to arrest McKinstry and imprison him in the St. Louis Arsenal.

Hunter orders the commanders to avoid extensive movements until plans can be arranged. He informs Maj. Gen. McClellan that his troops are falling back to Rolla and Sedalia while Rebel (MSG) Maj. Gen. Price and C.S.A. Gen. Benjamin McCulloch, he believes, have both retreated into Arkansas. He asks McClellan for two experienced and reliable ordnance officers, two engineers, and two competent assistant quartermasters, explaining that currently, “great portions of the army stores and other public property...are in the hands of irresponsible, ignorant, and illegally-appointed persons.”<sup>2</sup> However, at the time of this latter request, Hunter was unaware that he was no longer the commander of the Western Department, though the new commander would not take over officially until November 19.

On November 9, 1861, Washington created three departments from the Departments of the West, Cumberland, and Ohio: Department of the Missouri, Department of Kansas, and Department of New Mexico, each with its own commander. Maj. Gen. Henry W. Halleck is commander of the Department of the Missouri, while Hunter is now commander of the Department of Kansas.

About a week before Halleck took over command officially, Maj. Gen. McClellan sent him instructions to restore order, replace members of the staff who are not legally commissioned, economize the state’s expenditures, and personally inspect the department, reporting back to him the results. The day after taking command, Halleck orders that fugitive slaves no longer be admitted into military camps, as vital information has been leaked to the enemy. He impresses on the officers in command to prevent all unauthorized personnel from entering and leaving their lines. In late November, Halleck orders all prisoners found within the Department’s lines, who were exchanged according to the Fremont-Price Agreement and within the enemy lines at the time of exchange, to be arrested immediately. He further prohibits such prisoners from leaving St. Louis without an escort.

Also, immediately after taking command officially, Halleck asks President Lincoln for written authority to declare martial law in the Department of the Missouri. Lincoln responds that he will provide the authority if both Halleck and Maj. Gen. McClellan feel it is necessary, but McClellan asks for more information as to why Halleck views martial law as necessary in his department. Halleck responds that if he cannot be trusted with such authority, then the president should relieve him from command. He adds that he intends to act strictly under authority and according to instructions, and where authority cannot be granted, the government must not hold him responsible for the result.

Gov. Hamilton R. Gamble’s plans for a state militia, discussed in the previous volume, are completed, and he places Gen. John M. Schofield in command.

This volume covers the Engagement at Belmont and includes a special section describing the event and providing a list of pertinent documents. It also includes documents from the *Missouri Army Argus*, a rebel newspaper, grouped together and placed at the end of the week representing when the articles were originally published.

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<sup>2</sup> See (FLP: Ser 2PS-Nov#24).