

SIBLEY'S CAMPAIGN

Henry Hopkins Sibley of Louisiana was less than a model officer having deficiencies of character which resulted in his having difficulties getting along with superiors, alcoholism and an inability to manage his finances. He was to prove to be one of the worst Confederate generals ever to be appointed to command. His deficiencies were evident even at West Point which he commenced attending at age 17. He failed one year and was held back. He was arrested for making a false report, yet he graduated and received a commission to the Second Dragoons. This in itself was surprising as assignments upon graduation at West Point were based on class ranking. Those with the top marks were assigned to engineering, while those with the lowest marks were assigned to the infantry. Sibley's class ranking therefore fell somewhere toward the middle of his class. He subsequently served well in the Mexican War where he was decorated for bravery and rose in rank.

In the mid 1850's he was assigned to Fort Belknap, Texas. There he designed the Sibley tent for use by the troops in the field. The tent was adopted by the War Department, but while acceptable for semi-permanent locations, was impracticable with troops on the move due to its size and the space it used in transport.

In 1860, Sibley was assigned to New Mexico to fight Navajos and prior to resigning his commission in May 1861, was in command at Cantonment Burgwin at Taos and Fort Union. Upon his resignation, he immediately traveled to Richmond where he won a Generalcy and approval from Jefferson Davis for recruiting a brigade of Texas volunteers to occupy New Mexico, seize the rich mines of Colorado Territory, then turn west through Salt Lake City, and take over the seaports of Los Angeles and San Diego. By one stroke, with a minimal force living off the land, Sibley would bring the entire southwest under Confederate control. He further believed that the native New Mexicans, as well as recent immigrants in Colorado, Utah and California would join his ranks, and that the Union troops in New Mexico would desert to his banner. Another of Sibley's assumptions which doomed the expedition was that he could take Fort Union and re-supply there. Fort Union served as the Quartermaster depot for all the forts in New Mexico and was at the opposite end of the Santa Fe trail from Missouri.

By the fall of 1861, in San Antonio, Sibley had raised the Fourth, Fifth and Seventh Texas Mounted Volunteers plus attached artillery and supply units carrying supplies surrendered by General Twiggs. On October 22, he started west with 3200 men along the San Antonio-El Paso road, moving in detachments so as to not drain the scant water holes along the route. By late December, Sibley reached Fort Bliss where he incorporated the troops left by Baylor into what came to be known as the Sibley Brigade.

During January, the brigade marched to Mesilla, where Sibley proclaimed his invading force the "Army of New Mexico", and while at Mesilla, absorbed several local spy companies. On February 7th, Sibley started up the Rio Grande Valley toward Fort Craig, seventy miles away. Excluding detachments to staff his hospital and guard supplies, Sibley commanded 2500 Texans, fifteen pieces of artillery, and an extensive supply train.

On February 16 Sibley following the Rio Grande reached Fort Craig and found that Canby had made the fort too strong to be taken by assault. Sibley offered to do battle on the plains adjacent to the fort, but Canby

refused. On advice from his colonels, Sibley decided to bypass the fort by retreating seven miles down river to a ford where they could cross to the east bank, and march one day to re-cross the river at Valverde Ford six miles up river from Fort Craig. Realizing that Valverde Ford was Sibley's objective, Canby sent a battery of artillery and two regiments of volunteers across the river to stop the Texan advance. This force was driven off by rebel artillery.

At daybreak on February 21, 1862 Sibley sent troops to reconnoiter a road to Valverde. The force consisted of 180 men under Major Pyron and was followed by five companies under Major Raguet. Pyron's force collided with Federal cavalry and a firefight erupted. In response, Canby hurried Col Benjamin S Roberts with regular and volunteer cavalry to the scene. Hearing the same gunfire, Major Raguet joined by additional troops also raced to the river. By 10am, a section of Capt Teels Confederate artillery also reached Valverde. Several advances to the river by the Texans were driven off by a Union artillery bombardment. At this time, Union forces moved to envelop the rebel right by crossing the Rio Grande upriver from Valverde. Meanwhile, Capt. Alexander McRae continued to pound the rebel position on the east bank with the Union artillery. The rebels were forced to withdraw and by noon, the tide of battle was swinging in favor of the Federals.

By one o'clock as additional units, both Union and Confederate raced to the field, General Sibley had become so ill (some say due to passing a kidney stone), exhausted and drunk that he retired by ambulance to the rear. He was to remain drunk for most of the remainder of the campaign and any subsequent successes were due to the strong colonels in his command.

Colonel Thomas Green assumed command of the Confederate army. On the rebel right, Capt. Willis L Lang whose company was armed only with lances launched a charge against a company of Colorado volunteers. The Coloradoans held fire until the lancers were within a few yards and wiped them out. Shortly after three in the afternoon, Canby arrived on the field and decided to advance his right and center while using his left as a pivot, thus forcing the rebel left. To reinforce his army, Canby ordered Colonel Kit Carson's regiment of volunteers across the river. Simultaneously, Colonel Green decided to launch an all out attack on the Federal artillery. Concealed by sand hills, Green advanced on the Union center as Major Raguet moved against a Federal battery firing on the rebel left flank. Raguet's cavalry was repulsed, Green's advance on the right however proved to be the decisive maneuver of the battle. Despite McRae's battery pouring a deadly fire of grapeshot into the charging Texans, the rebels fell upon the Union artillery and in hand to hand savagely overran the Union guns. McRae and half of his men died at their guns.

Canby blamed the loss of the artillery on the New Mexico Volunteers, who refused to obey orders to counterattack the lost guns and instead fled the field. At this point Canby's forces were withdrawn, crossed the river where additional men were killed and retreated to the safety of Fort Craig. Canby sent a white flag into the rebel lines asking for a cessation of hostilities to remove the Federal dead and wounded. Union casualties at Valverde were 222 men killed and wounded while the Confederates lost 183. The next day the rebel dead were wrapped in blankets and buried in trenches. Federal dead, unless claimed by relatives for private burial, were interred at Fort Craig. When Fort Craig was abandoned at the end of the Indian wars, the

dead with the exception of Capt. McRae were moved to Fort Union. When Fort Union was obsolete, they were again moved to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. McRae was subsequently interred at West Point.

Although winning the Battle of Valverde, the Confederates failed to take Fort Craig which sat athwart their supply lines from Mesilla. The following are the Confederate Battle Reports on Valverde as wonderfully researched by Bill Manley:

FEBRUARY 21, 1862-- Engagement at Valverde, N. Mex.

Report of Brig. Henry H. Sibley,

C. S. Army, Commanding Army of N. Mex.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NEW MEXICO

Battle Ground of Valverde,

February 22, 1862.

GENERAL: I have the honor to report to you, for information of the President, that I encountered the enemy at this point (6 miles above Fort Craig) in force at 11 o'clock yesterday morning, and after one of the most severely- contested actions, lasting until 5 pm, the enemy was driven from the field with a loss, as estimated, of four captains of the Regular Army and some 300 killed and wounded, and the capture of his entire field battery, the disabling of one 24- pounder, and the abandonment of another in the river. We have but few prisoners; among them is Capt. William H. Rossell, of the Tenth Infantry.

