

PART ONE

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THE EARLY MILITARY HISTORY  
OF COLORADO  
1860-1876

HISTORY OF THE  
MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS OF THE  
STATE OF COLORADO  
1860-1934

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CHAPTER I.  
THE VOLUNTEERS OF THE CIVIL WAR, 1861-1865.

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“TERRITORY OF JEFFERSON” AND ITS MILITARY COMPANIES—  
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GOVERNOR GILPIN’S EMERGENCY MEASURES—THE SITUATION  
IN NEW MEXICO 1861-62—BATTLE OF VALVERDE—CONFEDER-  
ATE ADVANCE—ORGANIZATION OF THE FIRST COLORADO IN-  
FANTRY VOLUNTEERS—MARCH TO FORT UNION—BATTLE OF  
LA GLORIETA—CONFEDERATE RETIREMENT—REORGANIZA-  
TION OF THE REGIMENT AS CAVALRY—INDIAN CAMPAIGNS—  
MUSTER OUT.

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The “First General Assembly of the Territory of Jefferson” met in Denver during January, 1860, and among the “Acts” passed by the “Legislature” was one “To authorize the formation of military companies”. In this so-called “Act” the history of the military organizations of Colorado had its beginning, and under authority of the law there was raised in the latter part of January, 1860, in Auraria (West Denver) and Denver two military companies known respectively as the “Jefferson Rangers” and the “Denver Guards”. The “Jefferson Rangers” were commanded by Captain H. H. C. Harrison, and were called upon two weeks after their initial organization to suppress a lawless gang in Auraria known as the “Bummers” in the “Turkey War” of February, 1860.<sup>1</sup> The “Denver Guards”, a mounted company, was under command of Captain W. P. McClure, an ardent supporter of the Southern cause and quite a noted character in the new community because of his duel with R. E. Whitsitt (later to become Colorado’s first Adjutant General) in October of 1859. To quote from Smiley’s “History of Denver”: “These companies would seem to have had things wrong end foremost, for the ‘Guards’ should have been on foot and let the ‘Rangers’ have the horses if there were much ranging to be done. However, that was of little consequence; for both companies disbanded late in that winter (1860-61) and, therefore, as organizations were not known of men in the events of the civil war; though a large proportion of their members enlisted in the regiments organized later”.

<sup>1</sup> So-called because the “Bummers” had robbed a rancher of a wagon load of turkeys that he had brought to Auraria to sell. This episode precipitated the “war” between the law-abiding citizens and the “Bummers”, and resulted in the eventual banishment of the latter.



Colorado became a territory of the Union on February 26, 1861, and the first governor of the newly created territory, William Gilpin, arrived in Denver on May 29th, 1861, to take up his duties as chief executive. The Civil War had commenced, and conditions in the new territory were in a somewhat chaotic condition. A large secessionist element was present in the community, and prompt and decisive measures were necessary to save Colorado to the Union. These measures Governor Gilpin applied with characteristic vigor, and as a means towards the defense of the territory he began the enrollment of military companies which were the nucleus of the Colorado Volunteers who later played so important a part in the campaigns in New Mexico, Missouri, Colorado and Kansas.

As a further means of organizing the military of the territory Governor Gilpin appointed a military staff with R. E. Whitsitt as Adjutant General, Samuel Moer, Quartermaster, John S. Fillmore, Paymaster, and Morton C. Fisher, purchasing agent. The latter was sent out to buy and collect all the arms that could be obtained, and as every settler or emigrant had brought at least one rifle or shotgun into the territory a large and varied assortment was soon secured. This measure was supposed to serve the double purpose of obtaining arms for the troops that were being raised and to deprive Southern sympathisers of weapons that might be used against the forces of the Union. Inasmuch as the weapons purchased were a heterogeneous collection of all calibers and makes totally unsuited to the use of an organized military force, and as the Southern sympathisers would not sell their arms, neither purpose was attained. In fact, the Governor soon had active competition in the purchase of arms. Confederate sympathisers, throwing off all restraint, entered the field for the purchase of arms, and actually posted small handbills in Denver and the adjacent mining camps offering good prices for serviceable rifles and ammunition. However, they did not get the results expected, and the Confederate movement in Denver practically ended when the former Captain McClure and several of his fellow secessionists left the town to join the Southern army.

