THE CONQUEST OF CALIFORNIA

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JAMES KNOX POLK kept a diary during the time he served as President of the United States of America. On Thursday, October 30, 1845, he wrote in it: "I held a confidential conversation with Lieutenant Gillespie, of the Marine Corps, about eight o'clock P.M., on the subject of a secret mission on which he was about to go to California. His secret instructions and the letter to Mr. Larkin, U. S. Consul at Monterey, in the Department of State, will explain the object of his mission." A careful consideration of all the matter bearing on this subject shows that the mission of Lieutenant Gillespie was to carry a message from President Polk to the three representatives of the United States on the Pacific Coast—The American Consul at Monterey, the Commander of the U. S. Naval Forces, and Captain John C. Fremont of the Army, who was on a topographical mission in California. Stripped to its principal requirement this message was a direct order to obtain California for the United States, peaceably if possible but by force if necessary—California must not be lost to a foreign power.

We will now leave Lieutenant Gillespie with President Polk in the President's Mansion for the time being, in order to describe the important events that preceded the Conquest of California in 1846 and 1847.

California had seceded from Mexico in 1836 and adopted, like Texas, a Lone Star Flag. The Mexican troops were expelled and J. B. Alvarado, Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo and Jose Castro assumed control. Two years later Mexico recognized the California Government, but still claimed the territory.

Several American war vessels visited the ports of California during this early period. Among them was the *Peacock* that anchored in Monterey Harbor on October 23, 1836, and stayed there five days. The visit was for the purpose of enquiring into the seizure of the brig *Loriot* and cargo and the confinement of her supercargo.

At this time the actions of the great powers of Europe created a belief in Mexico that they desired a foothold in California. As a result the Mexican Government was suspicious of all foreigners

residing in her northern provinces. These suspicions broke out into action in April, 1840.

THE OUTRAGE OF 1840

While lying at Mazatlan, Mexico, with his ship, the *St. Louis,* Commander French Forrest received information of some outrageous proceedings on the part of the Californian Government toward British and American citizens residing in that territory, which induced him to make a visit to Monterey, the capital of Upper California. Over sixty American citizens and British subjects had been arrested, robbed of their arms and other property, their houses forced open, and they fired at while in their beds, and, without any attempts at defence, were dragged to a loathsome jail and there incarcerated for about twenty days. Some of the prisoners were subsequently discharged, while forty-seven of them, strongly ironed, were transported to San Blas, *via* sea, a distance of over 1200 miles. All this was done without any civil process, conviction, or trial whatever. One of the prisoners, an American by the name of Duger, died at San Blas. All were charged "with an intent to revolutionize California." The outrage unquestionably had its origin in a disposition or conspiracy, on the part of some of the Government officers, to expel the foreigners from the country, and to possess themselves of the fruits of their industry; at the head of this conspiracy was one Jose Castro, the prefect or head police magistrate of California.

These "atrocities," as Secretary of the Navy James K. Paulding called them, committed on the foreign residents at Monterey and its neighborhood, by the Mexican authorities, did not pass without notice from the Navy. Commodore French Forrest, in command of the *St. Louis,* anchored his ship at Monterey on June 15, 1840, at 3.15 P.M. By his prompt and spirited interposition he vindicated and secured the rights not only of American citizens, but of British subjects resident in Upper California. The Marine Guard of the *St. Louis* was in charge of Orderly Sergeant James Robinson. For these services Commander Forrest received a formal expression of the thanks of the American and English residents, and on July 5th sailed from Monterey for the East Coast *via* Cape Horn.

AMERICAN FLAG RAISED AT MONTEREY IN 1842 BY COMMODORE JONES

The next important incident occurred in the year 1842. The Mexican press was doing all it could to create a fighting temper, and

at times President Tyler himself was at a loss to see how war could be avoided. In the Washington *Globe* of March 6, 1840, we read under the heading of "Cession of the Californias," that "the New Orleans papers speak of information received in that city from Mexico, stating that negotiations are on foot between the English and Mexican Governments for the cession of California to the former. The *Bulletin* of the 19th ultimo alludes to several circumstances which render such a movement highly probable."

The New Bedford *Mercury* published the following news item sent from Monterey on September 30, 1841: "California must in time become a place of vast importance, the land, harbors and climate, being the best in the world; San Francisco being the very best. Should John Bull obtain this country, the owners of American whalers may bid farewell to their ships in the Pacific, in case of war between England and America."

An exploring expedition composed of the *Vincennes, Peacock, Porpoise,* and *Flying Fish* visited the California Coast in 1841. The *Peacock* was lost at sea off the mouth of the Columbia River on June 11th of that year. The *Vincennes* and the other vessels anchored of San Francisco in August of 1841, and their boats explored 300 miles up the Sacramento River.

Commodore Thomas A. P. Catesby Jones, in command of the United States Naval Force in the Pacific, was lying in the port of Callao, Peru, during the latter part of the summer of 1842. His flagship was the *United States,* and with him were the *Cyane, Dale* and *Shark.* Marines served on each of these vessels. First Lieutenant George W. Robbins commanded the Marines on the *United States,* with Orderly Sergeant James L. Smith as his First Sergeant. Orderly Sergeant John Robinson was in charge of the *Cyane's* Guard; Orderly Sergeant Josiah Whitcomb was in charge of the Marines on the *Dale;* and a Sergeant's Guard was also stationed on the *Shark.*

On March 22, 1842, while he was at Rio Janeiro, Commodore Jones informed the Secretary of the Navy that "there is some speculation afloat as to the large increase of Naval Force sent to the Pacific by France and England." Two months later, on May 21st, he wrote to the Secretary of the Navy from Callao Bay that a large French expedition had sailed from Valparaiso, destination unknown, but possibly for the purpose of occupying the Sandwich Islands or California. On September 13th, Commodore Jones informed the Department that this expedition had occupied the Marquesas and

Washington Islands, but added a warning that California might be occupied by a foreign power. The suspicions entertained by Commodore Jones that either France or Great Britain might occupy Upper California were based on good grounds. He read in a Mexican newspaper that war probably existed between the United States and Mexico, and that Mexico had ceded California to England. Our American Consul at Mazatlan, John W. Parrott, sent him a letter and a copy of the *El Cosmopolita,* which did not leave much doubt but that war existed between the United States and Mexico. He also read a report in an American newspaper to the effect that Great Britain had purchased California. Commodore Jones, like most well-informed Americans, felt convinced that secret negotiations had been going on for quite a period of time between British and Mexican agents with a view to the cession of some portion of Mexican territory on the Pacific coast to Great Britain; Mexico being, it should be remembered, largely in debt to British citizens. The presence af the large British naval force in the Pacific at this time also caused Commodore Jones to believe the reports coming to him from his varying sources.

The American Commodore evidently had been put upon the alert by his own Government; the question of the annexation of Texas, then in agitation, having given unusual interest and prominence to Mexican affairs, and in the event of war between the two countries, it being manifestly the policy of the United States to seize upon California. It seemed likely to Commodore Jones that the British Admiral was now intending to take formal possession of the territory, supposed to have been ceded, and he deemed it his duty to forestall or resist him in any such plan.

A conference of officers, presided over by Commodore Jones, concluded that in case war did exist the flag should be hoisted in all California ports, and if any European power did so, especially England, it would be "hostile to the true interest of the United States." He consequently sailed suddenly from Callao on the 7th of September, 1842, with the entire squadron, standing out to the westward. The *Shark* was soon sent back to Callao, and, shortly after, the *Dale* was detached with orders to proceed to Panama and land a special messenger with despatches for the Washington Government. The *United States* and *Cyane* then crowded on all sails for the coast of California.

The two ships anchored in the harbor of Monterey near the Castle at 2.45 P.M., on October 19th. The Mexican flag floated over

the town. There were no signs of British authority; so that the American Commodore was successful in being beforehand in respect to the British Admiral's supposed design. The "reiterated rumored cession of California to England" was confirmed by news that Commodore Jones received from the merchantman *Fame* lying in the harbor. His suspicions being also confirmed by what he heard and saw, Commodore Jones concluded to summon the Governor to surrender, and land a force to occupy Monterey. "The time for action has now arrived," he reported to the Secretary of the Navy. "If Admiral Thomas should afterwards arrive and attempt to supplant our flag on shore, the Marines of the squadron manning the guns of the fort without weakening our ships, would insure us the victory, and the responsibility would rest on the English commander."