The enemy had upon the field about 3500 men, 1200 of whom were regulars. We never had more than 1500 engaged. For the first time, perhaps, on record batteries were charged and taken at the muzzle of double-barreled shot- guns, thus illustrating the spirit, valor, and invincible determination of Texas troops. Nobly have they emulated the fame of their San Jacinto ancestors.

Our loss was severe.-- 40 killed, including Maj. S. A. Lockridge, of the Fifth Regiment, and Capt. M. Heuvel of the Forth. I have no reports of the wounded, but I think 100 will cover it.

Before closing this report it is especially due to Col. Thomas Greene, of the Fifth, to say that, in consequence of severe and prolonged illness and weakness resulting from it, I could only keep my saddle until 1 o'clock, and at that hour I relinquished to him the full direction of active operations. His coolness under the heaviest fire and intrepidity under the most trying circumstances are sufficiently attested by the results. I cannot commend Colonel Green too highly to the favorable consideration of the Executive.

Where so much gallantry was displayed I cannot, before reaching the reports of commanders, particularize individuals.

It will be necessary, to secure our purpose, to reinforce me largely from Texas at as early a day as possible. The force we had to contend against to near 6000 men.

I beg leave, in conclusion, to bring to your notice the intelligence and valor of the members of my staff, Maj. A.M. Jackson, assistant adjutant-general, Maj. R. T. Brownrigg, commissary of substance, Lieutenant Ochiltree, aide-de camp, and Col. W. J. Roberts, Major Magoffin, and Capt. J. Dwyer, volunteer aides

I am, sir, respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. H. SIBLEY,
Brigadier-General, Commanding.

General S. COOPER,
Adjutant and Inspector General, Richmond, Va.

P.S.— Lieut. Col. J. S. Sutton, of the Seventh Regiment (Col. William Steele's), in command of his battalion, and Capt. Willis L. Lang, of the Fifth, greatly distinguished themselves, and were both severely wounded, and I should not omit Lieut. D. M. Bass, of the Captain Lang's company, who was severely wounded in front of the charge leading the Lancers upon the enemy.
I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. H. Sibley,
Brigadier-General

FEBRUARY 21, 1862.— Engagement at Valverde, N. Mex.
Report of Maj. Charles L. Pyson, Second Texas Cavalry.
SOCORRO, N. MEX., February 27, 1862

MAJOR; on the morning of the 21st instant I left our camp, opposite Fort Craig, with 180 men of my command, under Captains Walker and Stafford, Lieutenant Nicholson, of Capt Coopwood's Spy Company, and Lieutenant Jett, Company B, Second Regiment Mounted Volunteers, to reconnoiter the road leading to the river near Valverde. Upon reaching the river, I could see the water, with none of the enemy intervening. I immediately dispatched a note to the general commanding, stating the road was clear and the water in sight, and proceeded leisurely to the river to water our horses, they having been over twenty-four hours without water.

When I reached the woods I discovered a body of cavalry, which I supposed to be about four companies, and immediately gave chase, they withdrawing to my left. I followed until reaching the bank of a slough in the bottom, when I found myself of a large force of small arms. Immediately my men were formed along the bank, when the

action commenced, and for over one hour, by courage and determination of the men, I was enabled to maintain the position in the unequal struggle, when I was relieved by the Forth Regiment Texas Volunteers, under the Command of Lieut. Col. W.R. Scurry.

For nearly two hours our joint commands held our position against odds of three to one, checking every attempt to outflank us and checking every effort to drive us back. The arrival of Teel's battery of artillery was the first re- enforcement we received, but it was soon followed by Major Lockridge's battalion, of the Fifth Regiment Texas Mounted Volunteers, and about 1 o'clock Colonel Green reached the field and took command.

Late in the afternoon a general charge was made along our line, by which a battery of artillery, consisting of six guns, was taken and their left driven back.

Following rapidly up on our successes, the enemy were driven back on all points, and the field at Valverde was won.

It is proper to state that the officers and men of my command behaved in the most gallant manner, and where all were equally brave it would be invidious to particularize. It is sufficient to say that it was a day on which deeds of personal valor were continually occurring.

I cannot consent to close this report without bearing testimony to the gallant bearing and personal valor of Colonels Green, Scurry, and Sutton, and Majors Ragnet and Lockridge, and others equally courageous. I have the honor to be, sir, your, most respectfully.

C. L. PYRON,
Major, Second Texas Mounted Rangers
Maj. A.M. JACKSON,
Assistant Adjutant-general, Army of New Mexico.

FEBRUARY 21, 1862.— Engagement at Valverde, N. Mex.
Report of Lieut. Col. William R. Scurry, fourth Texas Cavalry

VALVERDE, N.Mex., February 22, 1862.

MAJOR: Early in the morning of yesterday, while the army was encamped on the east side of the Rio Grande, opposite Fort Craig, I received orders to march with my command, Fourth Texas Mounted Volunteers, and take possession at as early an hour as practicable of some point on the river above Fort Craig at which water might be obtained. By 8 o'clock the regiment took up the line of march, accompanied by Capt. George M. Frazier, of Major Pyron's battalion, with his company acting as guide for the command. Supposing that we were the advance of the army, to prevent surprise I ordered Major H. W. Ragnet to take the advance, with four companies and Captain Frazier's company, throwing out the same front and flank patrols. In a short time, I learned that Major Pyron, with 180 men, was in our advance. Aware of the great vigilance of that active

officer, I recalled Major Ragnet and reunited the regiment. A report was received from Major Pyron that the road was clear of the enemy and the river in sight, but in a short time, a second message was received, through Capt. John Phillips, from the major, informing me that a large mass of the enemy was in his front and threatening an attack. As his force was but small, I was fearful that he would be overpowered before we could reach him, and accordingly pushed forward, guided by Capt. Phillips, as rapidly as our horses could carry us, to his relief, and found him gallantly maintaining a most unequal contest against vastly superior numbers. Dismounting my command, we formed on his right and joined in the conflict. For nearly two hours we held our position in front of an enemy now known to be nearly 5000 strong, while our own forces were not over 700 in number.

Immediately upon reaching the field Captain Frazier joined the command to which he belonged, where he did good service during the remainder of the day.

Upon opening fire with the light howitzer battery, under Lieut. John Riley, it was found to be ineffectual against the heavier metal of the enemy. It was therefore ordered to cease firing and be withdrawn under cover.

At about 1 o'clock Captain Teel, with his two guns of his battery reached the ground. Being placed in position on our right he opened a galling fire upon the left flank of the enemy, whereupon the enemy commenced a furious cannonade upon him from their entire battery, consisting of eight guns. So heavy was their fire that the captain soon found himself with but five men to work the two guns. A bomb exploding under his pieces had set the grass on fire, still, that gallant officer held his position and continued to fire upon the enemy, himself seizing the rammer and assisting to load the piece.

Seeing his situation, I ordered Lieutenant Riley, with his command, to join him and assist in the efficient working of the guns. During the balance of the day this brave little band performed the duty assigned them. Judging by the heavy fire on the left that Major Pyron was hard pressed, Captain Teel, with more of his guns, which had just reached the ground, was dispatched to his relief. Major Ragnet, with four companies of the regiment, was ordered to maintain our position there. I remained on the right with the balance of my command and two pieces of Teel's battery, under Lieut. J. H. McGinnis, to hold in check the enemy, who were moving in force in that direction to turn our flank. At this time Major Lockridge, of the Fifth Regiment, arrived on the field and reported himself with a portion of that command. He was ordered to join our troops on the left. During all this time the fire of the enemy had been extremely heavy, while, owing to the shorter range of most of our guns, our fire was reserved until they should approach sufficiently near our position to come within range of our arms, when they were invariably repulsed with loss. Soon after the arrival of Major Lockridge, Colonel Green reached the field and assumed command.

