PUBLISHED
Once a month
by
The Marine Corps
Institute

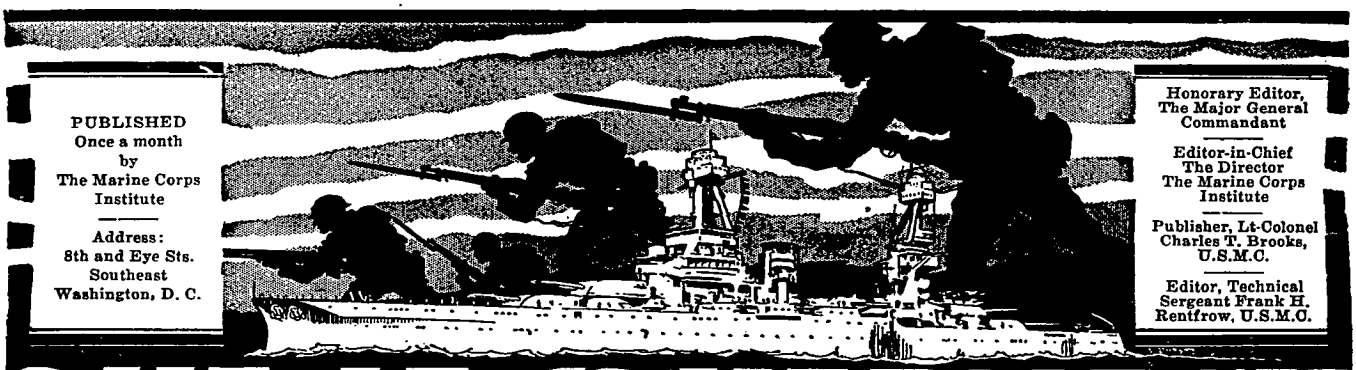
Address:
8th and Eye Sts.
Southeast
Washington, D. C.

Honorary Editor,
The Major General
Commandant

Editor-in-Chief
The Director
The Marine Corps
Institute

Publisher, Lt-Colonel
Charles T. Brooks,
U.S.M.C.

Editor, Technical
Sergeant Frank H.
Rentfrow, U.S.M.C.



THE LEATHERNECK

VOLUME 22 — WASHINGTON, D. C., FEBRUARY, 1939 — NUMBER 2

OUR PART IN CALIFORNIA'S ACQUISITION

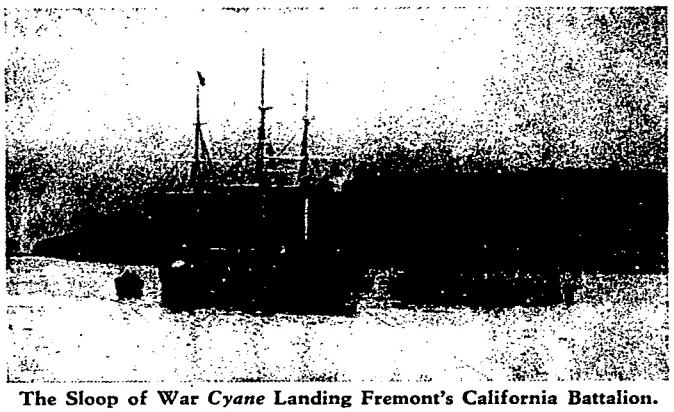
BY JOHN ULRICH FOHNER

Editor's Note. The author is the Jack Fohner who broadcasts "Adventures of the Marines," a regular Saturday afternoon feature of radio station WHAT in Philadelphia.

WITH the forthcoming Golden Gate International Exposition at San Francisco, and the Marine Corps' contemplated extensive participation in the celebrations, perhaps it is fitting and proper that all Marines should have a general knowledge of the most pertinent facts concerning that part of the State's early history which is closely woven with that of the Marine Corps.

Like the annexation of Texas in 1845 and the controversial Oregon question with England which started in about 1820, the acquisition of the gold rush State from Mexico was another step in the expansion of the Monroe Doctrine ideology that was proclaimed by President Monroe in 1823 and which has flourished down through the years.

That the actions of our government and our naval forces in Texas, Mexico, California and Oregon were stems from the roots of this definitely planted Doctrine can hardly be denied.



The Sloop of War *Cyane* Landing Fremont's California Battalion.

American statesmen of the time were determined, even at the cost of war, that no foreign power, or group of powers, should hold sovereignty over the lands bordering on the west coasts of the United States. They demanded a free and United States clear to the Pacific.