At 3.45 P.M., Commodore Jones despatched Commander James Armstrong ashore, accompanied by his Secretary, to summon the Governor to surrender Monterey. This Governor was John B. Alvarado, who in 1840 had committed the outrage already described. He "unhesitatingly consented to surrender," and the Mexican Commissioners were an board the *United States* at 7.30 A.M., the next day, October 20th, and signed the articles of capitulation. At 11.30 A.M., the Marines and Bluejackets of the squadron were disembarked and took possession of the Castle of Monterey. The Mexican flag was hauled down and the American flag hoisted at 11.55 A.M., being greeted with three cheers by those on the shore and the squadron Commodore Jones reported to the Secretary of the Navy that "the party that landed was composed of seamen and Marines from both ships, amounting to 150 rank and file. The Marines were under the immediate command of Lieutenant G. W. Robbins, assisted by Mr. H. H. Lockwood, Professor of Mathematics on board, who acted as Adjutant." The entire force was under the command of Commander C. K. Stribling.

The *United States* fired a salute of thirteen guns, the fortress having surrendered without firing a gun. That a long stay on shore was anticipated, was shown by the Marines carrying all their clothing and bedding with them. The next day at 12.10 P.M., "The Castle at Monterey" was saluted with thirteen guns. At 12.15 P.M., the Castle returned the salute with twenty-six guns.

Then came the disconcerting information to Commodore Jones on the 22nd that he had committed acts of war against a State with which his country was at peace; for the log of the *Cyane* of October

22nd shows that at 3.30 P.M., "all hands" were called and a communication from Commodore Jones read to them. The Commodore "having received information that there was no war between Mexico and the United States, the town and fort of Monterey was to be restored immediately to Mexican authorities." The log of the *United States* for the same date records that "the American flag flying over the Fort at Monterey was hauled down at 3.45 P.M., and the Mexican hoisted. The squadron saluted it with thirteen guns which was returned by an equal number from the Fort. * * * At 5.00 P.M., the Mexican Fort hauled down the Mexican flag and hoisted a new one and fired seventeen guns. Lieutenant Dulaney with the first division of stormers and First Lieutenant George W. Robbins with the Marines" returned on board the United States. The Marines of the *Cyane* under Orderly Sergeant John Robinson, returned on board their ship at 5.30 P.M. .Commodore Jones then sailed away.

Several months later Commodore Jones, after shifting his flag aboard the *Cyane,* visited "Monterey, San Francisco, Santa Barbara, San Pedro, and the village of Los Angeles, which last-mentioned place" was "the Headquarters of General Micheltorena, the Governor-General of both Californias." Commodore Jones was received and "treated as the *Nation's Guest,* honored with a public ball, to which he rode in the General's own carriage, drawn by valiant soldiers! Not only the General, but all others in and out of authority were unceasing in their attentions, restricted only by the compass of their means;" and, in fact, it would not be doing justice to the Californians not to say that Commodore Jones and his shipmates were "kindly received everywhere." Even in Mazatlan, "where the Mexicans were not accustomed to pay much respect to our flag," they were "received and treated with marked respect." An officer of the Pacific Squadron writing from Mazatlan on February 8, 1843, stated that: "I may say, with truth, that our Navy and our Nation have attained a character and standing with the proud and haughty Mexicans which it never before had." Such was the effect of the firm attitude assumed by Commodore Jones.

This somewhat precipitate movement on the part of Commodore Jones at Monterey caused a change in the command. He was recalled, and Commodore Sloat sent out as his successor. No censure, however, was ever passed upon the former, for his very decided movement, and it is to be supposed that the vigilance of the officer was acceptable to the government at home rather than otherwise.

THE OCCUPATION OF SAN DIEGO IN 1842

About the same time that Commodore Jones was operating at Monterey, the crew of the American merchantman *Alert,* of Boston, under Captain Phelps occupied the town of San Diego. In the month of October, 1842, the *Alert* was anchored in the harbor of San Diego, when Captain Phelps received information that his country was at war with Mexico, of the capture of Monterey by Commodore Jones, and that Mexican soldiers were on their way to capture his vessel. This news was confirmed on October 28th by a party of American hunters who went on board the *Alert* with all their property seeking protection from the anticipated movements of the hostile troops. Captain Phelps immediately took possession of the fort ashore, spiked the guns, and then got his stores on board and everything ready for slipping his cables if necessary. The *Alert* had four six-pounders on board, which were brought to bear on the shore; and, as the vessel lay within pistol shot of the land, her guns fully commanded the beach. On the 1st of November, the official intelligence of the evacuation of Monterey was received, and, as a matter of course, Captain Phelps ceased warlike operations, and commenced putting his ship in order for taking on cargo. The *Alert* arrived in Boston in April, 1843.

THE CALIFORNIANS DRIVE OUT MEXICANS

In 1843, Santa Anna sent up an army that so harassed the Californians that they again were forced to take up arms.

In November, 1844, Alvarado and Castro led a revolt against the Mexican troops which by February, 1845, drove them out of California. Mexico again recognized this California Government, with Pio Pico as Governor and Jose Castro as Commandante General. However, while Mexico substantially abdicated control of California, the "bare thread of legal proprietorship" was retained, since she expected to dispose of it to Great Britain. British influence was very strong in California. Vallejo was pro-American. Governor Pico "was chief of the British Party, and wanted no Americans in the country." Castro was "amiable to Americans, cordial toward France and posed at Mexico as an ardent patriot," and urged the need of preparing for war with the United States.

Consul Larkin had the respect of all the Californians but was extremely active in the interests of his country. He realized the possibility of a European power appropriating the West Coast. Certainly

President Polk, Secretary of State Buchanan and Secretary of the Navy George Bancroft, as well as Senator Benton, Chairman of the Senate Military Affairs Committee, feared this probability and were prepared to frustrate it. On October 24, 1845, President Polk wrote in his diary that Great Britain "had her eye" on California and "intended to possess it if she could." In those days communication between Washington and California was a question of months. There were no "Pony Express," railroads, telegraph, telephone, fast steamboats, Panama Canal or radio. President Polk through orders to Commodore Sloat, and his secret instructions to Larkin, Fremont, and Sloat, carried by Lieutenant Gillespie, did everything in his power to insure that the United States would forestall European efforts to acquire California. He believed in the Monroe Doctrine.

FREMONT, THE "PATHFINDER"

Captain John C. Fremont, an Army engineer, was a leading figure in this drama. During Tyler's administration he had made two expeditions into the western country, and in the summer of 1845 had undertaken the third. He reached California early in 1846, and, after making brief stops at Sutter's Fort (Sacramento), and Yerba Buena (San Francisco), he went to Monterey to visit Thomas O. Larkin, the American Consul, and to pay his respects to General Castro and Governor Pico.

Difficulties arose between Fremont and the native authorities. It is not necessary to describe them or their cause. Sufficient to know that they existed. Jose Castro, the Commandante General, ordered Fremont to retire from California. Fremont at first refused, established himself on Gavilan (Hawks) Peak, where he erected a log fort and hoisted the American flag. Reconsidering his determination to stand and fight, Fremont retired northward. He arrived at Sutter's Fort late in March, 1846. From there he proceeded to Lessen's Rancho on Deer Creek, in the vicinity of which he remained until April 14th, when he and his party went north. At this time the mission of Captain Fremont was of a topographical nature. He had about fifty men in his party, including Kit Carson and some Delaware Indians. His attention had always been occupied with subjects of science and therefore he was not any too familiar with military matters. This fact is important when considering affairs from now on. Lieutenant Gillespie was Fremont's chief military adviser and aide

from the time he joined him in May, 1846, and Captain Fremont was sincerely open in his praise and thanks to Gillespie for his assistance.

THE NAVY MAINTAINED FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH CALIFORNIANS

The *Portsmouth,* under command of Commander John B. Montgomery, was early on the ground. Her Marines were commanded by Second Lieutenant Henry B. Watson. The *Portsmouth* arrived at Monterey on April 22nd. On the next day Consul Larkin informed Commander Montgomery that " the feeling is rife that California is soon to be governed by England or the United States." On this same date the *Constitution,* the Marines of which were commanded by Second Lieutenant Joseph W. Curtis, sailed for home from Mazatlan, Mexico.

Very happy relations existed between the Californians and the Navy. Castro was suspicious that Commander Montgomery was in collusion with Captain Fremont, who had been ordered out of California by Castro. Mr. Larkin told Commander Montgomery of this suspicion on April 29, 1846. The day before, Lieutenant Watson of the Marines, and other officers of his ship, visited the quicksilver mines near Santa Clara, without passports from the California Government, but Castro accepted the explanations of Commander Montgomery as satisfactory. On May 9th, Commander Montgomery and his officers were present at a picnic given by Castro, and on the 15th Castro was a guest at a large ball given on shore by the officers of the *Portsmouth.*

One of the main sources of trouble at this time, however, was not the foreigners, but a civil war that had begun between Governor Pico and Commandante General Castro.