At about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, in extending our line to prevent the enemy from turning our right, I found myself with only two companies, Captain Hardeman's and Crosson's, opposed to a force numbering some 400 men, the other four companies being several hundred yards to my left. It was there that the daring charge was made by Captain Lang, of the Fifth Regiment, with a small body of lancers. But desperate courage was ineffectual against great odds and superior arms, and this company there sustained the greatest loss of life of any company in the brigade. This charge, otherwise unfortunate, had the effect of bringing the enemy within

range of our guns, when two pieces of Captain Teel's battery and the small arms fire of Captain Hardeman's and Crosson's companies opened an effective fire upon them, before they rapidly retreated with considerable loss. Just before sunset Lieut. Thomas P. Ochiltree, of General Sibley's staff, brought an order to prepare for a charge all along the line of our position went our brave volunteers, unmindful of the driving storm of grape and canister and musket balls sent hurling around them. With yells and ringing shouts they dashed on and on, until the guns were won and the enemy in full retreat before them. After carrying the battery, their guns were turned upon themselves, Captains Hardeman and Walker manning those on the right. Lieutenant Ragnet, of Riley's battery, being on the ground, I placed one gun in his charge, manning it with such of the men as were nearest. The rammer being gone, a flag staff was used instead. Captain Teel coming up, an effectual fire was kept up as long as the enemy was within reach. In the meantime a most timely and gallant charge was made by Major Ragnet from our left, thus effecting a favorable diversion at the moment of our charge upon their battery. This charge by Major Ragnet and his command was characterized by desperate valor.

In the last brilliant and successful charge, which decided the fortunes of the day, there were six companies of the Fourth Regiment Texas Mounted Volunteers, under their respective Captains, Hardeman, Crosson, Lesueur, Foard, Hampton and Nunn. Besides those, I saw Captains Shropshire, Killough and McPhaill of the Fifth Regiment and Captain Walker of Major Pyron's battalion.

The brave and lamented Major Lockridge, of the Fifth Regiment, fell almost at the muzzle of the enemy's guns.

Major Pyron was also in the thickest of the fray, and contributed much by his example to the success of the charge, as did also Lieutenant Ochiltree, of the general's staff.

There were others there whom I now regret my inability to name. Where all, both officers and men, behaved so well it is impossible to say who is deserving of praise. The enemy retired across the river, and were in full retreat when Major Ragnet, Captains Shannon, Adair, Alexander Buckholts and Lieut. Thermond reached the field with their companies, mounted. I asked and obtained permission from Colonel Green to cross the river with these companies to pursue the fleeing foe.

When the head of the column reached the opposite shore we were ordered to return. Night closed in on the hard won field of Valverde. This brilliant victory, which, next to Heaven, we owe to the heroic endurance and unfaltering courage of our volunteer soldiers, was not won without loss. Of the regiment which I have the honor to command there were 8 killed and 56 wounded, 2 of which were mortal.

It affords me great pleasure to be able to bear testimony to the calm, cool and discriminating courage of Colonel Thomas Green during the fight. Major Pyron also deserves great credit for his soldierly bearing from the commencement to the close of the battle. Of the general's staff, Major Jackson was early on the ground, as was also Major Brownrigg, Captain Dwyer, and Lieutenant Ochiltree, actively engaged in the discharge of the duties assigned them. Each of these gentlemen exhibited that high courage which I hope will ever distinguish the officers of the army. To Majors Jackson and Brownrigg I am indebted for valuable aid in the early part of the action.

It is due to the adjutant of this regiment, Ellsberry R. Lane, that I should not close this report without stating that he was actively and bravely engaged in the discharge of his duties on horseback until his horse failed, when, taking a gun, he entered the ranks of Captain Hampton's company, and did duty as a private during the remainder of the day.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant

W. R. SCURRY

Lieutenant Colonel, Comdg. Fourth Regt. Texas Mounted Vols

A. M. Jackson,

Assistant Adjutant-General, Army of New Mexico

FEBRUARY 21, 1862.—Engagement at Valverde, N. Mex.

Report of Major Henry W. Ragnet, Fourth Texas Cavalry

CAMP VALVERDE, ARMY OF NEW MEXICO

February 23, 1862

MAJOR: About sunrise on the 21st instant, while in camp opposite Fort Craig, I was ordered by Lieut. Col Scurry to take four companies of the Fourth Texas Mounted Volunteers, to which would be added Captain Frazier's company, from Major Pyrons battalion, and march as an advance to the river at the best point for approaching it above the fort, supposed to be about 6 miles distant. After marching 3 miles I was ordered to halt and join Lieut. Col Scurry who was approaching with other companies of the regiment and Lieut. Riley's artillery.

Our course was then changed for the nearer point on the river. After a half hours march, while descending a cation, the rapid advance of the head of our column gave notice that we were approaching the enemy, and emerging into a valley, the firing of skirmishers told that Major Pyron, who had been marching on our left flank, was already engaged with the enemy. A half a mile gallop brought us within range of the enemies artillery, when Lieut. Col. Scurry ordered us to dismount and advance, when we were soon within range of their small arms, and took position on the right of Major Pyron, behind a low bank, about 9am.

After we had taken this position about half an hour the enemy moved up on our right with the evident intention of flanking us, which at the time would have been fatal, when Lieut. Col. Scurry, dividing the command, assigned that position to me, and moved up to the position occupied by him during the day, and checked their advance.

The troops at this time with me were Major Pyron, with his battalion of 180 men, under Captains Walker, Stafford and Frazier, and Lieutenants Nicholson and Jett, and four companies of the Fourth Regiment, under Captains Buckholts, Scarborough, Heuvel and Alexander.

About noon one piece of Captain Teels battery, Lieut. Bradford, was added to my position, which did good service until the heavier metal of the enemy silenced it. Soon after the arrival of this gun Major Lockridge arrived with three companies of the Fifth Regiment Texas Mounted Volunteers, under Captains Shropshire, Campbell and Ragsdale and Major Pyron, and Lieut. Bradford's commands were withdrawn to the right. Major Lockridge called my attention to the gun, which had been partly disabled and silenced, on our left, at the foot of the mesa, where it had been placed in an endeavor to disable the enemy's battery on the west bank of the river. I ordered Company B, Fourth Regiment, Captain Scarborough, to the rescue, and with part of that company, under their captain and Sargeant Nelson, of Company H, Fourth Regiment, Captain Alexander, and some of that company, I succeeded in drawing the gun by hand from its perilous position amid the hottest cannonading on that part of the field, losing only one man killed and a few wounded..

The horses of this gun had nearly all been killed by the enemy's artillery. This gun then used by three of Lieut. Riley's company, assisted by a few others, until I ordered the fire discontinued for want of gunners, leaving it double shotted, to await an anticipated charge of the enemy. The enemy threatened us in such large numbers and their fire was so heavy that Major Lockridge and myself sent messengers to Col. Green for reinforcements, failing to get which, Major Lockridge deemed it prudent to fall back to a sand bank, about 100 yards to our rear, which was done by companies, after the artillery and the wounded had been removed. This gave us a better position, as the ground was somewhat broken in front.

