

SERIES 2, VOLUME 5, PART 2

VOLUME OVERVIEW

Previously, in Part 1 of Volume 5, Maj. Gen. Fremont and President Lincoln were at odds over Fremont's martial law proclamation, and Fremont had asked the president to openly direct him to make the correction if, after reflecting on his decision, he still believed the martial law must be changed. In Part 2, Fremont learns of Lincoln's response (to change the two points of dissension) from the newspapers.

Part 1 also includes a special section on the First Battle of Lexington, which began September 13. However, this battle continued until the 20th, on which date Col. James A. Mulligan surrendered to Rebel (MSG) Maj. Gen. Sterling Price's forces, and thus, Part 2 focuses heavily on this battle. In fact, most of the correspondence dealing with the subject are found in Part 2.

Fremont looks into accusations by Maj. Bernard G. Farrar, the late Gen. Nathaniel Lyon's aide-de-camp, that reinforcements were intentionally refused for the late general, and he was left to his fate. Capt. John C. Kelton (Fremont's assistant adjutant general) however, denies any knowledge of Farrar applying for reinforcements for Gen. Lyon, and insists that "every effort was made to send Gen. Lyon additional troops...but it was impossible to do so."¹

Washington requests Fremont send five regiments to them, and though he responds he is preparing to do so, he also advises the commanding general of the U.S. Army, Lt. Gen. Winfield Scott, that it is risky to withdraw troops from the rebel-infested areas in Missouri or from Paducah, Kentucky. In a letter to U.S. Sec. of War Simon Cameron, Attorney Gen. Edward Bates also questions why the regiments are leaving Fremont's command for Washington and leaving Missouri to defend itself.

Col. Jefferson C. Davis and Gen. James H. Lane request more troops, while Provisional Gov. Gamble begs Bates send arms. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant informs Fremont that their Austrian muskets are unreliable, and the troops are short on clothing, equipment, and accouterments. Advised that a large enemy force is between Lexington and Boonville, Fremont informs Scott that he cannot spare arms and requests two regiments of unarmed Illinois cavalry be permitted instead of the two Illinois regiments originally requested.

Fremont arrests Col. Frank P. Blair, Jr. for dishonorable behavior in attempting to undermine his authority as an officer, but he later releases him, advising Blair that he expects no more breach of military propriety. Shortly after, however, Blair transmits charges and specifications against Fremont and asks Lt. Gen. Scott to present them to the president. (The text of the charges and specifications, actually filed in the month of October, as well as Fremont's charges and specifications against Blair, are found in Volume 6 of this series.)

Fremont appoints Gen. Prentiss commander of the section of Missouri bordering on and to the north of the Hannibal and Saint Joseph Railroad and orders him to protect the railroad and the telegraph lines. Prentiss establishes headquarters at Chillicothe. Fremont gives Gen. Thomas L. Price command of Jefferson City and orders him to continue the work on the fortifications. He directs Maj. Gen. Hunter to take command of the First Division and proceed to the capital from Rolla with three regiments.

This volume includes several letters from Navy Capt. Andrew H. Foote concerning a variety of topics, including among them: instructions for the repairs and alterations of the steamboat *Tyler*; the shipment of men for naval service; requests for a supply of ammunition from the Army; overdue wages for the crews of the three gunboats commissioned at the time in the vicinity of Cairo; updates for Gen. Grant regarding decisions relating to the steamboats; and reports to the secretary of the Navy and to Gen. Fremont on his (Foote's) expedition up the Ohio River to Owensboro. There are also letters from U.S. officers to Foote with instructions, including Grant's that requests Foote proceed with gunboats to oust the rebels at Owensboro and keep the Ohio River open. Among other Navy correspondence is a request from Col. Richard J. Oglesby of the 8th Illinois Volunteer Infantry to Navy Cmdr. Henry A. Walke suggesting an alternate method of signaling the ship since he was unable to use the regular one.

¹ See (FLP: Ser 2PS-Sep#105.4)

After learning (a few days after the fact) of Lexington's fall, Fremont decides to take the field himself and so informs Lt. Gen. Scott, also asking him to notify President Lincoln immediately. Meanwhile, Grant learns that the rebels are crossing the river at Columbus, Kentucky, and moves three regiments to Norfolk to support Col. Oglesby, who is directed to inform Grant if there is danger of an attack so he can send reinforcements. (Three days later, Oglesby encounters the enemy at Beckwith Farm, near Norfolk, which results in the rebels fleeing when shots are fired.) Grant informs Fremont that he believes the rebels have been driven back to Belmont, Missouri and to Columbus, and that he has moved his forces to Norfolk and withdrawn his troops from Fort Jefferson, Kentucky. Grant also tells Fremont that the men on the gunboat *Tyler* are unable to receive their pay safely near Cincinnati; instead, he recommends they receive their pay in Cairo.

A camp of instruction is established at Benton Barracks, and Gen. Samuel R. Curtis finds that some of the men there have not been mustered in, and they stay a few days, eat rations, then leave. He'd given orders to muster them in, but the colonel in command is not complying. Fremont extends Curtis's command over St. Louis, and he is to assume control of all matters affecting the public interest in and near the city during Fremont's absence.

Fremont places the newly appointed Col. Joseph B. Plummer in command of the post at Cape Girardeau, which he is to reorganize.

Jessie Fremont writes to Isaac Sherman about conditions in Missouri. She says Washington reports that money is to arrive in St. Louis, but it is too late; officers are taking their lives in their hands, heading off to fight on bareback horses with only rope, halters, and armed with spears like Indians; and contractors are hesitant to sell goods to the Western Department for fear their contracts will not hold good if Fremont is removed.