Confederate aspirations at this time contemplated the adding of New Mexico, Arizona, California and Colorado to the territory of the seceding states, and Brigadier General H. H. Sibley, a former officer of the regular army of the United States, was assigned the duty of organizing the Southern forces for the invasion of New Mexico and the subsequent conquest of the southwest. He assembled his command, mostly Texans, about two thousand five hundred officers and men, at San Antonio, Texas, late in the summer of 1861, and due to unexpected delays did not start his march towards New Mexico until December, 1861. His immediate objective was the capture of the forts in New Mexico along the line of the Rio Grande, which were, thanks to former Secretary of War John B. Floyd, a Southern sympathiser, filled to capacity with military supplies of all kinds. These forts in order from the south were Fillmore, Thorn, Craig, Macey and Union. To oppose Sibley's advance, Colonel E. R. S. Canby, commanding the Union forces in New Mexico, had assembled at Fort Craig a thousand regulars from several different regiments, two regiments of New Mexico volunteers, Dodd's Independent Company of Colorado Volunteers (of which we shall have more to say later), and a small force of New Mexico territorial militia, in all an effective strength of about twenty-five hundred men. Sibley occupied Forts Fillmore and Thorn without opposition, and continuing his march to the north with his force augmented to about 3,000 effectives encountered Canby at Valverde near Fort Craig. Here, on February 21, 1862, a bloody encounter ensued in which the Union forces suffered a serious reverse. Canby retired to Fort Craig, and Sibley continued his triumphant march north along the Rio Grande capturing Albuquerque and Santa Fe without opposition. The news of Sibley's progress and



Canby's appeal for reinforcements eventually reached Denver, and to which we will now return to ascertain what the Territory of Colorado did to aid Canby.

Early in the summer of 1861 Colorado offered to furnish the War Department in Washington with several of the companies that were then being raised. The offer was rejected, but this did not deter Governor Gilpin, and he continued to go ahead and perfect the organization of an infantry regiment. His authority for doing so was rather obscure, and as a consequence he experienced great difficulty in securing the necessary supplies and equipment. As an expedient to meet the expenses of the regiment he issued drafts direct upon the Secretary of the Treasury. This action was of course illegal, but the drafts were readily accepted by those furnishing the supplies, and it certainly achieved the immediate purpose of getting the regiment supplied. The drafts were repudiated by the Secretary of the Treasury when they arrived in Washington, but were eventually paid after much acrimonious bickering and the removal of Governor Gilpin.

In July, 1861, Samuel H. Cook raised a mounted company in the South Clear Creek mining district for service under General "Jim" Lane in Kansas. Cook and his men were persuaded to remain in Colorado and join the new regiment, of which they became Company F. Recruiting offices were opened in Denver, the Clear Creek mining towns, Boulder, and at other points. Ten companies were soon recruited and the regiment was ordered to rendezvous at Camp Weld near Denver. John P. Slough, a prominent lawyer of Denver was appointed Colonel, Samuel F. Tappan, Lieutenant Colonel, and John M. Chivington, presiding elder of the Rocky Mountain district of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was appointed Major. Chivington had been tendered the Chaplaincy of the regiment, which he refused, and at his earnest request was assigned to combat duty. The Reverend

J. H. (Father) Kehler of the Episcopal Church was appointed Chaplain of the regiment in Chivington's stead. Dr. John F. Hamilton was appointed Surgeon with the rank of Major, and Dr. Lewis C. Tolles Assistant Surgeon with the rank of Captain. The company commanders and the locality in which the respective companies were recruited were as follows:

Company A — Denver; John P. Slough, Captain. When Captain Slough was appointed Colonel, Lieutenant E. W. Wynkoop was appointed captain of the company.

Company B—Denver; Samuel F. Tappan, Captain. On Captain Tappan's appointment as Lieutenant Colonel, Samuel M. Logan was promoted Captain in his stead.



COL. JOHN M. CHIVINGTON  
1st Colorado Cavalry, 1861-65

Company C—Denver and Buckskin Joe mining district; Richard Sopris, Captain.

Company D—Denver; Jacob Downing, Captain.

Company E—Oro City and Laurette; Scott J. Anthony, Captain.

Company F—South Clear Creek mining district; Samuel H. Cook, Captain.

Company G—Nevada and Empire City; Josiah W. Hambleton, Captain. Later cashiered and Lieutenant William F. Wilder promoted to the captaincy. Former Captain Hambleton was subsequently honorably discharged and eventually appointed 2d Lieutenant in the Third Colorado Cavalry.

Company H—Central City; George L. Sanborn, Captain.

Company I—Denver and Central City; Charles Mailie, Captain. Company composed almost entirely of Germans.

Company K—Denver and Central City; Charles P. Marion, Captain. Cashiered and succeeded by Samuel H. Robbins as Captain. Lieutenant Eayres resigned at this time from the company, and later became 1st Lieutenant of McLain's famous battery.

Between August 26 and December 14, 1861, the regiment was mustered in to the United States service for a term of three years as the First Regiment Colorado Infantry Volunteers. The personnel of the regiment was of an unusually high order, the men being hardy and well seasoned, self reliant and accustomed to danger. The regiment, less three companies under Lieutenant Colonel Tappan which were garrisoning Fort Wise (afterwards named Fort Lyon), remained at Camp Weld until February 22, 1862, when it commenced its march in compliance with orders to proceed to New Mexico to reinforce Colonel Canby.

Affairs in New Mexico were reaching a critical condition; Sibley, as we have seen, had occupied Albuquerque and Santa Fe after defeating Canby at Valverde, and was now preparing to march on Fort Union. He had divided his force; Major Pyron and 500 cavalymen were at Santa Fe and Lieutenant Colonel Scurry was ordered to proceed with the bulk of the Confederate force and the supply trains from Albuquerque by way of Bernalillo to Galistéo. Here he was within fifteen miles of the western exit of La Glorieta pass, and it was contemplated that when the advance to Fort Union was resumed the two forces would unite in the Apache Canyon at the western end of the pass.