The section of Teel's Artillery was now withdrawn to the right, leaving only one howitzer, under Lieut. Woods, who had arrived at our position. Lieut. Col. Sutton now arrived on the field, approaching in our rear, when a messenger was dispatched asking that he be ordered to remain with us. He soon marched up to the right and then returned. Major Lockridge now told me that we were to move up and join the forces on the right for a charge, that he would cover any movement to get horses, which were on the left and rear. Ordering the companies of the Fourth Regiment to horse, I soon marched up on the right of the rear of the rest of the command, dismounted, and ordering the companies then with me, under Capts Buckholts, Heuvel and Alexander, of the Fourth, and Capt. Ragdale, of The Fifth, into line of advance.

Col Green rode up and ordered me to reserve my command for a charge as cavalry. No sooner were we mounted than an order came from Major Pyron to move down on the left and menace the enemy, now flanking us in large force, Marching down to within 600 yards I dismounted my command under cover, when I was joined by Capt. Scarborough, of the Fourth, and received an order through Capt. Dwyer to charge the enemy.

Aligning in single rank, I charged to within about 100 yards of the enemy's lines, composed of infantry, supported by cavalry on each flank and in the rear and by artillery on their right, when, looking back, I saw great confusion from the wounded and fallen horses, for we had aligned and advanced under heavy fire of their infantry and artillery. I thought we could break their lines, and ordered my command to fall back and rally at the sand bank which we left on our rear and left. When I arrived at the sand bank I found that most of my command had passed it for some others still on their left, and that the position was untenable, as the enemy's artillery now raked it. I ordered those there to follow those yet in advance, and rallying, we could return.

Finding Lieut. Woods, with one howitzer, uselessly exposed under the enemy's fire, I ordered him to a position between the enemy and the train, to protect it as well as he could, and ordering such of my command as I meant to join in on the action on the right, I galloped down, then too late, however, to participate in that brilliant charge which gave us victory.

A few moments after reaching the river bank Lieut. Co. Scurry asked permission of Col. Green to cross and pursue the enemy with fresh companies that had just come up, which permission granted, I joined with my command who were present, and as the head of our column gained the opposite shore we were ordered back. Shortly after the arrival of the flag of truce ended the battle of Valverde after sunset.

During the entire day my position on the left was under fire of the enemy's heaviest artillery, and their small arms, whose longer range enabled them to keep out of our small arms range. When they threatened an advance and would reach our aim they were repulsed.

The gallant Major Lockridge, of the fifth, while in command of the left, won the admiration of all who saw him, and whose regrets are now mingled with those of his other friends at his death. The brave Heuvel, of this command, who fell in the charge he had so impatiently waited for, added another to the list of our gallant dead at Valverde.

For the officers and privates whom I had the honor to command on that day I can well say that they never faltered in their dangerous duty, and for those, less than 200, whom I lead to the charge against more than eight times their numbers, together with artillery, the recital of the act is their praise. This charge, though at the cost of nearly one-fifth of the men and horses in killed and wounded, succeeded in checking the flank movement of the enemy in time to enable the charge which won the day to be made.

Very Respectfully, your obedient servant,

HENRY W. RAGNET,
Major, Fourth Regiment Texas Mounted Volunteers

A. M. JACKSON,
Assistant Adjutant-General, Army of New Mexico

FEBRUARY 21, 1862.—Engagement at Valverde, N. Mex.
Report of Col. Thomas Green, Fifth Texas Cavalry
CAMP VALVERDE, N. Mex.,

February 22, 1862

SIR: I have the honor of submitting to you the following report of the battle of Valverde, fought on yesterday a part of the brigade of General Sibley, under my command.

While in the act of turning Fort Craig, on the east side of the Rio Grande, Major Pyron, with 200 men, was sent to reconnoiter, early on the morning of the 21st, the route around the mesa, north of the fort, and secure a footing on the river above. While Major Pyron was approaching the river with his command the enemy appeared in considerable numbers between his command and the river on the north of the mesa, and opened on him, about 8 o'clock, a heavy fire of artillery and small arms. The gallant Pyron, with his brave little force, kept up the unequal contest for an hour or two, until the arrival of Lieut. Col. Scurry with a part of his regiment, and Lieut. Riley's howitzer battery. Scurry took position behind a low line of sand hills. About this time one section of Capt. Teel's battery came up and took position and replied to the fire of the enemy.

Confederate Col. Greens Battle report on Valverde

At 12 o'clock, while under the orders of the general, I was threatening the fort on the south side of the mesa. I received his orders to move up, with all my disposable force, to the support of Lieut. Col. Scurry and Major Pyron, after leaving a sufficient force to protect the train which was then moving from our late camp around the mesa to the battlefield, and which was stretched out for several miles. Our train was threatened by a considerable body of troops of the enemy, who made their appearance on the mesa. Detaching Lieut. Col. Sutton's command and a detachment from my own regiment to protect the train, I moved up, with as much speed as practicable, with eight companies of my regiment, sending forward Major Lockridge, with two companies of lancers, under Capts. Lang and McCown. My companies were placed in the line of battle, between Pyron on the left and Scurry on the right, except three, which were sent by me, under Lieut. Col. McNeill, to drive the enemy from the north point of the mesa, where they were annoying our left and threatening our train.

After these dispositions I moved up to the line of battle myself, and by orders of the general took command of the forces present. The enemy during the day, and, with little intermission, kept up a brisk cannonade upon us, to which our 6 pounders, under Captain Teel, replied with effect. The enemy repeatedly advanced with their skirmishers to near our lines, killing many of our horses tied in the rear.

About 3pm a most galling fire was opened upon Lieut. Col. Scurry's command, on our right, by 300 or 400 of the enemy's riflemen. Captain Lang, of the Fifth Regiment, with about 40 of his lancers, made at this time one of the most gallant and furious charges on these light troops of the enemy ever witnessed in the annals of battles. His little troop was decimated, and the gallant captain and Lieut. Bass severely wounded, the latter in seven places. The enemy were repulsed by this gallant charge, and our right was for some time unmolested.

Large bodies of the enemy's infantry having crossed the river about 3:30 pm, bringing over with them six pieces of splendid artillery, took position in front of us, on the bank of the river, at a distance of 600 yards. In addition to this body of troops two 24-pounder howitzers were placed on our left flank by the enemy. These were supported by a regiment of infantry and a regiment of cavalry. The heaviest fire of the whole day was opened about this time on our left, which was under the command of the gallant Lockridge. Our brave men on that part of the line maintained the unequal fight with desperate courage, though overwhelmingly outnumbered. Lieut. Col. Sutton, now coming up with part of his battalion, took position on our left.

The enemy, now being on our side of the river, opened upon us a tremendous fire of round shot, grape and shell. Their force in numbers was vastly superior to ours, but, having the most unbounded confidence in the courage of our troops, I ordered a charge on their battery and infantry of regulars in front, and at the same time Major Ragnet, of the Fourth, with four companies of the same, and Captain Ragsdale's company, of the fifth, were directed by me to charge as cavalry upon the infantry and Mexican cavalry and the two 24- pounder howitzers on our left flank.

