

## SERIES 2, VOLUME 5, PART 1

### VOLUME OVERVIEW

In the previous volume, covering the month of August, Maj. Gen. John C. Fremont had learned that Gen. Ulysses S. Grant outranked Gen. Benjamin Prentiss, and had therefore replaced Prentiss with Grant as commander at Cape Girardeau. At the start of September, the first two weeks of which are covered in this volume, we find that Prentiss refuses to follow Grant's orders, has submitted himself for arrest and tendered his resignation, claiming he is the senior brigadier general. Fremont then asked Prentiss to withdraw his resignation until he (Prentiss) had communicated with the War Department. Over a week later, the commanding general of the U.S. Army, Lt. Gen. Winfield Scott, sent a letter determining that Grant was senior since he was listed above Prentiss on the list of general officers promoted by President Lincoln from May to August 1861.<sup>1</sup> Fremont, however, did not receive Scott's letter until September 19. In the meantime, he had ordered Prentiss to St. Louis immediately. Grant submitted the charges against Prentiss to headquarters but declined arresting Prentiss. He also claimed he would prefer to set the charges aside if Fremont permitted.

Another issue that was first introduced in the previous volume was Fremont's martial law, proclaimed on August 30, and the text is again included in this volume as a special insert. This volume also includes the correspondence between Lincoln and Fremont on the subject, as well as relevant newspaper articles and the personal letters of key players debating the issue, the latter letters grouped together in the Annex section.<sup>2</sup> Lincoln disagrees with two points in Fremont's martial law and confidentially informs him in a letter. He contends that if according to the proclamation, men are shot, the Confederates will retaliate, killing Union men; therefore, he orders that no man is to be shot without his approval. He also requests that Fremont revise the statement that declares slaves of those in arms against the United States will be freed. Fremont responds that he felt the position in Missouri was dangerous, and thus, decided on the proclamation as the best way to serve his country and the president. He therefore asks Lincoln to reflect on his decision, and if he still believes that the martial law must be changed, to openly direct him to make the correction. He states, "The implied censure will be received by me as a soldier always should the reprimand of his chief."<sup>3</sup> He explains that if he were to retract on his own, it would imply that he himself thought it wrong and that he had acted without the thought needed on a matter of such gravity, but he acted with full deliberation and the certain conviction that he made the right decision. Lincoln made the order three days later, on September 11.<sup>4</sup>

In the previous month, there was discussion about Provisional Gov. Hamilton R. Gamble's desire to raise militia regiments of Missouri troops. In the present volume, Fremont asks President Lincoln not to allow the governor to raise these regiments. However, the militia regiments were eventually approved by the president in early November. Regiments were raised, and they began service in early 1862.

Covered in this volume are the Battle at Dry Wood Creek, the Second Battle of Boonville, the First Battle of Lexington, and the Engagement at Lucas Bend, all with their own special sections describing the event and providing a list of related documents. In the case of the Battle at Dry Wood Creek, there is only one after-action report, which was submitted by a member of the Rebel (MSG), Gen. Alexander E. Steen.

Fremont sends Gen. Samuel R. Curtis to St. Louis to assume command of Camp Benton. Gen. Grant assumes command of the Southeast Missouri District, but first turns over the command of the post at Cape Girardeau to Col. M. L. Smith. While waiting for Grant's arrival, Gen. John A. McClernand takes command at Cairo on Fremont's orders. After Grant officially assumes command of the district, he declares that Cairo

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<sup>1</sup> See an extract of the appointments: (FLP: Ser 2PS-SepP1-Annex-2). A full list is found in the previous volume: (FLP: Ser 2PS-AugP2-Annex-8)

<sup>2</sup> See (FLP: Ser 2PS-SepP1-Annex-7).

<sup>3</sup> See (FLP: Ser 2PS-Sep#51).

<sup>4</sup> See (FLP: Ser 2PS-Sep#64).

will be added to the Southeast Missouri District, which will also include Bird's Point, Missouri and Mound City, Illinois. McClelland becomes Grant's second in command and oversees the post at Cairo.