THE MISSION OF LIEUTENANT GILLESPIE

Now let us return to Washington where we left First Lieutenant Archibald H. Gillespie in secret conference with President Polk.

He had arrived at Hampton Roads in the *Brandywine* on September 17, 1846, after a cruise that had carried him to Rio Janeiro, India, Ceylon, China, Manila, Sandwich Islands, Society Islands, Chile, around Cape Horn, to Rio for a second visit, and from thence to the Virginia Capes, where he arrived after a passage of thirty-eight days. The cruise had been filled with adventure and memorable events—particularly that part of it spent in China waters. Upon his arrival

in home waters Lieutenant Gillespie found the atmosphere highly charged with the pre-war spirit of approaching hostilities with the Mexicans. Much to his delight he no sooner arrived in Washington than he was offered—and enthusiastically accepted—the opportunity of performing an important, as well as extremely hazardous duty. On October 18, 1846, Lieutenant Colonel Commandant Archibald Henderson handed Lieutenant Gillespie these written orders: "You will report yourself to the Honorable Secretary of the Navy for such duty as he may assign you." These are the only *written* instructions to Lieutenant Gillespie known to have been given him. In obedience to these orders Lieutenant Gillespie reported to Secretary of the Navy George Bancroft, from whom he received the orders concerning a secret mission to California, already referred to. From Secretary of State James Buchanan he received orally, secret information to be passed on to the American Consul, Mr. Larkin at Monterey, to the Senior Naval Officer and to Captain John F. Fremont, who were all then in or near California. Mr. Buchanan also handed him a letter of introduction to Captain Fremont, and a long letter addressed to Mr. Larkin to which President Polk referred in his diary. This letter dated October 17, 1845, of Mr. Buchanan to Larkin appointed Larkin a "confidential agent" in California of the President, stated that Lieutenant Gillespie "is a gentleman in whom the President reposes entire confidence," and that he would coöperate with Larkin as a "confidential agent." Senator Benton, the father-in-law of Captain Fremont, intrusted to Lieutenant Gillespie, a packet of personal letters to Captain Fremont, requesting that they be delivered. Then came the confidential interview concerning the "secret mission" of Lieutenant Gillespie with President Polk, in whose good company he was left in the initial paragraph.

THE MAIN IDEA WAS TO ACQUIRE CALIFORNIA

The events occurring on the Pacific coast in 1846 and 1847, not only made California a part of the United States but was the cause of controversies, bickerings, contradictions, charges and counter-charges, courts-martial, and other disagreeable affairs among the chief actors and their adherents. To Americans, however, the fact that California, and the remainder of the Pacific Coast, was saved to the United States is of more vital importance than just how it happened or just who was responsible for such a glorious accomplish-

ment. The successful result is what counted and not to whom should be assigned the glory. Sloat, Kearny, Stockton, Fremont, Gillespie, Larkin, Zeilin, Kit Carson, Montgomery, Vallejo, Missroon, Maddox and many others, including those other numerous early native sons, all did their part—there is glory enough for all. And yet with all this, one cannot avoid the thought that if First Lieutenant Archibald H. Gillespie, of the Marines, had not possessed the courage, the efficiency, and the tenacity of purpose that his actions indicated, it is questionable whether or not our western boundary would be as far west as it is today and California one of the forty-eight States of the Union.

GILLESPIE SAILS FOR VERA CRUZ

Lieutenant Gillespie sailed for Vera Cruz, Mexico, in November, 1845. During the voyage he committed to memory the letter to Larkin and destroyed it. He retained the packet of personal letters confided to his care by Senator Benton for Captain Fremont, and also the letter of introduction to Fremont from Secretary Buchanan. Historians have stated that these were the actions of Lieutenant Gillespie, but they disagree nevertheless on many details. One writer states that Gillespie rolled the official papers " in a bunch of cigarettes while he crossed Mexico." However, it would appear that the necessities of the case and his high intelligence would lead Lieutenant Gillespie to destroy the official papers after he had absorbed their contents sufficiently to repeat them; moreover it is probable that these were his orders.

From Vera Cruz he made his way, accompanied by Mr. W. S. Parrott, Secretary of the American Legation in Mexico, disguised as a merchant, to Mexico City. A revolution kept Lieutenant Gillespie a month in the Capital, but he finally reached Mazatalan on the west coast in February, 1846, having passed through Mexico at a time of very great excitement just previous to the breaking out of hostilities. He found American warships under Commodore Sloat at Mazatlan.

While historians do not agree as to how much information Lieutenant Gillespie gave Commodore Sloat, there is ample evidence to conclude that he divulged, at least, the main outline of his mission to him. Some day an " Elbert Hubbard " will write another " Message to Garcia " but " Rowan " will be " Gillespie," and the message carried will be the one that saved California to the American Union.

GILLESPIE ARRIVES ON WEST COAST

At Mazatlan, Gillespie boarded the *Cyane,* and was taken care of by First Lieutenant W. A. T. Maddox, who commanded the Marines of that vessel. The *Cyane* sailed and arrived at Monterey on April 17, 1846, three days after Fremont had started northward from Lassen's Rancho, at Monterey, he met Mr. Larkin and repeated to him from memory Buchanan's instructions of precisely six months before. Larkin immediately acted to carry out these orders and transmitted, in confidence, the main points of these instructions to his friends at other towns. A careful reading of all the possible instructions received by Larkin—including information received from Gillespie that had never been put in writing—it would appear that the President's plan was to resist the transfer of California to Great Britain, France or any other European power, and that if California desired to become United States territory she would be welcomed with open arms. This was expressed in Secretary of State Buchanan's letter to Larkin, which letter the President stated in his diary contained an outline of Gillespie's mission. Everything else was collateral to the main idea, that the United States would "vigorously interpose" to prevent California from becoming a British or French Colony. As events turned out the native Californians became hostile to the United States and battles were fought. Even if this could have been avoided, it is immaterial, as it did not interfere with the accomplishment of the President's main design.

GILLESPIE MEETS FREMONT

Gillespie withheld nothing from Larkin. He had read Buchanan's letter of October 17, 1845, addressed to Larkin in which he had been appointed a confidential agent of the President to work with Larkin, and he passed every shred of data on to that officer. After delivering to Larkin all the information he had brought from Washington, Gillespie brought up the question of how to reach Fremont. This was an important part of his mission—indeed it was his real mission. Both Larkin and Vallejo assisted Gillespie in his plans to reach Fremont, who by this time was away up in Northern California and still working northward. Gillespie left Monterey immediately in pursuit but found that a stern chase is a long one.

At Sutter's Fort on the Sacramento, Gillespie learned more of

Fremont's whereabouts. He made up a party at Neal's Rancho, assisted by Neal, and led by that faithful American, took to Fremont's trail. After a difficult hike of about six hundred miles, beset on all sides by vindictive Indians and with horses weary from the hard and fast going, Gillespie at last overtook Fremont at the Oregon boundary early in May, 1846—the date on which Resaca de la Palma was fought. The day prior to his meeting Fremont, Gillespie had sent Neal and Sigler ahead to inform Fremont that he was following.

Gillespie never did write much about his achievements, but of this event we have his statement that he "proceeded immediately in search of Captain Fremont, and met him in the mountains of Oregon, May 9, 1846, having passed through a hostile Indian country with only five men, suffering much hardship and privations, want of food," etc. Then again he wrote that "but for this perilous journey into the mountains of Oregon, in pursuit of Captain Fremont" and the faithful performance of the duty intrusted to him by the Government, the early movements, "which frustrated British intrigue in California, could not have been made."

The problem which confronts every historian who writes of these events is: What was it that Gillespie communicated to Fremont at Lake Tlamath on the night of May 9, 1846? The only answer ever given was that made by Fremont. According to Fremont, Gillespie informed him "that he had left Washington under orders from the President and the Secretary of the Navy," and had been "directed to reach California by the shortest route through Mexico to Mazatlan." That he was the "bearer of despatches to the U. S. Consul at Monterey" and that he had been directed to find him [Fremont] wherever he might be, "and that Gillespie had in fact travelled about 600 miles from Monterey and through great dangers." Fremont testified that Gillespie "had crossed the continent through the heart of Mexico, from Vera Cruz to Mazatlan, and the danger of his letter falling into the hands of the Mexican Government had induced the precautions to conceal their meaning. The arrival of this officer, his letter of introduction, some things which he told me, and the letter from Senator Benton, had a decided influence on my next movement."

Gillespie gave Fremont the personal letters from Senator Benton and the letter of introduction from the Secretary of State Buchanan which accredited him to Captain Fremont as coming officialy from the

Secretary of State. Gillespie informed Fremont of the contents of Larkin's letter.