Meanwhile the First Regiment of the Colo-



Detachment Co. "G" 1st Colorado Cavalry Volunteers drilling in the main street of Empire, Colo., summer of 1861.



rado Infantry Volunteers was on the march towards New Mexico. The regiment, less the detachment at Fort Wise, left Denver on February 22d (the day following the battle of Valverde and news of which had not, of course, reached Denver as yet), and Lieutenant Colonel Tappan's detachment left Fort Wise on March 3d, following. The march to Fort Union, New Mexico, was an eventful one, and its story is well told in Whitford's "Colorado Volunteers in the Civil War" and from which I quote the following:

"Until these Colorado troops reached the Santa Fé trail they marched through a section of the country in which there was scarcely anything worthy the name of a broken wagon road. When the companies from Camp Weld had arrived at Pueblo, and those from Fort Wise at old Fort Bent, both on the Arkansas River, they learned for the first time, through advices from Colonel Canby, that his Fort Craig forces had been vanquished at Valverde and nearly all of his field guns captured, and that the Confederates were moving in triumph northward along the Rio Grande. They were urged to hasten to his relief. Discarding everything except actual necessities, the two divisions immediately struck out southward, advancing as rapidly as they were able through the several inches of snow that covered the country, and making about forty miles a day. The columns were united on the headwaters of the Purgatoire river, at Gray's ranch, near the present city of Trinidad. On the way the men were deeply impressed by the grandeur of the winter scenery around the majestic Spanish Peaks to their right. They followed the Santa Fé trail through the wild, picturesque gorge between Simpson's rest and Fishers peak, and on over the Raton Mountains. \* \* \* As the regiment was preparing to bivouac at the close of the day, March 8th, on the southern slopes of the Raton Mountains, and expecting to have a greatly needed rest for the night after the toilsome climbing of the opposite slope, there dashed into the camp a courier from Colonel Gabriel R. Paul, of the Fourth regiment New Mexico Volunteers, and commander at Fort Union, with the startling information that General Sibley was already in possession of Albuquerque and Santa Fé, was fast enlisting volunteers there, and completing his arrangements to march upon and attack the fort, in which were only some 400 regulars, and about the same number of volunteers, to defend it. On a stirring appeal to the regiment to render speedy aid to its garrison, all of the men expressed their willingness to set out again without delay, carrying 'only their arms and blankets'. Through the darkness up to daylight and over a route to which they were not accustomed, they marched thirty miles to Maxwell's ranch on the Cimarron river, making in all sixty-seven they had traveled continuously since the morning before, and ninety-two in the previous thirty-six hours. Here they were compelled to halt from 'sheer exhaustion'. Some of their animals, 'on account of overwork and underfed', had dropped dead in the harness on the road. One or two companies had been mounted for the movement to Fort Union, for scouting purposes, but the others covered these extraordinary distances on foot—a proof of the men's great physical endurance. After a brief rest, the Colorado volunteers proceeded toward the threatened post, encountering on the first day a bitterly cold and furious windstorm, a mountain hurricane, which showered and blinded them with driven snow, dust and sand. But in the evening of the second day, March 10th, they were joyously welcomed by the officers and soldiers at Fort Union, and also by the governor of New Mexico, who, with the other territorial officers, had abandoned Santa Fé and made Las Vegas, thirty miles south of the fort, the emergency seat of their government."



The regiment remained at Fort Union until March 22d, undergoing in the meantime daily drilling and being completely outfitted with clothing, equipment, arms and ammunition from the government stores. Colonel Slough assumed command of the post by virtue of his seniority, and so construed Colonel Canby's orders to Colonel Paul, the commander of Fort Union prior to the arrival of the Colorado troops, that he decided to advance against the invading Confederates rather than wait to be attacked at the post. The orders from Canby had directed Colonel Paul, if joined by a sufficient force, to act independently and by advancing over the same route that the enemy must take to reach the fort he could defend it as well as by staying and could better "harass the enemy" and discover an opportunity for "protecting Santa Fe from depredation". Colonel Paul disagreed with Slough's interpretation of Canby's orders but, as the sequel will show, the decision to take the offensive was the wisest course under the circumstances.

The strength of Colonel Slough's force on leaving Fort Union was 1,342 officers and men, and comprised the First Colorado Infantry Volunteers, Ford's Independent Company of Colorado Volunteers,<sup>2</sup> Companies A and G, 5th U. S. Infantry, detachments from Companies D and G 1st U. S. Cavalry and Companies C, E, and K 3d U. S. Cavalry, two light batteries of four guns each, and one company of the 4th New Mexico Volunteers. Colonel Paul was left at Fort Union with a small guard of regulars and volunteers.

