

## PROVISIONING THE CONFEDERATE CAMPAIGNS

Georgian David Emanuel Twiggs was the son of a distinguished Revolutionary War Officer. Born in 1790, he was a favorite of Andrew Jackson. Twiggs' military career spanned 50 years and included service in the War of 1812, the Seminole War, the Black Hawk War and the Mexican War during which he was brevetted to Major General for meritorious conduct at Monterrey. Following the Mexican War, Twiggs was given command of the Department of Missouri headquartered in St. Louis, a post he held until his retirement in 1857. This retirement was to be short-lived. In November 1860, at age 70 and no longer suited to command, he was recalled to active duty and given command of the Department of Texas by President Buchanan. At that time, Twiggs was second in seniority to Winfield Scott and was in line to assume the duties of Commander in Chief had Scott retired. The headquarters of the Department of Texas was in San Antonio which also served as the main quartermaster depot for supplies to the 17 Texas forts under Twiggs' span of control.

Twiggs arrived in San Antonio and took command in a department beset by the issue of secession. In January, 1861, the Texas legislature approved the calling of a Secession Convention. On January 28, 1861, the Secession Convention assembled and passed by a vote of 168-7 an Ordinance of Secession, which provided for the final separation of Texas from the Union. During the month, a Committee of Public Safety was appointed to negotiate with Twiggs the surrender of all Federal forts with their arms and equipment within the state. To give further teeth to their negotiations, the Committed of Public Safety appointed Ben McCullough (later killed at the battle of Pea Ridge) the task of raising a militia to insure the surrender.

Though a Southern sympathizer, Twiggs procrastinated because his duty was clearly to retain all Federal property. Further, he also did not want to be the man to fire the first shot in a Civil War. He reported the situation to Washington asking for guidance, but got none from the lame-duck Buchanan administration.

Deeming negotiation to be a failure, the commissioners ordered Ben McCullough to seize the San Antonio garrison. On February 16, 1861 about 1000 Texan militia united with secessionist San Antonio militia companies and surrounded the 3 garrison buildings manned by 160 troops. A detail was sent to Twiggs' house, intercepted him on his way to work in a buggy and brought him at shotgun point to Ben McCullough. McCullough demanded surrender of the garrison. At first Twiggs refused, but finally he surrendered the installation in San Antonio and further agreed to evacuate all 17 Texas forts on condition that the troops would be allowed to take their weapons and light artillery to Corpus Christi where they would embark on ships sailing to the north.

The evacuation of the northern troops was never completed for political and distance reasons. For example Fort Bliss near El Paso was 550 miles from San Antonio. Much time was needed to get dispatches there, and have the troops march across Texas to their departure destination.

Additionally, the Confederate government considered Twiggs agreement with Texas to be null and void. Earl Van Dorn stopped the evacuation and imprisoned the Federal troops at Camp Tyler for the duration of the war.

General Twiggs was accused of treachery and fired. He became a Confederate Major General but died 6 months later.

Thus the Texas Confederates gained the arsenals, border forts and logistical support of an army. Much of this material was later used in the Confederate campaigns in the South-west.