Our dismounted troops in front were composed of parts of the Fourth and fifth Regiments Texas Mounted Volunteers and parts of Lieut. Col. Sutton's and most of Major Pyron's battalions, and Teel's, Riley's and Wood's batteries of artillery, numbering about 750 on the ground. Major Ragnet's cavalry numbered about 250, making about 1000 men in the charge.

At the command to charge, our men leaped over the sand bank, which had served as a good covering for them, and dashed over the pen plain, thinly interspersed with cottonwood trees, upon the battery and infantry in front, composed of the United States regulars and Denver City Volunteers, and in a most desperate charge and hand to hand conflict completely overwhelmed them, killing most of their gunners around their cannons and driving the infantry into the river. Never were double barreled shotguns and six shooters used to better effect. A large number of the enemy were killed in the river with shotguns and six shooters in their flight.

While we were occupied with the enemy in front, Major Ragnet made a gallant and most timely charge upon the infantry and cavalry of the enemy on our left flank. This charge was made against ten times the number in Ragnet's force, and although we suffered severely and were compelled to fall back, he effected the object of his mission, and occupied the attention of our powerful enemy on the left, while our dismounted men were advancing upon those in front and running them into the river.

So soon as the enemy had fled in disorder from our terrible fire in front, we turned upon his infantry and cavalry and 24-pounders on our left flank, just engaged by Major Ragnet. We charged them as we did those in front, but they were not made of as good stuff as the regulars, and a few fires upon them with their own artillery and Teel's guns, a few volleys of small arms, and the old Texas war-shout completely dispersed them. They fled from the field, both cavalry and infantry, in the utmost disorder, many of them dropping their guns to lighten their heels, and stopping only under the walls of the fort. Our victory was complete. The enemy must have been 3000 strong, while our three actually engaged did not exceed 600. Six splendid pieces of artillery and their entire equipage fell into our hands, also many fine small arms. This splendid victory was not achieved without severe loss to us.

Major Lockridge, of the Fifth, fell at the mouth of the enemy's guns, gallantly leading our brave troops to the assault.

Lieut. Col. Sutton, of the Seventh, fell mortally wounded at the head of his battalion while assaulting the enemy's battery.

Several of our officers were desperately wounded, some of them no doubt mortally. Among them are the gallant Captain Lang, of the Lancers, and Lieutenant Bass, both of Company B. Lieut. Hubbard, of Company A, Fifth Regiment.

Captain Heuvel, of the Fourth, fell in the gallant charge of Major Ragnet. He was one of the most distinguished of the heroes of the day. Like the gallant Lang, of the fifth, he could not appreciate odds in a battle.

I cannot say enough praise of the gallantry of our surviving officers and men. it would be invidious to mention names. Were I to do so, the rolls of captains, lieutenants, and men would have to be inserted. I will only mention the principal field and staff in the engagement. The cheering voice of Lieut. Col. Scurry was heard where bullets fell the thickest on the field. Lieut. Col. McNeill, and the gallant Major Pyron, who has been mentioned, displayed the most undaunted courage. Major Ragnet, of the Fourth, though wounded, remained at his post, and retired not until the field was won. The captains, lieutenants and men in the action displayed so much gallantry that it would be invidious to make distinctions. They fought with equal valor and are entitled to equal credit with the field and staff here mentioned.

I will not close this report without a just need of praise to the general staff, who served me as aides-de-camp during the day. Col. Robards was in the dashing charge of the gallant Lang, and wounded in several places.

Capt. Tom Ochiltree, aide-de-camp to General Sibley, was exceedingly useful to me on the field and active during the whole engagement. He assisted me in the most critical moment to cheer our men to the assault. He deserves the highest praise for his undaunted chivalry and coolness, and I recommend him to the general for promotion.

Captain Dwyer was also very useful, gallant, and active during the whole action.

I cannot close without the mention of Captain Frazier, of the Arizona Volunteers. To him, more than others, we are indebted for the successful turning of Fort Craig. He led us over high ground around the mesa to the east of the fort, where we at all times had the advantage of the enemy in case he had attacked us in the act of turning the fort.

I will only personalize further by mention of my own regimental staff.

Sergeant Maj. Sheppard shouldered his gun and fought gallantly in the ranks of Capt. McPhaill's company in the charge. Lieut. Sayers, adjutant of the Fifth, during the whole day, reminded me of a hero of the days of chivalry. He was a gallant, daring and dashing soldier, and is as cool in a storm of grape, shell, canister, and musketry as a veteran. I recommend him, through the general, to the President for promotion.

Our killed and wounded are as follows:

2nd Regiment Texas Mounted Vol., Major Pyron's Command

Killed 4, Wounded 17 Missing 1

4th Regiment Texas Mounted Vol., Lieut. Col. Scurry's command

Killed 8 Wounded 36 Missing 0

5th Regiment Texas Mounted Vol. Col. Green's command

Killed 20 Wounded 67 Missing 0

7th Regiment Texas Mounted Volunteers. Lieut. Col Sutton's command

Killed 2 Wounded 26 Missing 0

Teel's battery

Killed 2 Wounded 4 Missing 0

Totals:

Killed 36 Wounded 150 Missing 1

Since which time Lieut. Col Sutton of the Seventh, and 2 privates of the Fifth, and 2 of Teel's battery, have died from wounds received in battle. The enemy's loss was far greater than ours. The precise number cannot be ascertained by us, as many were killed in the river, and as the enemy's white flag, asking permission to gather up their dead and wounded, came almost before the sound of the last cannon had ceased to reverberate in the hills. It is confidently asserted by many of our officers and men that the enemy, under the flag of truce, picked up many small arms and carried them off with the dead wagons, that they also carried off their two 24-pounder howitzers which were left by them in the river. It is certain that during the cessation of the hostilities they picked up a company flag and guidon of my regiment, left on the field during our charge, while they were gathering up their wounded and dead, and it is said these are considered by them trophies. I do not believe that the commanding officer of the enemy is aware of these facts, as he would have spoken of stolen flags as trophies.

I think, from the best information in my possession, that the enemy's loss must have been in killed and wounded at least 350 or 400. Among their killed were several gallant officers. The gallant McRae fell at his guns. Several other captains and lieutenants were killed. Captain Rossell, of the Tenth U.S. Infantry, and several privates of the Fifth and Tenth Infantry and Denver City Volunteers, were taken prisoners. Respectfully submitted,

THOMAS GREEN,
Colonel Fifth Regiment Texas Mounted Volunteers.

Maj. A.M. JACKSON,
Assistant Adjutant-General, Army of New Mexico

FEBRUARY 21, 1862.—Engagement at Valverde, N. Mex.
Report of Col. William Steele, Seventh Texas Cavalry.
CAMP NEAR FILLMORE, N. MEX.,

March 1, 1862

GENERAL: I have received a verbal express from General Sibley, the numerous parties of Mexicans in the employ of the enemy rendering it dangerous to write. Our forces turned the enemy's position by crossing the river to the east side, which drew him out of his entrenchments, and an engagement ensued just above Fort Craig, which commenced about 9 o'clock in the morning on February 21, and lasted, with little intermission until near sunset, when the enemy was driven in confusion from the field. We captured seven pieces of artillery and a considerable number of small arms were picked up. Much of the Mexican portion of the enemy fled to the hills. The regulars and Pike's Peak Volunteers returned to the fort. Our forces were encamped on the field when my informants left. Our loss is stated at 38 killed and 106 wounded. Major Lockridge is recollected as one of the killed. General Sibley had been sick some days previous to the action, and the command devolved upon Col. Thomas Green, who was in command most of the day, General Sibley being unable to remain long upon the field.