The command marched to Bernal Springs, N. M., and on March 25th, Major Chivington with Companies A, D, E and F (the latter mounted) First Colorado Infantry Volunteers and a detachment of regular cavalry, in all about 418 officers and men, was ordered to make a reconnaissance in force with the object of "surprising and expelling from Santa Fe the enemy, reported then to be only about one hundred men, with two pieces of artillery". Chivington bivouacked on the night of 25-26 March at Kozlowski's ranch on the Pecos at the eastern end of La Glorieta Pass. During the night a detachment from Company F, First Colorado, under command of Lieutenant Nelson, captured at Pigeon's ranch a small hostile detachment which included two officers. From them it was learned that the advance guard of Sibley's force was at the western end of La Glorieta Pass, and that the Confederates intended moving on Fort Union via the pass on the following day. Early on the morning of the 26th Chivington's detachment was on the march westward through the La Glorieta Pass, and on passing the summit and entering the Apache Canyon (western end of the pass) the advance guard unexpectedly encountered a detachment of thirty Texans under command of a lieutenant. These were captured without any casualties on either side, and on continuing the march the main body of Pyron's force was encountered advancing up the canyon. "Then were exhibited the superb push, daring and hardihood of the frontiersmen who constituted the bulk of both commands. On this spot began the armed conflict—brief, fearless and decisive—between these detachments, in one of which were 'Baylor's Babes', as they were familiarly called, and in the other the 'Pet Lambs of Colorado'. The issue at stake was the immediate mastery and the future civil control of an immense region in the West and Southwest".<sup>3</sup>

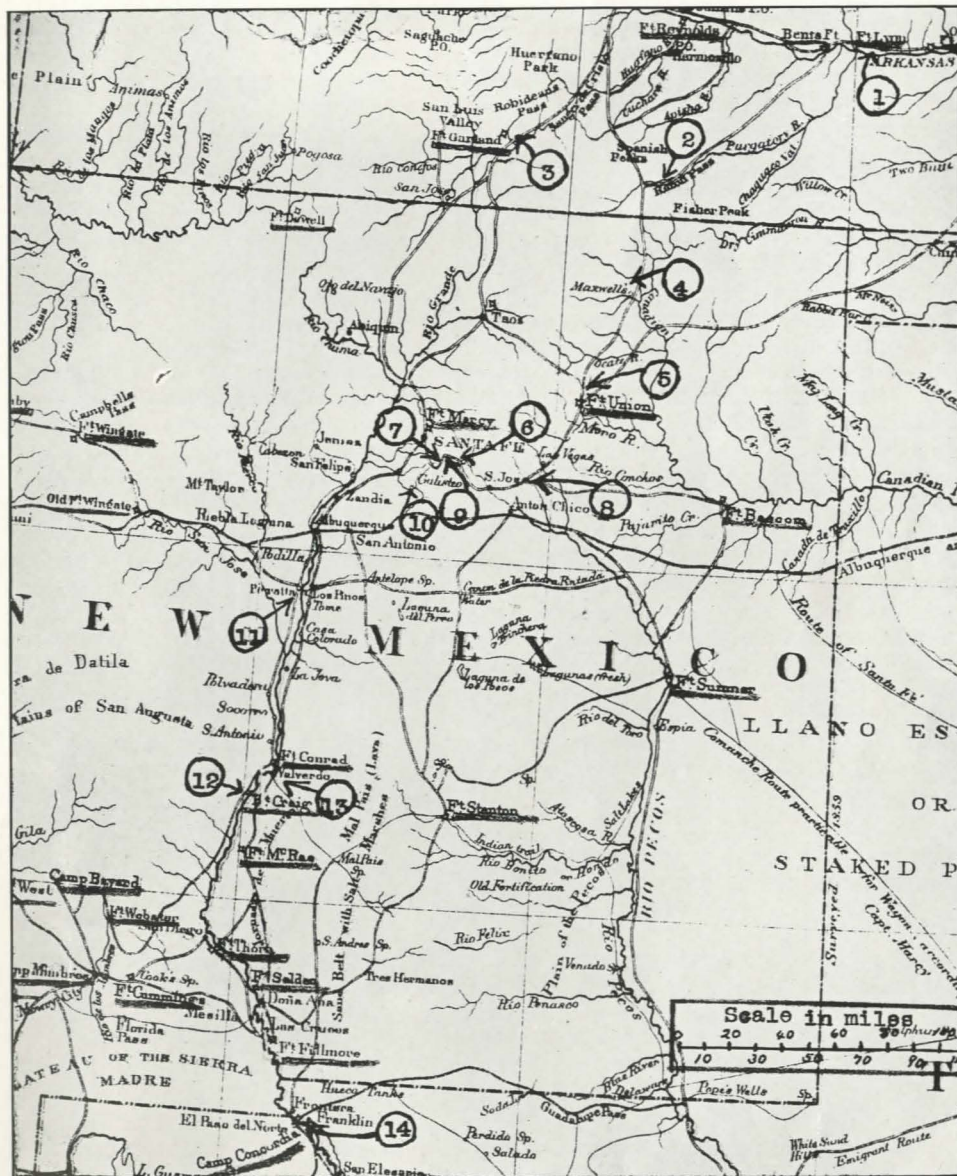
The Confederates at once deployed on gaining contact with Chivington's force, and their artillery, two howitzers, opened fire from positions near the road on the rather close formation of the Federal troops. Chivington acted promptly; the cavalry and Cook's mounted company of the First Colorado under command of Captain Howland, 3d U. S. Cavalry, were sent to the rear with instructions to charge the hostile artillery in the event of its retirement from its present position,

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 2, following.

