

SERIES 1, VOLUME 7 VOLUME OVERVIEW

In the previous volume of this series (Vol. 6, Part 2), we learn that Maj. Gen. John C. Fremont has proclaimed martial law in Missouri. In the current volume (Vol. 7), there is much discussion over martial law in general and over those parts of the law specifically dealing with the freeing of the slaves belonging to those who take up arms against the federal government. The *Missouri Democrat* even publishes extracts from several other newspapers to show the reaction to Fremont's martial law. It is reported that Fremont acted without the prior knowledge of President Lincoln and his Cabinet. Provisional Gov. Hamilton R. Gamble goes to Washington to protest the extension of martial law over the entire state. Rebel (MSG) Gen. M. Jefferson Thompson proclaims his intentions to retaliate, with excess, to any action taken against Confederates under Fremont's martial law. Lincoln modifies two points in the original—confiscated slaves will not be set free and, instead of punishment for bearing arms, encouragement will be held out to men who lay down those arms, and they will receive a pardon for the past. One editorial explains the limited conflict that Fremont's proclamation has with the act of Congress in regard to the slave issue. According to the article, the law¹ simply requires that slaves employed in service hostile to the government should be confiscated, with no mention of them being freed, this being the only contradiction. It also notes that martial law transcends congressional statute, and Lincoln's objection could not have been legal but merely policy.²

Gen. Benjamin Prentiss was appointed commander of the District of Ironton in August, but Fremont, learning that Gen. Ulysses S. Grant had seniority, orders Grant to Cape Girardeau to assume command of the newly created District of Southeast Missouri and informs Prentiss that he is to serve under Grant, his senior. Prentiss, however, refuses to submit to Grant and forwards his resignation, but Fremont refuses to accept it. Fremont orders Prentiss to St. Louis, and eventually, he is assigned to northeast Missouri and not required to serve under Grant.

The rebels tear up railroad tracks and down telegraph wires between Hannibal and Shelbina. On September 4, the forces of Rebel (MSG) Gen. Martin Green attack the 2nd Kansas and one or two companies of the 3rd Iowa, who were waiting for reinforcements from Gen. Stephen A. Hurlbut, who is accused of drinking to excess and not in any condition to take command of his forces. The Union forces retreat since they have no artillery, but the rebels continue firing upon the town long after the troops have left.

The gunboats *Conestoga* and *Lexington* have an engagement on September 10, with the land batteries on the Kentucky shore at Lucas Bend, a few miles from Cairo. They silence the batteries on shore and disable a rebel gunboat, *Yankee*, when a shell from the *Conestoga* knocks away her chimney as she ventures within range. However, the *Conestoga* is unable to capture her since she is supported by batteries on shore near Columbus.

C.S.A. Gen. Leonidas Polk invades Columbus, Kentucky on September 3, violating that state's neutrality. He delivers a proclamation in which he attempts to justify his move on Columbus.³ Federal forces then occupy Paducah, which is predominantly secessionist.

Gen. James Lane and his troops raid Osceola (St. Clair County), then loot and burn the town. (This occurs on September 22.)

There are reports that C.S.A. Gen. Benjamin McCulloch may possibly be moving toward Jefferson City. Maj. Gen. Fremont, Gen. John Pope, Maj. Gen. David Hunter, Gen. Justus McKinstry, and Col. James Totten arrive in Jefferson City at the end of September.

¹ For Senate Bill 25, "An Act to Confiscate Property Used for Insurrectionary Purposes," see (FLP: Ser 1MD-Sep-Annex-2).

² See (FLP: Ser 1MD-Sep#95.8).

³ See (FLP: Ser 1MD-Sep#63).

Earlier in September, Postmaster Montgomery Blair and Quartermaster Montgomery C. Meigs, representing President Lincoln's Cabinet, travel to St. Louis to investigate Fremont and the Department of the West. With reports of the possible removal of Maj. Gen. Fremont, the *Democrat* publishes several editorials and a compilation of articles from several newspapers addressing the subject. An editorial optimistically notes that the removal cannot possibly have been considered seriously by the Administration as Fremont is extraordinarily energetic, efficient, and too highly regarded. Another editorial praises Fremont and urges readers to support him. Meigs's and Montgomery Blair's reports, however, are unfavorable toward the general. The *Democrat* also publishes a letter⁴ from Fremont to a friend, explaining his feelings regarding the attacks against him as he goes to the field in defense of his country.

Fremont accuses Col. Frank P. Blair, Jr. of disregarding the chain of command and smearing his reputation in constant correspondence with members of the Administration. He has Blair arrested for insubordination. It is rumored that those who owe their commissions to Blair's influence are also implicated in the effort to remove Fremont. An editorial suggests that the Blair family's hostility toward Fremont is due to his refusal to allow them to dictate to him or force his acceptance of their choice of contractors. Blair files charges and specifications against Fremont,⁵ and Fremont files charges and specifications against Blair.⁶

This volume includes an article that presents the laws for the organization of companies of volunteers of infantry, cavalry, and artillery, as well as details concerning the preparation of muster rolls, mustering into service, taking the oath of allegiance, and entitlement to arms, equipment, etc.⁷ Also covered in this volume are the Battle of Lexington and the Action at Blue Mills Landing, each with its own special section that includes a description of the event and a list of the related articles.

⁴ See (FLP: Ser 1MD-Sep#104).

⁵ See (FLP: Ser 1MD-Sep-Annex-7).

⁶ See (FLP: Ser 1MD-Sep-Annex-8).

⁷ See (FLP: Ser 1MD-Sep#45.1)