Through Gillespie, Fremont became acquainted with the actual state of affairs and the purposes of the United States Government. Fremont realized that he was relieved from his duty as an explorer and was left to his duty as an officer of the American Army, with authoritative knowledge that his Government intended to acquire California. Gillespie had been sent to warn Fremont "of the new state of affairs and the designs of the President." Fremont later wrote that Gillespie informed him that "to obtain possession of California was the chief object of the President," and that he was to "counteract" all "foreign schemes in relation to California." Fremont wrote that, in substance, the effect of the information brought by Lieutenant Gillespie to him was: "The time has come. England must not get a foothold. We must be first. Act; discreetly but positively."

From Lieutenant Gillespie, Captain Fremont first learned that his country was probably at war with Mexico. The Mexican War did not break out from a clear, peaceful sky. The currents were surging toward this result for a very long period, and only a dull person would have been unable to forsee that war was inevitable. Neither Fremont nor Gillespie were dull. "Mr. Gillespie was directed to act in concert with me," wrote Fremont and "I learned with certainty from him that the President's plan of war included the taking possession of California, and under his confidential instructions I had my warrant." None of these instructions were incompatible with the instructions to Sloat and Larkin. Having thus construed the instructions brought to him by Gillespie from the President, Fremont immediately started southward.

At this time Fremont's party consisted of about fourteen picked men, including that wonderful character Kit Carson, and some friendly Delawares. Fremont and Gillespie had to literally fight their way back through hostile Indians. Once they were attacked by surprise at night, by a large band of Tlamath Indians, and three of Fremont's men were killed. Again, near a canyon at the head of a rocky, wooded ravine, at the foothills of the great mountains, the Americans had to beat off a savage attack of the redskins.

They reached Lassen's Rancho, on the Sacramento River, on May 24, 1846, having subsisted nine days on horse flesh.

THE NAVY HELPS FREMONT

Fremont, however, had no supplies, and moreover no funds with which to purchase any. His only source was the Navy, and it did not fail him. The Naval personnel knew that Gillespie had brought instructions to Fremont from Washington, and they cordially and enthusiastically supported Fremont. On May 28th, Fremont sent Gillespie to Commander Montgomery of the *Portsmouth,* lying at Yerba Buena, with a requisition for supplies, and on the following day left Cordua's Rancho for Sutter's Fort, going down the Sacramento by canoe. Commander Montgomery reported that Lieutenant Gillespie arrived on board the *Portsmouth* on June 3rd "from the camp of Captain John C. Fremont at junction of Feather River and the Sacramento." The assistance accorded by Commander Montgomery is illustrated by his reporting to Commodore Sloat on July 9th that he had "supplied funds and stores to the extent of $2,199.00 to Fremont." This coöperation enabled Fremont to organize a force, not only to carry out what he considered his instructions, but to protect American Interests in a territory of Mexico with which by this time he was certain his country was at war.

SOME FIGHTING IN CALIFORNIA WAS INEVITABLE

Efforts to untangle the snarl into which Californian affairs had become mixed by this time would be futile. Differences between the Californian leaders amounting to civil war; their distrust of the American and other foreign settlers; British and French propaganda; remnants of patriotism of the Californians for Mexico—a mother country which they had discarded; all brought about a condition which makes it somewhat difficult if not impossible to determine responsibility for not keeping the Californians friendly and thus bringing that territory peacefully into the Union rather than by force of arms as actually occurred. Nine-tenths of all that has been written on this subject has been upon this phase of the events rather than upon the major mission given our leaders in California—the acquisition of California. As a matter of fact it is an almost certainty that some groups of Californians would have opposed the American forces, no matter how delicately the affair was handled.

THE "BEAR FLAG"

Trouble between the native Californians and the foreigners residing in California seemed imminent early in June, 1846. Castro and Pico were at the head of the natives. Without attempting to

describe the causes which brought about conditions, the fact is that the Americans and other foreigners felt that their lives and property were in danger from the Californians and Indians. They banded themselves together for self-protection. The first clash occurred on June 11th. A few days later the fort at Sonoma was captured from the Californians, the "Bear Flag" hoisted, and the California Republic informally proclaimed. General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo and others were captured and sent to Captain Fremont as prisoners. The Californians did not relish Fremont's presence. They viewed the Bear Flag as an outrage; were suspicious of all foreigners, were intensely exasperated and the resentment was bitter. They therefore took up arms against Americans. Fremont and Gillespie with about ninety men arrived at Sonoma on June 25th and relieved that post, which was besieged by Castro. On June 29th–30th Fremont and Gillespie, Kit Carson and twenty men, including the Delawares, spiked the guns at the Fort on the south side of the entrance to San Francisco Bay. By July 1, 1846, the Bear Flag was at its zenith. On July 4, 1846, the new republic took more formal form. It was Lieutenant Gillespie, of the Marines, who acted as arbiter for the Committee appointed to draw up the declaration, the members of which could not agree upon the report. Lieutenant Gillespie chose one of the several submitted to him and all signed it. Commander Montgomery was cognizant of all that was going on and some of his officers were present. Fremont was present. He neither averred nor denied that he was acting under orders of the United States. The *Cyane* arrived at Monterey from Mazatlan on June 20th bringing news of the war to California, but this news did not reach San Francisco until a later date.

While the policy of the United States was " to conciliate and win the people " of California and " not to outrage and affright " this was the minor chord of the policy, the major one being *to acquire California.* Fremont and Gillespie were " to counteract foreign designs," and that they did is unquestionable. Thus they successfully accomplished their part of the main mission of the American forces in California during the Mexican War.

In the meantime, on July 5, 1846, Fremont and Gillespie had organized an efficient detachment of volunteers known as the " California Battalion," of which Fremont was commanding officer and Gillespie " Adjutant, Quartermaster and Commissary." The military

part of the organization of this Corps devolved on Gillespie, for Fremont was more of a scientist than soldier.

MARINES LAND AT SAN FRANCISCO

Marines under Second Lieutenant Henry B. Watson, and Bluejackets, landed at Yerba Buena (San Francisco) to protect the residents on July 4, 1846, and returned on board the *Portsmouth* on July 6th.

COMMODORE SLOAT

We must now leave Fremont and Gillespie and trace the movements of Commodore Sloat, who was commanding the American Fleet in the Pacific. His flagship was the *Savannah*. Her Marines were officered by Captain Ward Marston and Lieutenant Queen.

Sloat's "Secret and Confidential" Orders, dated June 24, 1845, signed by Secretary of the Navy Bancroft, were delivered to Commodore Sloat by Lieutenant Watson at Honolulu, on October 2, 1845. On October 12, 1845, the *Savannah* got under way; "Lieutenant Watson took passage in the ship and Commodore Sloat sailed for Mazatlan, Mexico, where he arrived after the very long passage of thirty-seven days, on November 18, 1845."

These orders of June 24, 1845, directed that if Commodore Sloat should learn of war with Mexico he should occupy California ports, and incidentally urged that Commodore Sloat "preserve, if possible, the most friendly relations with the inhabitants." Commodore Sloat learned more of the President's intentions from Lieutenant Gillespie on February 20–22, 1846. On May 17, 1846, he received information of Thornton's defeat from the U. S. Consul at Mazatlan then at Guadalajara; on May 31, 1846, he learned of Palo Alto and the Resaca; and on June 5, 1846, all this information was confirmed. On June 7, 1846, Surgeon Wood—in Mexico City on his way home—sent him word that the Mexican troops, six or seven thousand strong, had, by order of the Mexican Government, invaded the territory of the United States north of the Rio Grande, had attacked the forces under General Taylor, and that the squadron of the United States was blockading the coast of Mexico on the Gulf. "These hostilities" were considered by Commodore Sloat as sufficient to justify him in "commencing offensive operations on the West Coast." He therefore sailed on June 8, 1846, in the *Savannah*, for the coast of California, to carry out the orders of the Navy Department of June 24, 1845. He left the *Warren*

at Mazatlan to bring him any despatches or important information that might reach there. Sloat arrived at Monterey on July 2, 1846, where he found the *Cyane* and the *Levant,* and learned that the *Portsmouth* was at San Francisco.

MARINES PERFORMED EXPEDITIONARY DUTY

During the Mexican War there was a total of 402 Marines, who saw service on the Pacific Coast. They were born in the following states and countries: New York, 117; Pennsylvania, 77; Massachusetts, 26; Maryland, 23; New Jersey, 19; Maine, 16; Virginia, 13; District of Columbia, 13; New Hampshire, 12; Connecticut, 9; Rhode Island, 7; Vermont, 6; Ohio, 6; South Carolina, 3; Delaware, 2; Michigan, 2; Louisiana, 2; Kentucky, 1; Tennessee, 1; Mississippi, 1; Ireland, 21; England, 10; Germany, 7; Holland, 4; and Sweden, Russia, Nova Scotia, and Minorca, each 1.