<sup>3</sup> "Colorado Volunteers in the Civil War"—Whitford—pp. 87 and 88.



and Captains Wynkoop and Anthony with their companies, A and E First Colorado, were at once deployed on the hillside to the left (south) of the field above the line of fire of the hostile artillery. These companies were later reinforced by a company of regular cavalry dismounted under command of Captain



War Department map of New Mexico and Southern Colorado, 1865-1870. 1. Fort Lyon. 2. Raton Pass. 3. Fort Garland. 4. Maxwell's Ranch. 5. Fort Union. 6. Pigeon's Ranch. 7. Apache Canyon and Johnson's Ranch. 8. Bernal Spring. 9. Glorieta. 10. Galisteo. 11. Peralta. 12. Fort Craig. 13. Valverde Battlefield. 14. El Paso, Texas.



Charles J. Walker. Captain Downing with his company, D First Colorado, was deployed on the mountainside to the right, and the remainder of the infantry was deployed astride the roadway under cover of a transverse ridge. The accurate and deadly fire of the companies on the hillsides, in effect a double envelopment of the Confederate flanks, soon rendered the hostile position untenable, and Pyron withdrew his force to a strong position where the canyon narrowed about three-fourths of a mile to the west. Captain Howland failed to take advantage of the hostile retirement, as ordered, and the Confederate guns were able to take up their new positions without hindrance. The Union force maintained close contact with the Confederate flanks, and Captain Downing's company now reinforced with the dismounted cavalry of Captain Howland, was directed to climb the steep and rough mountainside above the left (north) flank of the enemy and drive him from the canyon. The companies on the south side of the canyon cooperated in this movement, and as the Confederates began to fall back they were repeatedly charged by Captain Cook's mounted infantrymen of Company F, First Colorado. The Confederates were badly demoralized and Pyron finally withdrew his shattered force to the western end of the Apache Canyon. Night was coming on and Chivington abandoned further pursuit.

This was the Colorado troops first battle, and they had acquitted themselves like veterans; the defeat of the Confederate force was decisive, and their losses, estimated at 32 killed, 43 wounded and 71 taken prisoner, were exceedingly heavy in comparison with the number engaged.<sup>4</sup> Chivington's casualties were comparatively light, five killed and fourteen wounded. Leaving a small rear guard in the Apache Canyon, Chivington retired to Pigeon's ranch early in the night, and here he was joined by about three hundred infantry and cavalry from the main body. The night of the 26th was spent in caring for the wounded and burying the dead. A message had been sent to Colonel Slough advising him of the engagement and requesting that the main body reinforce Chivington's command as early as possible inasmuch as the enemy was now on the move from Santa Fé towards Fort Union. On the 27th the water supply at Pigeon's ranch became rather low and Chivington's force retired during the afternoon to Kozlowski's ranch where a plentiful supply of water was available. Here, at 11:00 p. m. of the same day, he was joined by Colonel Slough with the main body. Meantime Major Pyron had notified Colonel Scurry at Galistéo of his (Pyron's) reverse in the Apache Canyon, and Scurry at once put his entire command on the march towards the Confederate camp at Johnson's ranch in the western exit of the canyon. He reached there early on the 27th, and on the next day, leaving the supply train at Johnson's ranch with a strong guard, the combined Confederate columns moved forward in the pass to give battle to the Federal force.

Early on the morning of March 28, 1862, the Union force commenced its march to the west "with a view" to quote from Colonel Slough's report "of reconnoitering his (the enemy's) position at Johnson's ranch". To accomplish this mission Major Chivington with a detachment consisting of Companies A, B, E and H, First Colorado Infantry Volunteers, Ford's Independent Company Colorado Volunteers, and Companies A and G, Fifth U. S. Infantry, approximately 430 officers and men, was ordered to take the Galistéo road and by a detour through the mountains gain the principal heights upon the sides of Apache Canyon and occupy them while the main body under Colonel Slough's command advanced west through the La Glorieta Pass. Accordingly Chivington's detachment left the main body about two miles west of Kozlowski's ranch, and continued its march to the southwest to gain the hostile rear.

<sup>4</sup>No accurate report of the Confederate losses was ever made, and the estimate given above is that of Major Chivington in his report on the engagement.



At 10:30 a. m. Slough's command, now numbering about 700, reached Pigeon's ranch and a halt was made to enable the men to fill their canteens with water as that would be the last opportunity before reaching the western end of Apache Canyon. Captain Chapin, 7th U. S. Infantry, Colonel Slough's assistant adjutant general, with the cavalry, was directed to reconnoitre towards the summit of the pass and gain contact with the Confederate force. He had proceeded but about three hundred yards when he encountered the enemy in full strength and occupying positions across the line of advance of the Federal troops.