This account agrees with the information I had a few days previous as to the contemplated movement. I received this intelligence the day after the stage left for San Antonio and have delayed writing, hoping to get some more particulars, but as yet have none.

Very respectfully, Your obedient servant,

WM. STEELE,
Colonel Seventh Texas Mounted Regiment

GENERAL S. COOPER,
Adjutant General

FEBRUARY 21, 1862.—Engagement at Valverde, N. Mex.
Report of Capt. Powhatan Jordan, Seventh Texas Cavalry.
IN CAMP NEAR SOCORRO, N. MEX.,

February 27, 1862.

GENERAL: I have the honor to report the First Battalion of the seventh Texas Mounted Volunteers in the battle of Valverde, N. Mex., on February 21. The first Battalion of the Seventh Regiment, under the command of Lieut. Col. J. S. Sutton, with Companies C and H of the Fifth Regiment, were detailed as a guard for the transportation on the morning of the 21st. Before the train had gotten barely out of camp we were appraised of the fight having commenced at Valverde Crossing of the Rio Grande by hearing the sullen

roar of the cannon. The train being in danger of attack, we were kept in position as the guard, and all thought for a time the Seventh would have no share in the conflict, but in two hours after the commencement of the battle an officer appeared with the order for us to move on to the battlefield. Colonel Sutton detached from his command Companies A and F, of the Seventh, and Company C, of the Fifth, to remain, and then gave the order to go forward, when the remainder of his command, consisting of Companies B, F, and I, of the Seventh, and F, of the Fifth, moved on to the scene of action. We went at a gallop, and were met on the field by Major Lockridge, who ordered us to take position on the left. We were held for an hour or more, running the gauntlet by countermarch under a most galling and destructive fire from their batteries.

While in this position we lost two men and some 3 horses were killed. The battle having now continued several hours, the charge was ordered, and the Seventh was most gallantly led in the charge by Lieut. Col. Sutton, who fell mortally wounded when within 20 paces of the enemy's battery. The battle was now soon ended, and victory was ours, though purchased by the Seventh with the death of the heroic Sutton. The Seventh did its duty bravely, nobly, all acting gallantly.

To make mention of individuals would be unjust. They all share equally the dangers of the field, and all deserve equal praise. To Capt. Rudden S. Pridgen and his company (H, of the Fifth), who acted with our command, we must give great credit for their coolness and gallantry, and wish himself and company to share with us whatever credit may fall to our command.

Accompanying is the list of killed and wounded, together with the horses killed in the battle, as furnished by captains of companies. (note: list not affixed)

I have the honor to be, respectfully, your obedient servant,

POWHATAN JORDAN,
Captain Comdg. First Battalion,
Seventh Regiment Texas Mounted Volunteers, Army of N. Mex.

General H. H. Sibley,
C. S. Army

Note: One source (not mentioned elsewhere or in the Confederate battle reports) indicated that the Texans lost many supply wagons to a surprise cavalry charge by the New Mexico Volunteers and gives this shortage of supplies as a reason for Sibley's decision to bypass Fort Craig and continue north toward supply depots in Albuquerque. If this is true, obviously the Confederates learned little from this supply train loss and were to repeat the error at Glorieta Pass with disastrous consequences.

FEBRUARY 21, 1862.—Engagement at Valverde, N. Mex.
Report of Capt. Trevanion T. Teel, Texas Light Artillery.
CAMP LOCKRIDGE, N. Mex., February 27, 1862.

SIR: I have the honor to report to the general commanding the Army of New Mexico the operations of the light battery which I had the honor to command in the battle of Valverde, N. Mex., on February 21.

I received orders on the morning of the 21st, at camp, 8 miles below the battleground, and opposite Fort Craig, to detach one section of the battery, under Lieut. Bradford, to march to the front of the column and head of the train to Valverde, and place the other section and remain myself in the rear with the Second Regiment of Sibley's brigade, which orders were executed.

About an hour after the head of the column had moved I received intelligence that a large body of the enemy's cavalry, infantry, and artillery had taken up the line of march for Valverde.

I then placed the section of the battery in command of Lieuts Bennett and McGinnis, and went to the head of the column, before reaching the head of the train I heard the firing of the advance at Valverde.

I found Lieut. Bradford, with his section, at the head of the train, and ordered the pieces to the place of firing at a gallop, and in a few minutes it was placed in battery about the center of Lieut. Col. Scurry's regiment, and commenced firing upon the battery of the enemy and his line in a few minutes. I lost 1 man killed and 2 wounded, which left but 5 cannoneers to man the two pieces. I then kept up the fire alternately with the pieces. Finding it impossible to use the two pieces with steady and effective fire, I called upon Lieut. Col. Scurry for men to fill up the detachments of the guns, which were immediately sent from Lieut. Riley's company of howitzers. After sustaining the action for some time the enemy changed his front. I then placed the section in another position. Lieuts. Bennett and McGinnis having by this time reached our line, I ordered them to place their section in battery, which they did, and opened upon the enemy with good effect.

From the great length of the enemy's line and his superior number I found it necessary to detach the pieces. Lieut. Bradford was sent to the extreme left flank with his piece to support Majors Lockridge and Pyron's commands, which had been engaged with the enemy for more than an hour, Lieut. McGinnis, with his gun, on the right of Major Lockridge's battalion, Lieut. Bennett at the center of the right flank, and the other piece at the extreme right flank, Lieut. Riley, with his battery of howitzers, on the left wing, and Lieut. Woods with his battery of howitzers on the right wing. The different pieces and howitzers changed positions, however, during the action as circumstances required, and were used with effect whenever the enemy presented a front or his battery in view.

Having received orders that our troops were about to charge the enemy, I placed the guns in battery upon the extreme right flank as a reserve, in case the charge was unsuccessful, so that I could open the line of the enemy with raking shots or engage his battery until our troops would prevent my firing by closing with the enemy. The charge was made by our line, and in eight minutes his battery was captured and his troops completely routed. Lieut. Ochilree, aide-de-camp, rode back and ordered the guns forward, which order was executed, and soon the enemy's guns, as well as ours, were opened on his retreating forces. Firing was kept up from our guns until the enemy's rear was out of range of them. I then ordered the firing to cease.

I lost 4 men killed, including 2 who died the day after the battle, and 6 wounded, 25 horses killed and wounded, one gun partially disabled, and eight sets of harness rendered unserviceable.

I refer with great pleasure to the gallant conduct of Lieut. Bennett, McGinnis, and Bradford, of my company, as well as Lieuts Riley, Woods, Ragnet, and Falcrod, of the batteries of howitzers, also of the non-commissioned officers and privates of all the batteries.