While all these officers and men did not serve together at any one time there were several operations—for instance at Los Angeles, San Diego, San Pedro, Monterey—in which a great portion of them combined with other personnel to operate ashore. The operations they participated in were land operations and not on board ship. The vessels really served as floating bases from which the Marines and Bluejackets operated and were supplied.

In this connection it is interesting to remember that the Royal Marines of Great Britain were first established in 1664, to act as an expeditionary force of *Sea Soldiers* in the fleet. The "Duke of York and Albany's Maritime Regiment of Foot" or the "Admiral's Regiment" as this organization of British Marines was frequently denominated, consisted of 1200 "Land Souldjers" divided into six companies of two hundred men each. Although described as "Land Souldjers" in the Order in Council, they were raised for service afloat, for in the preamble of the Order it is stated that it was issued upon a report received from the Lords of the Admiralty.

The experiment of using Army troops aboard the vessels of the British Navy had been made during the latter part of the reign of King James I, up to 1664, but proved unsuccessful. During that period service afloat was so unpopular that when it was known that the recruits might be sent aboard ship, none appeared. To meet this condition the "Admiral's Regiment" of Marines was authorized.

Thus the true object of the Marine force at its inception was not that of maintaining discipline and order among the "turbulent and

refractory seamen of the period," but of serving with the Navy as a military body adapted to naval conditions. The need for an "expeditionary force" of soldiers trained to the ways of the sea was as necessary then as now. Not only for what are termed "landing parties" was it desirable to have the Marines in the fleet but for the purpose of having a military force available to take advantage of the "surprise" in actions against strongpoints ashore, after the naval force had done its part. It was recognized by the "Fathers" of the early British Navy that such a force was not only necessary but that it could be maintained at an efficient standard only by being part of the naval service and serving on board the naval vessels. Nobly have the British Marines performed this duty.

Major General John A. Lejeune, the present Commandant of the American Marines, is not only intensely interested in the history of his own Corps, but possesses a thorough knowledge of history, both military and otherwise. Historical reading and study is one of his pet hobbies, and it was he who first pointed out to the writer the causes that brought about the authorizing and raising of the earliest British Marines.

And so we find the vessels of the Pacific Squadron doing this same old-fashioned duty in 1846 and 1847, transporting Marines and Bluejackets to the Pacific Coast to land on the enemy's shores. The presence of a fast-sailing ship, carrying an "expeditionary force" of Marines, would have simplified these operations.

This use of the Naval vessels and Marines in the Mexican War, however, was not novel to the American naval service. The first appearance of United States Marines in history was in the nature of expeditionary service, as part of a relief expedition to Fort Ticonderoga in May, 1775. The landing of a battalion of Marines and Bluejackets at New Providence, Bahama Islands, early in 1776; the Penobscot Expedition in 1779; and the smaller expedition down the Mississippi in the *Rattletrap* under Captain Willing at an earlier date, were other illustrations of expeditionary duty in the Revolution. In 1812, Captain John Williams coöperated with the Army in an expedition to East Florida, he himself being killed by the Indians. In 1836, Colonel Commandant Archibald Henderson took the whole Marine Corps down to Florida, where it fought the Indians. Then came the Mexican War of 1846 and the occupation of California by an expedition of Marines and Bluejackets organized in that country.

MONTEREY OCCUPIED AND AMERICAN FLAG HOISTED NEVER TO COME DOWN

On July 5, 1846, the *Portsmouth* launch arrived at Monterey from San Francisco with information of Torre's defeat near San Rafael the spiking of the guns at San Francisco, the capture of Ridley, and that Fremont and Gillespie were acting with the "Bear Flag" insurgents. This was a decisive despatch. On July 7th, Commodore Sloat sent Captain Mervine to the Military Commandant of Monterey with a summons to surrender the town to the United States. The Commandant replied that he was not authorized to surrender, and referred Commodore Sloat to the Commanding General of California, Don Jose Castro.

About 165 Seamen and eighty-five Marines (under Captain Ward Marston and Second Lieutenant W. A. R. Maddox) were immediately embarked in the boats of the *Savannah, Cyane* and *Levant*. Marston and Queen were in the *Savannah's* boats, Maddox in the *Cyane's*. Those of the *Levant* included Orderly Sergeant John McCabe with two sergeants, one corporal and twelve privates. The boats landed at 10.00 A.M., under cover of the guns of the ships, with great promptitude and good order, under the immediate command of Captain William Mervine, U. S. Navy. Upon landing the forces were immediately formed and marched to the Custom House, where the proclamation, which had been prepared by Commodore Sloat, assisted by Larkin, "to the inhabitants of California," was read, the standard of the United States hoisted amid three hearty cheers by the troops and foreigners present, and a salute of twenty-one guns fired by all the ships. Immediately afterwards the proclamation, both in English and Spanish, was posted up about the town, and two justices of the peace appointed to preserve order and punish delinquencies; the alcades declining to serve. The Bluejackets returned aboard ship at 11.00 A.M., the same date leaving a detachment of Marines under Lieutenant Maddox to garrison Monterey. The Marines took possession of and occupied the barracks, which had been used by the forces of General Castro, which had fled. Commodore Sloat then despatched a courier to General Castro with a letter and a copy of the proclamation and on the 9th did the same for Senor Don Pio Pico, the Governor, who was at Santa Barbara. The hoisting of our flag at Monterey on July 7, 1846, saved California and the Pacific Coast to the United States, and prevented a disastrous collision between the

United States and Great Britain. Sloat's decision, however, was largely influenced by Fremont's and Gillespie's achievements in the north, news of which was received by Sloat on July 5th. On July 6, 1846, Commodore Sloat had sent a despatch to Commander Montgomery at San Francisco, " by sea," to take immediate possession of San Francisco Bay if Fremont would join him or if he himself had sufficient force to do so. He also wrote that he was anxious to know if Fremont would coöperate with the Naval Forces. The following day Commodore Sloat sent a duplicate of this order overland to Montgomery and directed him to hoist the flag at San Francisco.

HORSE MARINES

On July 8, 1846, Commodore Sloat directed the organization of a company of 35 dragoons from Marines, Bluejackets and volunteers ashore " to keep open the communication between Monterey and San Francisco," and to act, as what may be termed, the first Mounted Police of California. Sloat selected Purser Fauntleroy to command this mounted company.

FLAG HOISTED AT SAN FRANCISCO

On July 8, 1846, Commander John B. Montgomery, of the *Portsmouth,* lying at Yerba Buena, " received an express from Commodore Sloat at Monterey with a proclamation, announcing the commencement of war between the United States and Mexico. A battle having been fought on the Rio Grande * * * Sloat had taken possession of Monterey and hoisted the American standard over the Californias as a part of the United States." San Francisco " was called Yerba Buena, for the peppermint, which was plentiful around some springs, located probably a little south of the junction of Pine and Sansome Streets."

Commander Montgomery landed July 9, 1846, at Yerba Buena " with seventy men, including Marines, under Lieutenant Watson, and at 8.00 A.M., hoisted our flag in front of the Custom House in the public square with a salute of twenty-one guns from the ship, followed by three cheers on shore and on board, in which the people, principally foreign residents, seemed cordially to join." Commander Montgomery then read the proclamation of Commodore Sloat and one of his own. The proclamation of Commander Montgomery stated that " a military guard has been stationed in possession of the Custom House under Henry B. Watson, Esq., whom I have appointed the Military Commandant (*pro tem*) of all the Marines and Militia."

The seamen with a small portion of the Marines were then returned to the ship. "Lieutenant Watson with the residue of his guard were formally established as military occupants of the post." A militia guard of thirty-two volunteers was formed and placed under Lieutenant Watson.

Commander Montgomery gave Lieutenant Watson written orders on July 9th. "You will remain in military possession as the commander of the Marines and local Militia," directed Montgomery addressing Watson as "Military Commandant of the Marines and Militia stationed as Yerba Buena."

On July 11th Watson reported to Commander Montgomery from the "Marine Barracks, Yerba Buena," that all was quiet, and the same on the 12th.

Thus the whole of that very noble and important bay became at once, substantially subject to the American flag. By July 11th, the flag was flying on Sutter's Fort on the Sacramento, at Bodega on the coast, at Sonoma, and at Yerba Buena, or what is commonly called San Francisco.

On July 9, 1846, Lieutenant J. S. Missroon, U.S.N., and a detachment of mounted Marines of the *Portsmouth* proceeded to the fort at the entrance of the harbor of San Francisco, about seven miles from Yerba Buena, and hoisted the flag. They found three brass guns; old Spanish pieces made in 1623, 1628, and 1693; three long iron 42's and four smaller iron guns. These were the guns that had been spiked by Gillespie and Fremont. They called at the Presidio on the way, but found no guns.