Scurry had disposed his troops in three groups; one occupied a ridge on the south side under Major Pyron, another in the valley, under command of Major Raguet, supported the artillery, while Scurry himself personally led a third group on the north of the Santa Fé trail which here traverses the battle field from east to west. The Confederates opened the engagement with their artillery and for a few minutes caused considerable confusion in the Federal ranks. However, Slough promptly got his command in hand, and Captain Downing with his company, D First Colorado, was ordered to deploy to the left (south) and engage the enemy occupying the ridge to the southwest. Company I, First Colorado, was similarly ordered to engage the hostile force to the northwest, and the batteries under Captain Ritter and Lieutenant Claflin, supported by the cavalry and Company K First Colorado, at once went into action in the vicinity of Pigeon's ranch.

The action now became general and both sides fought desperately. Slough's force was outnumbered, although Scurry was not aware of this, and it became a defensive fight on the part of the Federals throughout the entire engagement. Quoting now from Hall's "History of Colorado": "Captain Downing advanced and fought desperately, meeting a largely superior force in point of numbers, until he was almost overpowered and surrounded, when happily Captain Wilder of Company G First Colorado, with a detachment of his company, came to his relief, and extricated him and that part of his company not slaughtered. While on the opposite side, the right, Company I had advanced into an open space, feeling the enemy, and ambitious of capturing his battery, when they were surprised by a detachment which was concealed in an arroyo, and which, when Kerber and his men were within forty feet of it, opened a galling fire upon them. Kerber lost heavily (Lieutenant Baker being wounded) and fell back. In the meantime the enemy massed and made five successive charges on our batteries, determined to capture them as they had captured Canby's at Valverde. At one time they were within forty yards of Slough's batteries, their slouch hats drawn down over their faces, and rushing on with deafening yells. It seemed inevitable that they would make their capture, when Claflin gave the order to 'Cease Firing', and Captain Samuel Robbins with his Company K First Colorado arose from the ground like ghosts, delivered a galling fire, charged bayonets, and on the double quick put the rebels to flight.

"During the whole of this time the cavalry under Captain Howland were held in reserve, never moving except to fall back out of danger, with the exception of Captain Samuel Cook's men who dismounted and fought as infantry.<sup>5</sup> \* \* \* But every inch of ground was stubbornly contested. In no instance did Slough's forces fall back until they were in danger of being flanked and surrounded, and for seven hours without rest or refreshment, the battle raged incessantly. At one time Claflin gave orders to double shot his guns, they being nothing but little brass howitzers, and then stood and counted, 'One, two, three, four', until one of his gun carriages capsized and fell down into the gulch; from which place

<sup>5</sup> Cook's company was not a cavalry unit; although mounted they were a company (F) of the First Colorado Infantry Volunteers.



Captain Samuel Robbins and his Company K extricated it and thus saved it from falling into the enemy's hands".

Shortly after 5:00 p. m. Colonel Slough decided to break off the engagement and retire to Kozlowski's ranch. Scurry had been too badly punished to attempt a pursuit, and furthermore just about this time he received word of the destruction of his supply train. It was a stunning blow and the Confederate commander realized the hopelessness of any further advance. He at once sent a flag of truce to Colonel Slough to arrange for an armistice until nine o'clock the next morning, which was agreed upon, and was afterwards extended to twenty-four hours more.

In the meantime, and unknown to Colonel Slough at the time the armistice was arranged, Major Chivington had successfully reached the hostile rear and, as above stated, had totally destroyed Scurry's supply train. After leaving the main column at 9:30 in the morning, Chivington's command followed the Galistéo trail for about eight miles, and then branching off west into the mountains they finally, at 1:30 p. m., reached the heights on the southern side of the Apache Canyon and overlooking Johnson's ranch. A reconnaissance of the Confederate camp was made and it was ascertained that there were about 80 fully loaded wagons near the ranch, some 500 horses and mules corralled in a deep ravine, and a small guard with one field piece.<sup>6</sup> Chivington's force descended the mountain side with great difficulty, charged the camp, took and spiked the gun, and totally destroyed by fire the entire wagon train with its load of ammunition, commissary stores, clothing, and forage. The animals were bayoneted in the corral, and all of the guard that had not escaped down the Santa Fé road were captured or killed. Reascending the mountain the command was met about dark by Lieutenant Cobb, aide on Colonel Slough's staff, who informed Chivington that the main body had suffered a reverse and was retiring to Kozlowski's ranch where Chivington would rejoin the command without delay. Guided by a French priest and in intense darkness Chivington and his men after a toilsome march finally rejoined the main body about midnight.