I cannot close my report without bearing testimony to the bravery and coolness of the officers under whom I acted during this sanguinary and well-contested battle. Col. Green, and especially Lieut. Col Scurry, who so promptly manned my guns from his regiment (the First), and who was present with my guns under the heavy fire in the morning, and whose voice was heard above the din of battle and smoke, and flame, and death, encouraging the men to stand by their posts. Also the lamented Lockridge, Major Jackson, assistant adjutant-general, Major Brownrigg, brigade commissary, Lieut. Col McNeill and Lieut. Ochiltree, aide-de-camp, who were rallying the men to charge and were in the line leading on the troops, also Capt. Dwyer, of the staff, Col. Robards, and Major Ragnet. Also the deep obligations I am under to Lieut. Col Scurry, and Capt. Scarborough and his company, who hauled out a disabled piece by hand under hot fire, to Capts. Campbell, McPhaill, and Killough, and their respective companies, for the promptness and willingness with which they replaced the killed and wounded of my guns, many of their comrades having been killed and wounded while aiding in manning the battery during the action.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

T. T. TEEL,
Captain, Artillery.

Maj, A.M. JACKSON,
Assistant Adjutant-General, C. S. Army.

Thus ended the Battle of Valverde. The Confederates won the battle and by crossing the Rio Grande to the north of Fort Craig, hoped to cut the federal supply line from Fort Union. They failed to take Fort Craig to augment their 10 days rations and in fact, left Fort Craig as an impediment blocking their supply line from Mesilla. Further, the Confederate logistical supplies were insufficient and Sibley's Brigade too lightly equipped to be anything more than a large raiding party. Losses in animals and supply trains made their situation even worse. Facing starvation, the Confederates could not invest further efforts on Fort Craig and they abandoned the battlefield and resumed their march north toward Albuquerque hoping to find supplies.

Today little remains of Valverde Battlefield as it was fought on a sandy flood plain and subsequent floods since the battle have obliterated everything.

Due to the heavy losses of horses at Valverde, the 4th Texas was dismounted and their horses were distributed to the 5th Texas. Abe Hanna, a Confederate enlisted man wrote in his journal: "I had my horse

killed in the battle of Valverde and I am now on foot.....] now feel the pleasure of soldiering in New Mexico more plainly than I have ever done before, notwithstanding the severity of the climate and the hardships of the march.....without wood or water and but little grass and being in the dead of winter.

On March 2, Sibley's Brigade reached Albuquerque and found that the federals had destroyed the military depot there prior to abandoning the site. An advance party of Confederates reaching Santa Fe 2 days later, found the same state of affairs. The Texans did capture a small post at Cubero, which was reported as follows:
MARCH 3, 1862.-- Capture of Cubero, N. Mex.

Report of Capt. A.S. Thurmond, Third Regiment, Sibley's Brigade.
CUBERO, N.MEX., March 19, 1862

SIR: In making an official report of my entry into this place, &c., I will furnish a transcript of the notes handed me by men whom I have myself found to be sound.

NOTE 1.-- At 9 am, March 3, Dr. F.E. Kavanaugh, in command of three Americans, demanded of Capt. Francisco Aragon, U.S. Army, commanding military post of Cabrero, the surrender to him for the Confederate States of himself and command, consisting of Dr. Boyd, surgeon of post, 42 New Mexican soldiers, and 3 Americans, one of whom was Sergeant Wahl, bugler, U.S. Army, together with the post, and all stores, arms, ammunition and property of whatsoever description, belonging thereto. Captain Aragon was allowed ten minutes to decide whether he would peaceably comply with the demand or resist. At the expiration of the time, he not having returned an answer, one of Kavanaugh's party was sent to receive the arms, which were formally demanded. The following correspondence will show the formal surrender of the post to Dr. Kavanaugh and his regiment, to hold in the name of the Confederate States of America, which said correspondence I herewith inclose.

The amount of property turned over will be accurately shown by the quartermaster's invoices, which show a large and valuable lot of quartermaster's commissary, and ordnance stores. The surgery is also well supplied with valuable medicines, &c. There was not less than 60 arms and 3000 rounds turned over. Captain Aragon and company were furnished with arms and transportation sufficient to take and protect them to Albuquerque upon promise to deliver the Government property furnished them the Confederate States Army officer commanding there.

Upon taking command of the post Dr. Kavanaugh dispatched MR. Richmond Gillespie, one of his party, to take information to Albuquerque of the surrender of the post, and to procure assistance in holding it. This trip was performed by Mr. Gillespie greatly to his credit, having voluntarily risked his life a second time in passing through a most dangerous portion of hostile Indian country to a post where he was not certain but what he might fall into the hands of the enemy. The successful execution of this hazardous trip brought to the protection of the post Capt. A.S. Thurmond, C. S. Army, with 25 men of his command, arrived at Cubero on March 5, at 2pm.

Next day the command was turned over to him by Dr. Kavenaugh. George Gardenheir, one of Dr. Kaenaugh's party, has rendered most valuable services as assistant quartermaster and commissary, working incessantly in saving and protecting property belonging to those defenses.

Mr. R.T. Thompson was not only at the capture of the post, but always, been truly Southern, being a Virginian by birth, and certainly his services were most efficient in carrying out the duties of adjutant, treating the enemy always with much leniency, but with the sternness and decision of a true Southern gentlemen.

In conversing with both friends and enemies I have found the above to be substantially true, yea, more than true, for such an act of bravery, under the circumstances, could not be expected from the number of men. Dr. Kavenaugh and Messrs. Thompson, Gillespie, and Gardenhier constituted the whole force in the side of the Confederate States, and they too, men who had been persecuted by the Federal Government. They were not only suspected but known to be friends of the Confederate States, consequently there was but one game to play, and they did play it with profit to the Confederate States and great credit to themselves. The game would be in other countries called bluff, though it was not intended so by them, although it had that effect. Dr. Boyd is among us, a gentlemen of high medical attainments, and at this time doing valuable service as I have quite a number of cases of pleurisy in my company.

This at Cubrero, March 20.

A.S. THURMOND,
Comdg. Co A, Third Regt., Sibley's Brig., Army of N. Mex.

To the OFFICER COMMANDING C. S. FORCES,
Albuquerque, N. Mex.

General Sibley remained in Albuquerque due to alleged illness and turned command of the Confederate troops over to Colonel Scurry. Scurry's instructions were to capture Fort Union- the principal Quartermaster Depot of the South- West for all supplies coming down the Sante Fe trail from Missouri. Fort Union was manned by 400 troops who were busy building fortifications for defense. Upon reaching Sante Fe, the Confederate flag was raised, but snow storms held up any further advance for two weeks. During this period, Fort Union was reinforced by the 1st Colorado Volunteers (950 men) known as the Pikes Peakers who made the trip through a blizzard from Denver in 13 days. Commanding them was Colonel John Slough who also assumed command of Fort Union and it's garrison due to his rank. Slough's orders from Canby were to protect Fort Union at all costs and not to start a major battle. Contrary to those orders, Slough thought the best place to defend Fort Union was on the road to Santa Fe, so he started down the road toward Glorieta Pass, with 1348 men- the Fort Union Garrison, the Colorado Volunteers and a company of the 4th New Mexico Volunteers.