AN EARLY ADVANCED BASE

On July 10, 1846, the *Portsmouth's* Marines were on shore doing guard duty and the Marines and sailors, under Lieutenant Missroon, were cutting away a portion of Telegraph Hill to obtain room to plant a battery there to help defend the ships.

AT THE MISSION OF DOLORES

On July 11, 1846, Lieutenant J. S. Missroon proceeded "with a small party of Marines mounted as cavalry to the Mission of Dolores (six miles from Yerba Buena) in search of arms, ammunition, etc., and public documents of the district." Only an old lance was found, documents collected and brought back and "placed in the Custom House under charge of Military Commandant Watson."

The British warship *Juno* anchored at San Francisco on July 11, 1846. Watson's Marines were withdrawn from the shore to assist in defending the *Portsmouth* in case the *Juno* showed a disposition to fight. The Flag ashore was guarded by civilians. The Marines returned on shore shortly afterwards. On July 17th, Montgomery reported to Commodore Sloat that the entrance to San Francisco Bay could be "fortified in a manner to repel the whole Navy of Great Britain," as war with that country, "now more than ever likely to occur," and recommended that heavy guns should be placed there.

THE "FIRST SHOT"

The Marines of Lieutenant Queen fired the first shot that was fired after the raising of the American flag, when he had a skirmish with the forces of Don Emanuel Castro "Chinate" a notorious Californian, on July 12, 1846.

SLOAT PRAISES THE MARINES

On July 15, 1846, Sloat issued a General Order in which he announced to the "officers, seamen and Marines, under his command," that the flag was flying at Yerba Buena, Sutter's Fort on the Sacramento, Saucelito, Sonoma, and Bodega, and that the forces of the United States have quiet possession of the magnificent Bay of San Francisco and all the country within one hundred miles around."

AT THE MISSION OF SAN JUAN

On July 17, 1846, Fauntleroy's Dragoons, composed of Marines, Sailors and volunteers, were ordered to reconnoiter the country as far as the Mission of San Juan (St. John's); to take possession of that place; hoist the American flag and recover ten brass cannon said to have been buried there by General Castro before he retreated. On their arrival at San Juan, however, they found that Fremont and Gillespie had anticipated them shortly before and occupied the town. The Dragoons and Fremont's force then went on to Monterey, arriving there on the 19th.

On a later date Commodore Sloat sent Fauntleroy back to St. John's "to garrison the place, dig up, mount the guns, and recover a large quantity of powder and shot, said to have been secreted there." Later, as will be seen, Lieutenant Queen with his Marines relieved Fauntleroy in command of the garrison at this post.

CALIFORNIA LEADERS THROW IN LOT WITH MEXICO

Both Commodore Sloat and Consul Larkin endeavored to conciliate Castro, but he would not be reconciled to the conditions. He retorted by demanding an explanation of the Sonoma affair. Doubtless that episode had thoroughly angered him, and he felt besides that a man in his official position would not be forgiven by the people, should he condone it. Alvarado and Pico, both of whom were cordially addressed, held entirely aloof; and before long the Governor Pico and Commandante General Castro, forced into a reconciliation by Fremont's operations, united their commands. But as the people of Northern California generally, thankful to escape from the clutches of the Bear and pleased with Sloat's proclamation, appeared willing to accept the change of flags, these two leaders withdrew to the vicinity of Los Angeles, where with about 800 men and ten cannon they supported—or pretended to support—the cause of Mexico. The situation was further clarified by Admiral Sir George F. Seymour, commanding the British, who arrived at Monterey on July 16, 1846, on the *Collingwood*, and a week later admitting that he could not interfere, sailed away for the Sandwich Islands.

Commodore Sloat reported to the Secretary of the Navy that "the visit of the Admiral was very serviceable to our cause in California, as the inhabitants fully believed he would take part with them, and that we would be obliged to abandon our conquest; but when they saw the friendly intercourse subsisting between us, and found that he could not interfere in their behalf, they abandoned all hope of ever seeing the Mexican flag fly in California again."

FREMONT AND GILLESPIE VISIT SLOAT

On July 7, 1846, Sloat wrote to Commander Montgomery that he wished "very much to see and hear from Captain Fremont," in order that they might understand each other and coöperate together."

Fremont and Gillespie arrived at Monterey on July 19, 1846, with 160 mounted riflemen and one piece of artillery. They immediately repaired on board the *Savannah* (Marston and Queen) and waited on Commodore Sloat, who appeared glad to see them. This was the only interview Sloat and Fremont had, and nothing came of it. The appearance of Fremont's force made a striking impression on the British.

STOCKTON RELIEVES SLOAT

Commodore Robert F. Stockton was given command of the frigate *Congress* (on which vessel the Marines were commanded by Captain Jacob Zeilin), which had been equipped at Norfolk for duty in the Pacific. His sealed orders, which were not to be opened until he had passed beyond "the Capes of Virginia," directed him to proceed to the Sandwich Islands, and eventually, to join the squadron of Commodore Sloat. To Stockton was intrusted the originals of the instructions to Sloat and Larkin, duplicates of which, as we have seen, were sent overland in care of Lieutenant Gillespie.

Commodore Stockton arrived at Monterey in command of the *Congress* on July 15, 1846, from Valparaiso *via* Sandwich Islands. He reported for duty to Commodore Sloat who was on board the *Savannah*.

Sloat reported to the Secretary of the Navy that on July 23, 1846, his "health being such as to prevent" his "attending to so much and such laborious duties," he "directed Commodore Stockton to assume command of the forces and operations on shore; and on the 29th, having determined to return to the United States, *via* Panama," he hoisted his "broad pennant on board the *Levant* and sailed for Mazatlan and Panama, leaving the remainder of the squadron under" the command of Stockton.

COMMODORE SLOAT AGAIN COMMENDS THE MARINES

In referring to "the officers, seamen, and Marines of the squadron" that he "had the honor to command," during all these operations in California prior to his departure, Commodore Sloat officialy reported, on July 31, 1846, to Secretary of the Navy George Bancroft, "that no men could display more zeal, activity and determined desire to do honor to their country and the service than they."

FREMONT AND GILLESPIE SERVE UNDER STOCKTON

As before stated, Commodore Stockton relieved Commodore Sloat on July 23, 1846. Stockton had vision enough to see that if he did not act in conjunction with Fremont (who he knew had received secret instructions from the President of the United States, through Gillespie, to act toward the acquisition of California) that country might be lost to his Government, therefore acted with intelligent judgment. He proposed to Fremont that the "California Battalion"

act as a part of the naval forces, and that if Fremont consented he would commission Fremont a "Major" and Gillespie a "Captain." This would raise each of these two officers one grade in rank. Fremont met this coöperating spirit of his senior in a different branch of the service, with equal spirit, and the California Battalion became in fact a battalion of "Acting Marines," in the Naval Service subject to the orders of Commodore Stockton. Lieutenant Gillespie, by tact and through his influence allayed discontent among the volunteers composing the "California Battalion" and brought about a unanimous decision to serve under Stockton. Fremont was therefore an Acting Marine officer. Commodore Stockton declared himself Governor of California, and this "California Battalion" composed of "Acting Marines" formed in reality the first armed forces—corresponding to the present National Guard—of California. Commodore Stockton then proceeded with energy to pacify that territory.

THE "CALIFORNIA BATTALION" WERE "ACTING MARINES"

In his statement at his courts-martial Fremont says that "we became a part of the naval forces under" Stockton's command. "We (Lieutenant Gillespie and myself) joined Commodore Stockton for the public good, and with some sacrifice of our independent positions. Neither of us could have been commanded by him except upon our own agreement. I belonged to the Army and was at the head of the popular movement in California. * * * Lieutenant Gillespie was of the Marines, and was, besides, on special duty, by orders of the President, and no officer of any rank could interfere with him. We might have continued our independent position, and carried on the war by land. * * * We became part of the Naval forces."

On July 25, 1846, Fremont and Gillespie received their commissions from Stockton. Fremont stated in a letter to Senator Benton, dated July 25, 1846, that "a force of eighty Marines will be attached" to his battalion. This battalion "was received into the service of the United States to aid the Navy," or as expressed by another authority, "taken into the naval service as the California Battalion."

A few days later, on the 29th, Commodore Sloat sailed away in the *Levant* for Mazatlan and Panama, leaving under Stockton the following ships at the following places: The *Portsmouth* at San Francisco; the *Congress* and *Savannah* at Monterey; the *Cyane* en route to San

Diego with the "California Battalion"; the *Warren* at Mazatlan, and the storeship *Erie* at the Sandwich Islands.