Scurry, utterly demoralized, withdrew under cover of the armistice to Santa Fé, and the Union forces spent the 29th in burying the dead and caring for the wounded, friend and foe alike. The Federal losses as reported by Colonel Slough were one officer killed (Lieutenant John Baker, Colorado Volunteers), and two wounded; twenty-eight enlisted men killed and forty wounded. Colonel Scurry's report of the Confederate losses at La Glorieta were thirty-six killed and sixty wounded. Among the killed were Majors Raguet and Shropshire and Captain Buckholts. In addition about twenty-five prisoners, including several officers, were captured by the Union force. These reports, Union and Confederate, of the losses incurred at La Glorieta, lean somewhat towards conservatism, and it is likely that both sides lost more than they cared to admit. Whitford says: "However, it is very close to the facts to say that the Union losses in killed and wounded in Colonel Slough's force on March 28th. was about one-fourth of the number of troops engaged; and that the Confederates lost in the two fights more than one-fourth of their men who entered the pass."

The engagements in the Apache Canyon and at Pigeon's ranch, now generally designated as the battle of La Glorieta and sometimes referred to as "The Gettysburg of the Southwest" were glorious episodes in the history of Colorado's military organizations in that they proved the mettle and sterling worth of the soldiers of the territory and destroyed most decisively Southern aspirations of adding the great Southwest to the Confederacy. Further, any indications of favoring

<sup>6</sup> The guard originally left with the supply train numbered about 200 men, but during the day 125 of them were withdrawn to reinforce Scurry in the pass.



the Southern cause on the part of the Mormons of Utah, the Indian tribes of the Southwest, and the "malignant element" in Colorado were "rudely checked and held in restraint".

On the afternoon of March 30th Colonel Slough's command started for Fort Union in compliance with positive orders from Colonel Canby to retire to that post in order to protect it "at all hazards and leave nothing to chance". Slough was incensed at the order to retire to Fort Union, but could do nothing but obey. To quote from Hollister's "History of the First Colorado" (Hollister was a member of Company F, First Colorado at the time): "Flushed with an honorable and complete victory, his brave troops eager to complete the destruction of the enemy, Colonel Slough read the despatch brought by Captain Nicodemus, in dismay. He could not destroy the order; it had been too openly delivered to leave any room for evasion; to obey it was to let the enemy, broken and disheartened, escape; to refuse was to subject himself to court martial and disgrace. He issued the order for the backward movement, but resigned his commission".<sup>7</sup>

There is no doubt that had Colonel Slough been permitted to continue his advance right after the battle of La Glorieta it would have led to the entire capture or dispersion of the enemy's force. Colonel Slough, disgusted, resigned his commission on April 9th, and Major Chivington, at the petition of all officers of the regiment including Lieutenant Colonel Tappan, was promoted colonel of the regiment on April 14th, 1862.

On April 5, 1862, the regiment again left Fort Union under orders to join Colonel Canby's force in the pursuit of the Confederate column now retreating southward along the Rio Grande. The Union force was re-united at Carnuel Pass on April 13th, and Canby on the following day commenced his march in pursuit of the retreating Confederates, who had previously evacuated Santa Fé and were now on their way back to Texas. Late at night on the 14th Canby's force overtook the Confederates at Peralta, where, on April 15th, ensued a desultory skirmish without much advantage or loss to either side. However, while it was in progress, a part of the Confederate force that had encamped about two miles above on the bank of the Rio Grande was discovered making an attempt to join its main body. A detachment of the First Colorado was immediately dispatched and captured the entire rebel party with its baggage and one field gun.

"That night, under cover of darkness, Sibley and his command crossed the Rio Grande and pursued their way down the river on the opposite side. And thus for several consecutive days were the Union and Confederate forces on opposite sides of the river almost constantly in sight of each other; the rebels making all haste to escape from the country, and the Union forces endeavoring to get sufficiently in advance of them to cross the Rio Grande and cut them off, which they were never enabled to do. Frequently the forces would stop and exchange a few shots from their artillery, and then resume their march, until the night of the 17th when the enemy, in the midst of one of the severest wind and sand storms ever known in that section of the country burned all his wagons excepting two ambulances, packed his scanty supplies upon his transportation mules, and left the river, taking to the mountains to avoid being captured. Next morning left Colonel Canby free to cross the river with his command and proceed leisurely on his way to Fort Craig, where he arrived on the 22d".<sup>8</sup>

The First Colorado Infantry Volunteers remained at Fort Craig until July, 1862, when orders were received relieving the regiment from duty in the Southern

<sup>7</sup> Colonel Slough was later appointed Brigadier General and was assigned to command of the Military District of Alexandria, Va. At the close of the war he was appointed Chief Justice of the Territory of New Mexico.

<sup>8</sup> Hall.



District of New Mexico and directing that it take station at Fort Union. In the meantime Colonel Chivington obtained leave of absence, and had proceeded to Washington, D. C., for the purpose of having his regiment converted into a cavalry organization and transferred if possible to the Army of the Potomac. He succeeded in having it converted to the cavalry arm and also secured an order for its return to Colorado, but failed in his effort to have the command sent east.