Rebel (MSG) Gen. M. Jefferson Thompson is at Bloomfield. He informs C.S.A. Gen. Gideon J. Pillow of the large number of Union soldiers at Cape Girardeau and says he is having them carefully watched to be prepared to retreat at a moment's notice. He says he will fall back as far as Sikeston, per Pillow's suggestion, then continue southward, but he believes that a better plan is to situate himself on the White or Little Rivers, at Wagner's or Carpenter's Ford. He also recommends sudden and unexpected blows against the Union forces to fight their superior advantages in mails, telegraphs, steamboats, and railroads. C.S.A. Sec. of War LeRoy Pope Walker extends C.S.A. Maj. Gen. Leonidas Polk's command to embrace the state of Arkansas and all military operations in Missouri. Tennessee Gov. Isham G. Harris requests that Polk not allow Pillow, if he has returned to Madrid Bend, Kentucky, to enter Missouri until things change in Kentucky. Polk occupies Columbus, Kentucky with C.S.A. Provisional President Jefferson Davis's approval, thus violating Kentucky's neutrality. According to Polk, it was a "military necessity."

U.S. Army Col. Jefferson C. Davis reports on his 5<sup>th</sup> Iowa Regiment's expedition toward Columbia and on that of Col. George B. McClelland toward Iberia, which returned with prisoners. He also informs Fremont that the city of Warsaw is active in furnishing recruits and supplies for the rebels. Fremont directs Grant to send scouts to Benton, which he believes is now clear of rebels. However, he orders Grant to send scouts to the area, and if they find any rebels there, he is to attack. He also instructs Grant to ensure that the important points on the Illinois Central Railroad are guarded. Grant, following further orders from Fremont, directs Col. Gustave Waagner to retain possession of Belmont and send scouts to conduct reconnaissance. Col. Chester Harding, Jr. reports on his expedition through Jefferson County in the first few days of September but explains that an expedition to Cuba, Missouri, to rid the area of rebels, must be deferred due to a shortage of Volunteers.

Navy Cmdr. John Rodgers exchanged fire during his reconnaissance down the Mississippi River when the gunboats *Tyler* and *Lexington* discovered a rebel gunboat off Hickman, Kentucky. Fremont informs Lincoln that war vessels are advancing from Memphis, the rebels are at New Madrid, and they are in immediate need of large guns. He also notes that the Confederates appear to be pulling out of southeast Missouri, and he believes they intend to invade Kentucky. He informs Lincoln that C.S.A. Gen. Pillow crossed from New Madrid to Hickman, Kentucky with 5,000 men and artillery, while 2,000 Tennessee secessionists with artillery will occupy Paducah, and 6,000 troops are already in Columbus. He asks that the Indiana regiments en route to Missouri, which have been put on hold by orders from Washington, be released from hold and allowed to continue on to Missouri.

Lt. Gen. Scott recommends Gen. Stoneman be sent to help Fremont instead of Maj. Gen. David Hunter. He points out legal reasons why Hunter would not be appropriate. Nevertheless, Lincoln ignores the advice and sends Hunter to Missouri, allegedly to "advise" Fremont.

Fremont gives orders for the creation of Fort Holt on the Kentucky shore of the Mississippi River, which he also wants heavily guarded. He directs troops from Cape Girardeau, Bird's Point, and Cairo to move there for its defense. Grant agrees to follow Fremont's plans but contends that the fortifications in his location need attention. He (Grant) orders all commanders in southwest Kentucky to seize and take command of all ferries, yawls, flats, and other boats in response to the citizens of the area aiding the rebels. Grant occupies Paducah, Kentucky and informs Fremont. In order that Grant personally continues to command the forces at Cairo, Bird's Point, Cape Girardeau, and Ironton, Fremont sends Brig. Gen. of Volunteers Charles F. Smith to Paducah to command the forces there and on the Kentucky side of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. He informs Grant that the heights commanding Fort Jefferson and Blandville should be occupied and the crossing at Norfolk and Belmont watched. He directs President Lincoln's attention to affairs in Kentucky and asks him to extend his (Fremont's) command to Indiana, Tennessee and Kentucky, and orders McClelland to keep frequent communication with Paducah and advise him

(Fremont) of the details. (No reply from Lincoln regarding the extension of Fremont's command has been found.) Fremont advises Grant on troop movement and asks him to inform Gen. Smith that Smithland must be immediately occupied to control the Cumberland River.