The plan of Stockton was to sail at once for San Pedro and attack Castro at Los Angeles.

SAN DIEGO OCCUPIED

On July 29, 1846, Lieutenant Rowan of the Navy, "with the Marine Guard and a few Sailors" of the *Cyane*, landed at San Diego and hoisted the American flag. The Bluejackets immediately withdrew and the "Marines were left to guard the flag," under Second Lieutenant W. A. T. Maddox, of the Marines. The log of the *Cyane* includes the information under date of the 29th that the "Marine Guard under command of Lieutenant Maddox" was left "on shore to defend the flag and town."

SANTA BARBARA OCCUPIED

Commodore Stockton sailed in the *Congress* about the first of August, 1846, from Monterey (leaving the *Savannah* there) and occupied Santa Barbara on August 4th, where he left a small force. Lieutenant Zeilin commanded the Marines and was Adjutant of the Naval Battalion in this operation. Commodore Stockton arrived at San Pedro (twenty-eight miles from Los Angeles) on August 6, 1846. Here he learned of the arrival of the *Cyane* at San Diego and the landing there of Fremont's Battalion.

LOS ANGELES OCCUPIED

When it became evident to the Californians that Commodore Stockton intended to occupy Los Angeles, Pico and Castro remonstrated and finally prohibited his advance. Stockton refused to consider this protest. His force consisted of the Marines of the *Congress* under Lieutenant Jacob Zeilin, and Bluejackets and volunteers. An additional force of 120 volunteers under Captain Fremont and Lieutenant Gillespie also joined on the 13th. The records show one Marine wounded on the 10th, Private John Yost, shot in the head. This force moved from San Pedro on August 11, 1846.

Stockton reported that they had "quietly occupied" the famous City of the Angels, the capital of the Californians, on August 13, 1846. The enemy had "buried their guns" and retreated. Additional Marines from the *Cyane* under Lieutenant Maddox, joined the

forces at Los Angeles on August 16th. Jose Maria Flores and Don Andres Pico (brother of Pio Pico) were captured and paroled.

CIVIL GOVERNMENT ORGANIZED

On August 17, 1846, Commodore Stockton issued his proclamation that California belonged to the United States.

Having occupied the capital of the enemy, Commodore Stockton proceeded with the organization of a temporary civil government. He himself, "exercised the powers of Governor of California and Commander-in-Chief of the forces of the United States." He divided California into three military districts—Northern, Middle and Southern. He appointed Major John C. Fremont "Military Commandant of the Territory"; Captain Archibald H. Gillespie, Military "Commandant of the Southern Department," with headquarters at Los Angeles; and later appointed Lieutenant W. A. T. Maddox, Military Commandant of the Middle Department, with Headquarters at Monterey.

At this time, according to Commodore Stockton's report, he had intended to "leave the territory" in order to capture Acapulca and other southern ports. His plan was to appoint Major Fremont Governor of California, and directed that officer to meet him on October 25th, at San Francisco to turn over.

STOCKTON SAILS FOR THE NORTH

Commodore Stockton received alarming information that Sutter's Settlement was menaced by a large body of Walla Walla Indians. The *Savannah* was ordered to proceed immediately to San Francisco Bay. Lieutenant Maddox was appointed "Military Commandant of the Middle Department." Lieutenant Queen of the Marines, joined the *Savannah* from San Juan, just before she sailed. Stockton decided to follow. Leaving Los Angeles on September 2nd, with an absurdly small retaining force under Gillespie, Commodore Stockton sailed from San Pedro on the *Congress* on September 5th. Despite the earnest recommendations that a stronger force be left under Gillespie at Los Angeles, he had only forty-eight volunteers of his battalion of mounted riflemen to cope with an ugly situation. The inadequacy of this force for the mission assigned was proven by the fact that it was totally unable to cope with the enemy during the subsequent period. Larkin had urged that Gillespie be given a "respectable command." "Gillespie's task was peculiarly important because news and troops

from Mexico would arrives first at Los Angeles, and because that section had the largest percentage of restless people."

Picking up the small garrison he had previously left at Santa Barbara and stopping a short time at Monterey, Commodore Stockton soon arrived in San Francisco Bay and joined the *Savannah*. He found that the reports about the Indians had been greatly exaggerated.

INCIDENTS AROUND MONTEREY

Events were also transpiring around Monterey. On July 29, 1846, Lieutenant Queen of the Marines at Monterey, was ordered to San Juan, forty miles from Monterey, with the Monterey Marines to aid in its defense. On August 4, 1846, Fauntleroy of the Navy, turned over the command at San Juan to Lieutenant Queen, who, with seventeen Marines, continued in command of that town for a considerable period. Lieutenant Queen's Marines had several contacts with Indians during this time. On September 18, 1846, Private John Fishpon, of the *Savannah*, died at San Juan.

In August, 1846, Lieutenant Maddox of the Marines, stationed at Los Angeles since August 16th, was ordered on the 18th of that month to proceed "with Captain Ford's company of volunteer riflemen in pursuit of" General Alavado, Manuel Castro Pablo de la Guerra and Colonel La Forre, all notorious Californians. Having performed this duty and travelled the several hundred miles to Monterey, Commodore Stockton then appointed him Captain of a company of mounted volunteers and Commandant of the Central Military District of California, at Monterey. The performance of duty by Captain Maddox in this capacity called for frequent praise from his superior. He remained on shore with the Marines of the *Cyane* until the arrival of that ship at Monterey. Maddox then went to San Diego on special duty for a day or so and returned to Monterey in the *Congress*.

REVOLT IN LOS ANGELES

No sooner had Commodore Stockton sailed than the Californians became active in the vicinity of Los Angeles. Within a few days about 400 Californians were in arms. The surrender of Lieutenant Wilson, U.S.N., with some twenty-five Bluejackets at the Chini Farm to about 110 insurgents encouraged them. Lieutenant Colonel Flores and Don Andres Pico were the leaders. The first attack was made on Gillespie in Los Angeles on September 23, 1846. Gillespie reported that on this date he "was attacked in the Government House by a

force of sixty-five Californians; beat them off with twenty-one men, wounding two of the enemy." Gillespie had only seventy-two men, including "stewards, Indians and camp followers." He "was without supplies of any kind." He "had no artillery when attacked in the Government House." "After much labor" he "succeeded in clearing and mounting upon the axles of ox carts, three old pieces of iron artillery and made shot and grape from the lead of distillery pipes, which" he "found in a vineyard close at hand." His "force, although subsisting most of the time upon a scanty allowance of dried beef, labored in strengthening" the "works with the greatest enthusiasm, determined to stand by" Gillespie "until the last man should fall, rather than submit to the terms proposed by the insolent officers of the enemy."

From September 23rd to the 30th Gillespie was "besieged by a force of 600 Californians, having skirmishes with them day and night."

"Upon the 30th of September, 1846, after the constant skirmishing and losing but one man," Gillespie obtained honorable terms and marched out of the City with Colors flying, without leaving an article behind him, and as he reported, "having endured more suffering in those seven days, than" his "service of seventeen years could equal."

MERVINE'S DEFEAT AT SAN PEDRO

Gillespie retired from Los Angeles and boarded the merchant ship *Vandalia* lying at San Pedro. Captain Mervine shortly after arrived at San Pedro on board the *Savannah* with orders to do all he could for the small garrison at Los Angeles. Of course he found Gillespie on the *Vandalia.*

Acting in the spirit of his instructions, Captain Mervine, on October 8th, landed Marines and Bluejackets and with Gillespie's men, but without artillery, attempted to force his way across the plain to Los Angeles. Early on the march he was met by a body of Californians with a single piece of artillery, which they used so effectually to harrass him that he was compelled to abandon his attempt to reach Los Angeles and retreated to the *Savannah* with a loss of four killed and several wounded. Among the wounded was Private William Conlan. "When the Americans charged, this gun was hurried beyond their reach by mounted men with lariats; but as soon as the Americans halted from exhaustion, it was drawn back and set at work."

STOCKTON MOVES TO RELIEVE GILLESPIE

About September 30, 1846, word reached Commodore Stockton, in San Francisco Bay, that Gillespie was besieged in the Government House at Los Angeles by a large force. Stockton at once ordered the *Savannah* to San Pedro and immediately conceived a plan for Gillespie's relief. Fremont, with his battalion, was at Sacramento and was ordered to proceed to San Francisco and join Stockton. Fremont arrived in San Francisco on October 12th, and embarked on the *Sterling*. He was directed to proceed to Santa Barbara, from where he would march on Los Angeles. Stockton would go to San Pedro, from where he would march upon the City of the Angels.