On reaching Fort Union the regiment was split into detachments, and sent to garrison various posts in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. Early in January, 1863, it was again concentrated at Colorado City, Colo. Terr., and on the 13th of that month the entire regiment arrived in Denver where it received a royal and enthusiastic welcome after its year's absence and gallant service in the cause of the Union. Under the provisions of Special Orders No. 36, Headquarters Department of the Missouri, St. Louis, Mo., dated November 1, 1862, the regiment was converted to the cavalry arm and re-designated as the First Colorado Cavalry Volunteers. The change to the cavalry arm was effected soon after the regiment returned to Colorado, and almost immediately thereafter it was again split into detachments which were ordered to garrison the posts and camps throughout Colorado and adjacent territories to hold in check the Indians who had become hostile.

Two additional companies were added to the regiment by the transfer of Companies C (Captain Backus), and D (Captain Sexton), Second Colorado Infantry, as Companies L and M, First Colorado Cavalry, respectively, the first in December, 1862, and the latter in April, 1863. These two companies had been raised in Denver, Golden, Central City and Nevada City between September 2d and December 1st, 1862, as independent companies but were later designated as units of the new Second Infantry then being formed under Colonel Leavenworth. However, their services were needed immediately and since they had originally been organized as cavalry units they were transferred to the First Cavalry.

The widely dispersed units of the First Colorado Cavalry now entered upon a long and arduous period of active service against the hostile Indians, and important and interesting as this service was it is beyond the scope of this history to recount the story of the many expeditions and skirmishes participated in by the various detachments. However, it may perhaps be of interest and value as a matter of historical record to mention briefly a few of the more important of these expeditions and skirmishes in which units of the regiment participated. The first of these was an expedition along the overland mail route to the vicinity of Fort Bridger, Wyo., "to chastise any Indians who may have committed depredations on either the ranches or emigrants \* \* \*". The Expedition was composed of Companies B, I, L and M, First Colorado Cavalry, under command of Major E. Wynkoop of the same regiment, and left Camp Collins, Colo. Terr., (later Fort Collins) during the early part of July, 1863. The expedition proceeded to a point about 100 miles southwest of Fort Halleck near the headwaters of the Bear, White, and Snake rivers in western Wyoming, and although it had but little opportunity to "chastise" the Indians, nevertheless its presence on the Overland Route afforded protection to the mails and saved the lives and property of many an emigrant and rancher. The expedition returned to Colorado late in the fall of 1863.

The Indian War of 1864-65 kept the detachments of the regiment constantly in the field, and during this time skirmishes were fought at Cedar Canyon, Fremont's Orchard, Atkins Ranch and Valley Station, Colo., Smoky Hill, Kan., and Little Larimer, D.T., to mention a few only. Two provisional battalions of the regiment, one composed of detachments from Companies C, E, and H, and the other from detachments from Companies D, G, and K, with the Third Colorado

Cavalry, all under command of Colonel Chivington, then in command of the District of Colorado, participated in the engagement against hostile Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians at Sand Creek, Colo. Terr., on November 29, 1964.<sup>9</sup>

The following report is typical of the activities of the detachments of the regiment during this period:<sup>10</sup>

Valley Station, Colo. Terr.,  
January 29, 1865, 9:00 p.m.

Six hundred and fifty head of cattle driven off and all government hay burned yesterday by Indians. I sent out eighteen men, who followed them fifteen miles, and had a fight with a large party for three hours. Killed 10 Indians and 7 ponies; I had 3 horses wounded. I started in pursuit with twenty of my men and twenty of Lieutenant Walter's men last evening and came upon their camp, about 300 strong, at daylight this morning, which we attacked and routed with a loss of 20 Indians killed and several ponies. Succeeded in recapturing some 400 head of cattle. Three of Lieutenant Walter's men slightly wounded. Some 200 of the red devils followed us 20 miles back. The impression is that all the ranches and stations between here and Julesburg will be destroyed, and all communication cut off, unless there are more troops sent on the road. Indians seen on all sides and large fires below, supposed to be ranches and stations. Lieutenant Walter leaves with his company in the morning.

(Sgd.) J. J. Kennedy,  
Lieutenant 1st. Colo. Cav.,  
Commd.<sup>11</sup>

The terms of service of the original members of the regiment having expired, the muster out of the First Colorado Cavalry as a regiment took place by companies at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., and Denver, Colo., during the months of October, November and December, 1864. However, in compliance with War Department instructions, all officers and men of the regiment desiring to continue in the service and those whose terms of service had not yet expired were assembled at Fort Lyon, Colo., in January, 1865, where they were organized into a battalion of seven companies, A to G, Lieut. Col. S. F. Tappan, commanding, and designated "The Veteran Battalion, First Colorado Cavalry". The "Veteran Battalion" served in Colorado and Kansas until the end of the war, and was finally mustered out of the United States service by companies at Denver and Fort Leavenworth during the months of October and November, 1865.

<sup>9</sup> For details of the battle see chapter 3, following.

<sup>10</sup> Records of the War of the Rebellion, Ser. I, Vol. XLVIII, Part I, p. 41.

<sup>11</sup> The skirmishes referred to in this report took place as a consequence of an attack on the American ranch near Valley Station, Colo. Terr., in which eight whites, including a Mrs. Morrison and her two children were killed by the Indians.