If we are to be just in retrospect of history, neither we nor England, who insistently and doggedly forced her influence into the internal affairs of Texas, Louisiana and California, as well as the Oregon Territory, could have properly laid claim to the Oregon country. It should have belonged to Spain, for it was her countrymen who first reached the coast seventeen years before our Pilgrim ancestors landed at Plymouth Rock.

But Spain's influence in foreign affairs dropped to a low point when Mexico and several of her South American provinces won their independence, and it was the United States and England who jumped in to make the claim upon Oregon, and begin the diplomatic dogfight that culminated in the Oregon Compromise, the Annexation of Texas and the Acquisition of California.

The famous cry of "Fifty-four forty, or fight" might have led us into another war with England had not President Polk's astute Secretary of State saved the day with his famous compromise on the forty-ninth parallel. So we got off without another war with our English cousins and with a just and fortunate proportion of Oregon.

Texas won her independence from Mexico in 1836 and from the time and day of her independence her political leaders worked hard for annexation to the United States. California, from the beginning of her history, considered herself a separate and independent province of Spain and would not recognize Mexico as her mother country. Her government was usually in the hands of a military officer at Monterey.

For several years, while Mexico boiled in the reactions of her own guerrilla warfare and her newly won freedom from Spain, California remained tied to the mother country on the other sides of the waters. In 1820 she adopted the Spanish constitution, but under foreign influence and pressure she reversed herself and gave her allegiance to Mexico in 1822. The hand of England was evident in this affair as she later offered to buy California from the Mexicans. Strenuous objections from the Californians and the United States caused the deal to fall through.

From the time that California swore new allegiance to Mexico until 1840 there is a complicated and not uninteresting movement of local and international politics. Missions fell, republicanism grew, sentiment of local patriotism became a political force, northern towns fought southern towns, foreign commerce increased, and with foreign immigration into the province came strong foreign influence; the latter to play an important part in later events.

California was constantly in a turbulent mood. There arose a deep dissastisfaction with Mexican rule. One governor after another was driven out of office in their many small internal wars; most of them against Mexican officials who accomplished nothing tangible for the good of the province.

While all this was going on the foreign influence in the province continued to grow to immense proportions with England leading the parade by battering at the gates of any staple government by her subsersive influence and her constant veiled threats at occupation. France stood aloof with her squadron ready to spring in and take a hold, and Russia held trading posts in the province without paying levies to the existing governments.

With Mexico unable to exert her control over the province; with foreign powers of three nations laying covetous eyes upon the State, and because of the Californians' evident desire to have the United States give them friendly assistance in their governmental affairs, the Washington government started boring in with friendly gestures. President Polk and his cabinet worked feverishly to have California to secede from Mexico, without any military aid from the United States, but with her good will and sympathy.

To further the promotion of this policy the American Consul Thomas O. Larkin at Monterey, was instructed to make friendly representations to the governing authorities and build up American good-will and wherever possible to disintegrate and break down any other foreign influence. Larkin's act and assistance was wholeheartedly accepted by the Californians and he was doing a mighty fine job of it and would have succeeded in getting California to declare herself independent, but other influences from Washington and elsewhere took a hand in the job and this is where the Marines enter the picture.

One can take his own choice of who was right and who was wrong in this battle of international diplomatic wits. France, England and America were set to make certain that nothing was left unturned to sway the Californians to their ways of thinking, but American pioneers and settlers answered the question for the whole lot when they infiltrated into the country during the years from 1826 to 1846 and became the predominating factor and voice in internal affairs.

The United States had sent Captain John C. Fremont, an army topographical engineer, into California as early as 1842, on a surveying expedition. As borne out by later events, Fremont was also instructed to cooperate with Larkin in his work at Monterey. However, Fremont, an aggressive soldier, incurred the unfriendliness of Larkin and several other high authorities in Californian affairs, and was more or less asked to leave the country.

Vice Admiral Stephen Clegg Rowan, who, with Marines, raised the American Flag over San Diego, July 29, 1846.

At about this point in the history of California entered a man whose trek over two oceans and through a foreign land rivals the famous "Message to Garcia." That man was Lieutenant Archibald Gillespie of the United States Marines, who as a special emissary from President James K. Polk traveled in disguise with secret instructions to Larkin, Fremont, and Commodore Sloat, who was in command of a U. S. Naval squadron in Pacific waters.

There is nothing definite stated in history as to what instructions President Polk gave to Gillespie, but from all accounts the President evidently sent him there to bring about a better coordination and cooperation between Americans acting for the American cause and to set these forces in motion for the coming war which opened officially with Mexico before Gillespie landed in California.