The Marine Guard of the *Warren* at this time was ashore at Monterey under Lieutenant Maddox.

The *Congress* and *Sterling* sailed in company, as soon as possible, but separated in a fog. The *Congress* reached San Pedro about October 23, 1846, having landed reinforcements at Monterey, en route, to assist Captain Maddox. On the way south Stockton had spoke with the merchant ship *Barnstable* carrying despatches to him from Maddox. Stockton also touched at Santa Barbara. At San Pedro, Stockton found Gillespie on board the *Savannah*.

Serious efforts were now directed towards recapturing the city of Los Angeles. On October 25, 1846, Stockton landed and hoisted the flag over San Pedro, the Marines being under Lieutenant Zeilin. Stockton and Gillespie sailed for San Diego, which was also in difficulty. Fremont, it seems, failing to get horses at Santa Barbara, had gone on to Monterey but hoped to get south soon, and Stockton sent the *Savannah* there to assist him. Stockton and Gillespie arrived at San Diego about October 24, 1846. Here the Marines and Bluejackets had several engagements with the enemy, the most important one being on November 24, 1846. At this time San Diego was a "small group of adobe houses about four miles northeast of the present city."

SAN PEDRO RECAPTURED

The Californians had occupied San Pedro after the retreat of Mervine. Stockton had expected to find Fremont at Santa Barbara, and had gone on hoping to find him at San Pedro. On October 24th the Marines and Bluejackets of the *Savannah* and *Congress* landed at San Pedro. As the Americans approached the shore, the enemy fired a few muskets without harm and fled; the Naval force took pos-

ession and once more hoisted our flag at San Pedro. The Commander-in-Chief commended the "determined courage with which the officers, Sailors, and Marines landed (in spite of the false alarm as to the enemy's force) and again hoisted the American standard at San Pedro."

The roadstead of San Pedro was a dangerous position for men of war being exposed to storms which at this season raged with great violence. Commodore Stockton therefore proceeded to San Pedro.

As had been described, Fremont had sailed on the *Sterling* from San Francisco with Stockton, but the ships had parted and Stockton had heard nothing of him up to the time he left San Pedro for San Diego. Stockton had sent the *Savannah* to Monterey to aid Fremont.

On arriving at San Diego Stockton found it besieged. A force was landed and defeated the enemy.

At this time Flores was acting as provisional governor and commandante general of the California forces and martial law had been declared in Los Angeles. Don Andres Pico was associated with Flores.

GILLESPIE ALMOST GOES TO SAN BERNARDO

About this time Stockton learned that the principal force of the insurgents was encamped at San Bernardo, thirty miles from San Diego. Thereupon Commodore Stockton ordered Captain Gillespie to proceed there, with as many men as he could mount, and one field piece to surprise them. But receipt of an urgent request for reinforcements from General Kearny made it necessary for Gillespie to give up this plan and go to Kearny's relief.

REINFORCEMENTS SENT TO KEARNY

About December 5, 1846, while he was organizing his small army of Marines, Bluejackets and Volunteers, Commodore Stockton received an express from Brigadier General Kearny announcing his arrival at Warren's Ranch (Aguá Caliente) the frontier settlement of California. Commodore Stockton immediately despatched Gillespie with a small force to join him. Gillespie left San Diego December 3, 1846, with about 40 mounted men. On the day but one following his departure from San Diego, Gillespie met General

Kearny about one o'clock in the afternoon, in the mountains between Santa Maria and Santa Ysabel, and put himself under his orders. Gillespie carried a letter dated December 3, 1846, from Stockton to Kearny. "I have ordered Captain Gillespie, with a detachment of mounted riflemen and a field piece, to your camp without delay. Captain Gillespie is well-informed and will give you all needful information," etc., read the letter dated December 3, 1846, from Stockton to Kearny which Gillespie handed the latter. Small as it was, his party proved a seasonable addition to the force which the General had with him.

BATTLE OF SAN PASQUAL

Informed by Gillespie of the proximity of a force of Californians, the General decided to attack, and, if possible, to "surprise" them. In the evening of the same day he encamped near San Pasqual.

On December 6, 1846, General Kearny fought and lost to Andres Pico the Battle of San Pasqual. Kearny himself was wounded and had two officers and sixteen men killed and four officers and eleven men wounded. Captain Gillespie, in endeavoring to rally the dragoons, was attacked by seven lancers, front and rear, and finally dismounted. He was wounded in the left breast, cut open to the lungs, and received a deep gash upon the right arm and, when rising from the ground, received a blow in the mouth from a lance which broke a front tooth.

In describing this battle in a speech delivered in the United States Senate, Senator Benton stated that Don Andres Pico "inquired for the killed, and especially for Gillespie, whom he personally knew, and whom he had reported among the dead. Godey told him that he was not dead, but badly lanced, and that his servant in San Diego had made up some supplies for him, which he had brought—sugar, coffee, tea, fresh linen. Pico put the supplies under a flag, and sent them to Gillespie, with an invitation to come to his camp and receive better treatment than he could get on the dry rocks of San Bernardo; which he did, and was treated like a brother, returning when he pleased. The same flag carried a proposition to exchange prisoners." Gillespie was brevetted a Captain for his gallantry in this battle.

General Kearny after this defeat despatched Ensign Beal, Kit Carson and an Indian to Commodore Stockton for reinforcements.

A large force of Marines and Bluejackets under Lieutenant Zeilin of the Marines and Lieutenant Gray were immediately despatched These reinforcements joined Kearny on December 11, 1846.

The remainder of the month of December was devoted to the completion of plans for the recapture of Los Angeles. General Kearny arrived at San Diego on December 12, 1846.

Stockton's small Army, composed principally of Marines and Bluejackets with some volunteers and a few of Kearny's dragoons, set out for Los Angeles, on December 29, 1846. Commodore Stockton was in supreme command with General Kearny acting under his orders in direct command of the troops. Lieutenant Zeilin was Stockton's Adjutant. The battle of San Gabriel was won twelve miles from Los Angeles on January 8, 1847. The 32nd anniversary of the Battle of New Orleans. The Battle of La Mesa was won the following day, Los Angeles occupied on January 10, 1847, and Gillespie's flag replaced on the Custom House. Gillespie was wounded by a carbine ball in the left hip in the Mesa battle.

After capturing Don Jesus Pico and others early in January, Major Fremont and the Californian leaders signed the Treaty of Cahuenga on January 12, 1847. From this date on Los Angeles remained in American hands.

THE EXPEDITION UNDER MARSTON

While Los Angeles was being re-occupied Marines were busily engaged farther north. On December 29, 1846, an expedition of Marines (under Lieutenant Tansill), volunteers, and Weber's Mounted Company with a small field piece, the whole force under command of Captain Ward Marston of the Marines, set out from San Francisco for the purpose of capturing some leading Californians and releasing a Naval officer and some Bluejackets, held as prisoners by them. Captain Marston experienced many difficulties. The gun-carriage broke and was "repaired with lashings of cowhide." The streams made his Marines "strip to it as it was waist deep." One Marine was "slightly wounded in the head in an engagement on January 2nd. On this date the American force "was in a miry place, the Marines up to their knees, and the gun over the hubs in mud." The "enemy then surrounded us," reported Marston, "but a stand of grape and the fire of the Marines and volunteers soon dispersed them." The Californians laid down their arms on January 7th. The success of the expedition was largely

made possible by the arrival of Lieutenant Maddox at Santa Clara Mission, where the surrender occurred, in eleven days from Monterey, after a circuit of 200 miles and the most difficult in California. For this exploit Captain Marston was brevetted a Major. Lieutenant Tansill and Surgeon Duvall of the Navy were warmly commended for their splendidly performed duty. Lieutenant Maddox returned to Monterey and Marston was back at San Francisco on January 10th.

THE ACQUISITION COMPLETED

The acquisition of California may be said to have been completed with the "Capitulation" or "Treaty of Cahuenga," which was signed on January 12, 1847.

The many stirring incidents participated in by Marines along the Pacific Coast during the remaining part of the Mexican War will be described at another time.

GILLESPIE RETURNS TO WASHINGTON

About the middle of January, 1847, Commodore Stockton appointed Major Fremont, Governor, and Lieutenant Gillespie, Major of the California Battalion. Gillespie's commission was dated January 18th, and was received by him two days later. It was also the intention of Commodore Stockton to appoint Gillespie the Secretary of the Territory. Trouble then arose between Kearny and Fremont. These troubles necessarily delayed Gillespie, who on March 11th, by order of Kearny, was relieved from duty with the California Battalion. This left Gillespie with no active military duties and he received orders to return to Washington. In company with Commodore Stockton, Gillespie left the West Coast on May 25, 1847, and travelling overland arrived in Washington, November 15, 1847.