Gen. John Pope seeks Fremont's approval to move his forces on Rebel (MSG) Gen. Martin Green in northern Missouri. He had been waiting on Gen. Stephen A. Hurlbut, who arrived too late to move earlier. He reports, on September 8, that the road is now open and clear as far west as the Platte River. Pope reports that Green's force dispersed on learning of their approach, but his (Pope's) men were unable to pursue.

Navy Capt. Andrew H. Foote reports for duty to Maj. Gen. Fremont, replacing Cmdr. John Rogers. Meanwhile, Gen. McClernand orders Navy Cmdr. Rodgers to prevent all boats from passing up the Ohio River until further orders. Asst. Sec. of the Navy Gustavus V. Fox authorizes Fremont to advertise for seamen and counsels him against relying on anyone other than Foote. He orders Navy Cmdr. Henry Walke to St. Louis. Foote later orders Walke to Cairo, to take charge of the gunboats there.

Due to some officers breaking the chain of command, Fremont proclaims that brigadiers and other commanders are not to correspond with state or other high offices in matters pertaining to any branch of public service; instead, matters are to be directed to him.

The rebels cut off communication on the Hannibal and Saint Joseph Railroad. Gen. Samuel D. Sturgis reaches Saint Charles and finds the troops are still on board the boats, the artillery and cavalry have not arrived, the bridges appear to have been destroyed, and a Home Guard officer took an engine and 18 cars intended for Sturgis's command, delaying their start. He decides to move to Mexico, Missouri to destroy bridges and says he will order two units to take position at the most advanced bridge to hold it until the cavalry and artillery arrive. However, when he arrives in Mexico, it is without the cavalry or his baggage wagons, which are impeding his movements. He asks Fremont for a few companies of regular infantry and cavalry.

Rebel (MSG) Gen. Thompson and C.S.A. Gen. Pillow are both at Columbus, fortifying the heights there. Reports indicate that their force is poorly equipped.

Included in this volume is a letter from Barton Bates to his father, Attorney Gen. Edward Bates, arguing that the Lincoln Administration should make a distinction between the army of the Confederate States of America and the belligerent rebels. He also believes that the Administration should accept the C.S. Army as honorable forces but shoot down the rebel spies and assassins.

Congressman Frank P. Blair, Jr., Sec. of War Simon Cameron, and President Lincoln each send letters to Quartermaster Gen. Justus McKinstry requesting that their friends be given government patronage. Blair's request is for a contract to purchase horses, Cameron's and Lincoln's are for the same friend, for purchasing army supplies. Cameron does add that McKinstry oblige "provided he [the friend] will make the prices suit you."<sup>5</sup>

U.S. Army Col. Jefferson C. Davis requests additional regiments of Indiana infantry, batteries light artillery, and heavy guns in order to execute his plans for Warsaw. Iowa Gov. Samuel J. Kirkwood informs the people of Iowa that the state requires four more regiments for the war, two of which are for the protection

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<sup>5</sup> See (FLP: Ser 2PS-Sep#55.8).

of Iowa's border. Illinois Gov. Richard Yates, Sr. follows up with Asst. Sec. of War Scott regarding the 5,000 stand of arms the latter promised had been sent but had yet to arrive.

This volume also includes several letters from Mrs. Jessie Fremont, both to President Lincoln and to her husband. She requests copies of Frank Blair's correspondence relating to Fremont's military command, which she was told led to the president sending Postmaster Gen. Montgomery Blair to look into and report on the Western Department. Lincoln denies her request. She warns her husband that U.S. Army Quartermaster Gen. Montgomery C. Meigs and Postmaster Gen. Blair are on their way to investigate the department but have already prejudged the situation. (Indeed, Postmaster Gen. Blair writes to Lincoln, requesting that Fremont be immediately replaced "to save" Missouri.) In a subsequent letter, Jessie encourages her husband to focus on the country's enemies.