The President called Gillespie into his office at Washington one October evening in 1845 and issued to him some secret orders. What little of these instructions were given to him in writing have been destroyed and what those orders were has never been divulged. A complete conglomeration of guesswork as to their actual contents has clouded the possibility of securing an unbiased knowledge.

History, however, does relate to us that Gillespie left the capital, alone, on a secret (*Continued on page* 53)

COMPANY C
By E. A. Kuhn

We start with the marriage of 2nd Lt. Robert W. Boyd, 11 December. By listening and saying nothing, we find that the lieutenant and bride to be went to Yuma bright and early on said date, returning as Mr. and Mrs.

We wish that both will be very happy.

Sgt. George Hadusek has replaced Sgt. James Elliott in the Co. Store room. Sgt. Elliott has returned to line duty from which he has been absent for quite a time. I might remind you that Sgt. Elliott is one of the more prominent Acy-Ducy players of this Company. They say that practice makes perfect. He gets enough of it.

Now for the changes. Those on furlough are Cpl. Franklin Lewis, Cpl. Edwin Hutchinson, Pfc. Jere Atchison, Fmlc. Edwin Cannon, Jr., Fmlc. James Wisner, Pvt. Albert Vrooman, and Pvt. Harry Talbert.

Sgt. Harold Reeves joined from Recruit Depot Detachment. Pfc. William Whitney, Pfc. Raymond Knowles, Pfc. Frederick Overton, and Pvt. Harold Kolway joined from sea going.

Transferred are, Pfc. Raymond Schreckengos and Pvt. Wallace Simmons to base Headquarters company.

Edward O. Dyer was promoted to Asst. Cook and transferred to Headquarters company.

Promotions: William Potter from Pfc. to Cpl., Floyde O. Schilling from Cpl. to Sgt. The cigars were swell, Schill. And from Pfc. to Cpl. went Frederick Collins.

1—D—6
By E. A. Burrows

Corporal Quick will be discharged February 6, 1939, and he is going to try the "outside" for a job on the San Diego Fire Department. Good luck, corporal.

Harry Owen, better known as "Swing time," or "Bing," has survived a Hollywood furlough. More scars but nothing serious. Jitter Bug bites, so the story goes.

Lieutenant Wood B. Kyle is our company commander in the absence of Captain H. C. Tschirgi who is on leave at the present time. The men have gone in for furloughs in a big way—those now on furlough with 30 days are: Privates Cecelski, Farmer, Fry, Pignataro, Rhode, Weisenberger, Welch, Wetzel, and Field Music 1st Class Galles. Those just recently returned from furlough are: Pvt. Adair who kept the folks back in Arkansas snowed under, Sgt. Falken, Cpl. Moore, Pvts. Hansen, Owen, and Rowlett.

BATTERY D, 10TH MARINES
(Continued from page 29)

went the way of all flesh when he shipped to the USS "Outside" and Pvt. Geyer transferred to our nation's capital to become a school-mar'm in the Marine Corps Institute. One of our few remaining plank owners, Sgt. Wunderly, deserted us for the romance of the high seas by getting himself a berth on the USS *Northampton*. All of which, together with numerous leaves and furloughs, makes this an interesting place to live in. Or does it?

Our boy Iggy, of the Pennsylvania Iggies, caught an extra bit of change by receiving fourth class specialist, while the big ordnance man, Dukeman, snared fifth class. Barney and Roberts caught up with the law of averages and are now exhibiting a pair of chevrons apiece and Luko grabbed up one chevron for himself in the melee.

OUR PART IN CALIFORNIA'S ACQUISITION
(Continued from page 6)

mission to Commodore Sloat at Mazatlan, Consul Larkin at Monterey and Fremont, wherever he could be found.

The Marine officer traveled in disguise as a merchant on business and some historians would have us believe that he either ate his instructions from the President or memorized them and then destroyed them. We can believe the latter, as certainly the man was practical enough to burn the papers without danger of being discovered and he was certainly sensible enough to know that the burning of a piece of heavy parchment is more conducive to good health than the eating of it.

Gillespie arrived at Vera Cruz where he was met by the American consul. Together they traveled overland to Mexico City where the consul arranged for his transportation to Mazatlan to see Commodore Sloat. The Marine left Mexico City and after a rather hazardous trip across a revolutionary torn country he met the Commodore and delivered the President's message. The text of the message must have been of heavy importance, for it caused that passive naval commander to place a ship at Gillespie's disposal to carry him to the Sandwich Islands, thence to California, to further cloak his movements in secrecy, while Sloat himself weighed anchor for the shores of Monterey.

Gillespie arrived at Monterey in a round about way and got in immediate touch with Mr. Larkin. Here again, historians leave us hanging out on a limb as to what his instructions to Larkin were. However, we can assume that the two men decided that Fremont must be brought back into the fold of closer cooperation and all forces operate as one. Fremont, by this time, was far into Northern California.

The situation when Gillespie arrived was a split between Larkin and Commodore Sloat (who had arrived at Monterey) on one side and Fremont on the other. Sloat was not of the same mind as was Fremont; he sided more with Larkin. However, President Polk's instructions, brought to California by Gillespie, surely must have contained some dynamite, for shortly after his arrival and contact with Fremont at Lake Klamath near the Oregonian border, action of a more aggressive form and more to Fremont's liking, took place.

The first change was the relief of Commodore Sloat by Commodore Stockton who immediately acted in cooperation with Fremont. Gillespie has meantime alligned himself with the army captain, no doubt taking his cue from the President's instructions. He served with Fremont in some of the later armed engagements and with him was instrumental in raising the Bear Flag over Sonoma, when a part of the American-Californians proclaimed it the Bear Republic and independent of Mexico.

War with Mexico had by this time been declared, although Fremont and Gillespie were ignorant of the declaration. But, and the acquisition of California is filled with buts and suppositions, it might have been with the thought in mind that such a war was inevitable that President Polk hurried Gillespie across two countries and oceans to get things set right before the blow-up came.

Then, as now, the Marine Corps was not concerned with the political aspects of the situation. Their mission was to follow orders with the same unswerving loyalty to the government at Washington as they have always displayed. Whatever the political situation was before they landed, it was none of their affair . . . it was war when they got there!

With England trying to purchase the province from the Mexicans, who knew they did not control it and would lose it eventually, and with France seeking an opportunity to jump in and take a hand, and, strikingly important, the fact that the Californians preferred annexation to the United States, surely there was nothing left for President Polk to do, but tell Gillespie: "California must be saved to the Union . . . peaceably if possible, but secured at all costs."

Sloat after meeting Gillespie at Mazatlan sailed for Monterey and landed there on July 7, 1846, and with sailors and Marines raised the first Stars and Stripes ever to fly over California.

During the meantime Gillespie had met Fremont near Lake Klamath and together they started their trek back southward. With their small group of volunteers they fought their way through hostile bands of Indians and highwaymen. Several of them were killed and at times they lived on horseflesh.

After taking Sonoma, Gillespie and Fremont organized the "Californian Battalion" and soon after their forces were augmented with a company of dragoons from among the Marines and bluejackets aboard the ships and some volunteers from ashore.

On July 9, the Stars and Stripes were flung to the breeze at Yerba Buena (now San Francisco) and sailors and Marines again participated. Then events followed event in rapid succession. San Diego was occupied by a force commanded by Lieutenant Rowan, USN, from the *Cyane* on July 29, when sailors and Marines landed there and hoisted the flag.

On August 4, Santa Barbara was occupied and on August 13, the naval forces marched into Los Angeles. Gillespie was with this force and for a while with only about 72 men he remained on guard at Los Angeles as military governor of the southern district, to which post he had

been apopinted by Commodore Stockton who had relieved Sloat.

Gillespie left Los Angeles about September 30, after he had been besieged for about two weeks by revolting Californians led by Jose Maria Flores, who had hemmed the Marine up at Los Angeles. He was permitted to retire to San Pedro with the honors of war in the last of the month.

Later, Captain Mervine, USN, from the *Savannah*, with Gillespie who had retired to the south, made a determined march to reach Los Angeles and retake it, but had to give up after some severe fighting at Domingo Ranch, near San Pedro. Stockton then tried to make a landing at San Pedro and finding his forces too light, went on to San Diego.

During all of this time there were skirmishes in the vicinity of San Diego and elsewhere, all rather small affairs in which naval forces from the squadron participated. During all the early fighting there was not an army detachment on Californian soil. The final phases of the acquisition came along in December.

General Kearny of the Army came through the mountains from the east with one hundred men. Learning of the occupation of California by the Navy, Kearny had sent back most of his troops to Sterling Price in New Mexico. On the way west he met Kit Carson, the scout, who had been with Fremont and Gillespie and had gone east with the express.

California by this time had been rather well conquered. San Diego, Monterey, Sonoma, Santa Barbara, Yerba Buena, were all occupied by the forces of Stockton, Gillespie and Fremont. Castro and Don Pico, the Mexican officials in California, had fled to Mexico.

Stockton, upon hearing of Kearny's coming, sent Gillespie from San Diego with forty mounted men to join forces with him at Warner's Ranch, where the Marine met Kearny and together they fought the battle at San Pasqual. Kearny's men were exhausted by their long march; his animals and stock were especially tired and he was in no condition for an engagement. The combined army and naval forces charged the Californians and drove them. In the midst of the pursuit, the enemy scattered hill-billy style and turned and cut the Americans down piecemeal. They killed eighteen and wounded nineteen. Gillespie was wounded in the chest and arm in this action and was later brevetted for his bravery.

Sometime in December the forces of Kearny and Gillespie joined the forces of Marines and sailors from Stockton's ships and together they moved against Los Angeles, defeating the Californians at San Gabriel in a sharp engagement. This battle was on January 8, 1847, and then another at La Mesa on the following day also brought victory to the Americans. On January 10, they again raised the flag at Los Angeles never to come down.

So far as California is concerned the war was over; its acquisition to the United States had been accomplished. Fremont, on his way south had concluded the treaty of Cahuenga (this without Stockton's knowledge) with the Californians, receiving their capitulation and closing the rebellion in California. Within a short while the naval forces turned the State over to the army under General Kearny . . . but the acquisition of California to the Union, the object for which the Government at Washington had fought for so long and arduous, was at last accomplished . . . by naval forces.

The Marines' participation in the acquisition of California, as well as all naval forces', was one of war. They landed under the articles of war, acted under such orders, and operated in territory that supposedly belonged to the enemy. Unbiased posterity must certainly look upon their landings as acts against a country with whom we were at war.

Perhaps Gillespie's trek over Californian trails may some day inspire another writing to rival the "Message to Garcia." Certainly his ensuing actions after leaving President Polk's office; his unswerving loyalty to his Commander-in-Chief in keeping his own counsel, even unto death, as to the secret instructions with which he was entrusted, and his bravery on the fields of California, entitle him to all the promotions and honors that were given to him during his lifetime and that a grateful posterity had bestowed upon him.

CLOTHING

(Continued from page 14)

alphabetical order, regardless of rank, securely wrapped, and forwarded to the Quartermaster. There the accounts are audited and in case of any discrepancy the officer submitting the accounts is notified and a correction is made. The clothing record book follows the man wherever he is stationed throughout his enlistment. When his enlistment expires the book is sent to the Quartermaster at Marine Corps Headquarters. In case a man reenlists he is given a new clothing record book.

There are, no doubt, a large number of men who do not realize the true purpose of "A *Clothing* Allowance." The clothing allowance is an equal allowance given to every enlisted man so that he may wear serviceable uniforms at all times without any cost to himself. The fact that a man is paid in cash for the unused part of his clothing allowance at the time his enlistment expires is no reason why he should deny himself of clothing he needs in order to receive a larger sum of clothing allowance. Your clothing allowance is not a savings account and should not be used as such. The only ways to save your clothing allowance are by making purchases and by taking good care of your clothes. However, when you pay cash for your clothes from the Quartermaster's Department you pay ten per cent more than the amount normally charged against your allowance. The ten per cent added to all cash sales is to pay the overhead expense such as packing and shipping of the articles from place of manufacture.

Men stationed in China usually save more on their clothing allowance than men stationed elsewhere. The reason is that they are given the opportunity to purchase their khaki uniforms, which are made to order, from Chinese tailors, instead of drawing against their clothing allowance. In order to maintain uniformity and comply with Post Regulations, this work is done under the supervision of the Commanding Officer.

To draw clothing on your allowance and to sell it to civilians is a serious offense and should be impressed on every Marine. Though this offense has rarely been known to occur, it may cause men, who are not aware of the fact that their allowance is about exhausted, to be checked for overdrawn allowances.

Men who are assigned to sea duty are authorized a larger clothing allowance than men assigned to other duty. Each man is given an additional allowance of $9.00 when he is assigned to sea duty and an additional allowance of $0.04 for each day while assigned to this duty.

It has been learned through careful study just how much is needed by the average Marine who takes reasonable care of his clothing. The variations in allowance from year to year are occasioned by changes in the prices of various items, *not* by changes in the individual's needs. The amount of allowance has been put at a figure that encourages the Marine to take good care of his clothing, yet does not tend to divert his attention from the fact that his chief purpose is to be an able and efficient soldier. Only in exceptional cases is it necessary for a man to overdraw his clothing allowance in order to keep himself properly outfitted with uniforms and to maintain a military appearance at all times.

A PILLION ON PEGASUS

(Continued from page 7)

rise of about 75 feet "flat footed from a standstill." The vestigial wings that the earlier models bore, like the atrophied digits of the eohippus, have now in the process of evolution been dropped, permitting of amazing observability when compared with the airplane.