Learning of the Federal force hastening south from Denver to Fort Union, Scurry detached a force of 400 Confederates under the command of Major Pyron to investigate. On March 26, 1861, Pyron was scouting the

western end of Glorieta Pass, called Apache Canyon when the Confederates ran into Slough's advance party of 415 men under the "Fighting Parson" Major John Chivington. Chivington attacked at once and drove the Confederates down the canyon, capturing dozens of Texans. Fearing the entire Confederate Brigade was near-by, Chivington halted and withdrew to Kozlowski's Ranch near Pecos. Pyron fell back to wood and water and sent to Scurry for help. Scurry put his two battalions on the road and embarked for an all night march through bitter cold reaching Pyron's position at dawn. An expected Federal assault did not take place on March 27th.

At Kozlowski's, Slough and Chivington decided on a plan of attack to take place on the 28th. Slough would take 2/3's of the troops, including all the artillery down the pass toward Santa Fe. Chivington would take his battalion of 113 men, guided by Lt. Col. J. Francisco Chavez of the New Mexico Volunteers over the shoulder of Glorieta Mesa on a 12 mile trail to attack the Confederate flank.

Scurry decided not to wait at Apache Canyon. He started almost all his force eastward through the pass, leaving his supply wagons with a small guard at Johnson's Ranch at the junction at Glorieta Pass and Apache Canyon. At mid-morning, he attacked Slough's lead elements near Pigeon Ranch, located on the Santa Fe trail. Both sides deployed their men in a long line, but Slough's line was shorter by 300 men.

Scurry's battalions attacked with great vigor but were met with equal vigor by the Coloradoans. Slough's men fell back to a better position, from which Slough tried unsuccessfully to send men around Scurry's right. Scurry kept pressure on the Federals while organizing a three pronged assault. It was during this assault that Abe Hanna who's journal was quoted previously was mortally wounded and Lieutenant John Shropshire telling his troops "Follow Me" took a shot to the head and was killed. The Confederate's attacked Slough's entire front, driving in the flanks and threatening the center. The Federals retreated and Scurry's men pursued, but were too exhausted from the all night march and 6 hour battle. Slough abandoned the field, leaving the Confederates in undisputed possession.

While the Confederates won the battle, the turning point of the campaign took place at Pigeon's Ranch. Chivington completely missed Scurry's flank, falling instead on the Confederate supply train parked in Apache Canyon. Rapelling down to the canyon floor, the lightly guarded 80 wagon train was captured and destroyed leaving Scurry with no ammunition, food, blankets or other supplies. Chivington returned to Kozlowski's and Slough's reunited command withdrew to Fort Union. Unable to sustain his men in the field, Scurry returned to Santa Fe. The Federal dead were buried at Fort Union. The Confederate officers except John Shropshire were placed in coffins and buried in Santa Fe. Shropshire due to his size would not fit in a coffin and was buried in a mass grave with the Confederate enlisted dead. This mass grave remained undiscovered for well over 100 years and was found by an man digging a foundation for his home. Shropshire was one of the few identifiable bodies and was removed to Kentucky for burial with his parents. The balance of confederate dead were taken to the National Cemetery in Santa Fe.

In Sante Fe, Scurry was joined by Sibley and there learned that Col Canby was marching north from Fort Craig to threaten Albuquerque. The balance of the Sibley Campaign will be continue after the following battle reports on Glorieta Pass:

Colonel John P Slough, a Denver attorney turned soldier, was commanding officer of the First Colorado Infantry. He dispatched his battle report to Colonel Edward S. Canby the day after the fight at Pigeon's Ranch

Kozlowski's Ranch, March 29, 1862

COLONEL: Learning from our spies that the enemy, about 1000 strong, were in the Apache Canon and at Johnson's Ranch beyond, I concluded to reconnoiter in force, with the view of ascertaining the position of the enemy and of harassing them as much as possible; hence left this place with my command, nearly 1300 strong, at 8 o'clock yesterday morning. To facilitate the reconnaissance I sent Maj. J.M. Chivingtonwith about 430 officers and picked men, with instructions to push forward to Johnson's. With the remainder of the command I entered the canon, and had attained but a short distance when our pickets announced the enemy was near and had taken position in a thick grove of trees, with their line extending from mesa to mesa across the canon, and their battery, consisting of four pieces, placed in position. I at once detailed a considerable force of flankers, placed the batteries in position, and placed the cavalry...nearly all dismounted... and the remainder of the infantry in position to support the batteries.

Before the arrangement of my forces was completed the enemy opened fire upon us. The action began about 10 o'clock and continued until after 4 p.m. The character of the country was such as to make the engagement of the bushwacking kind. Hearing of the success of Major Chivington's command, and the object of our movement being successful, we fell back in order to our camp. Our loss in killed is probably 20...; in wounded probably 50...; in missing over 100. In addition we took some 25 prisoners and rendered unfit for service three pieces of their artillery. We took and destroyed their train of about 60 wagons, with their contents, consisting of ammunition, substance, forage, clothing, officer's baggage, etc....During the engagements the enemy made three attempts to take our batteries and were repelled in each with severe loss.

The strength of the enemy, as received from spies and prisoners, in the canon was altogether some 1200 or 1300, some 200 of whom were at or near Johnson's Ranch, and were engaged by Major Chivington's command. The officers and men behaved nobly. My thanks are due to my staff officers for the courage and ability with which they assisted me in conducting the engagement. As soon as all the details are ascertained I will send an official report of the engagement.

MARCH 28, 1862.-- Engagement at Glorieta, or Pigeon's Ranch, N. Mex.

Report of Brig. Gen. Henry H. Sibley, C. S. Army

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NEW MEXICO

Albuquerque, N. Mex.,

March 31, 1862

GENERAL: I have the honor and the pleasure to report another victory.

After the battle of Valverde our advance was uninterrupted to this city. Here sufficient supplies were secured for sixty days, while from Cubero, a village 60 miles distant, large supplies have been drawn from the enemy's depot. We have been surrounded with every description of embarrassment, general and individual. Whole trains had been abandoned, and scantily provided, as they had originally been, with blankets and clothing. The men had, without a murmur, given up the little left them. More than all this, on the representation of their officers that forage could not be procured with one accord the regiment agreed to be dismounted.

These preliminary facts are stated because it is due to the brave men under my command that they should be known and the hand- to -hand desperate contests duly noted.

The battle of Glorieta was fought March 28 by detached troops, under the command of Lieutenant- Colonel Scurry, and Federal forces, principally Pike's Peakers, under the command of Colonel Slough, the one having 1000 men and the other estimated at 1500 or 2000. Glorieta is a canon 23 miles east of Santa Fe.

Pending the battle the enemy detached a portion of his forces to attack and destroy our supply train which he succeeded in doing, thus crippling Colonel Scurry to such a degree that he was two days without provisions or blankets. The patient, uncomplaining endurance of our men is most remarkable and praiseworthy.

Our losses was 33 killed and 35 wounded. Among the killed are majors Ragnet and Shropshire and Captain Buckholts. Colonel Scurry had his cheek twice grazed by minie balls, and Major Pyron had his horse killed under him.

In consequence of the loss of his train Colonel Scurry has fallen back to Santa Fe. I must have re-enforcements. The future operations of this army will be duly reported. Send me re-enforcements.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. H. SIBLEY

Brigadier- General, Commanding.

General S. COOPER

Adjutant and Inspector General, Richmond, Va.

MARCH 28, 1862.-- Engagement at Glorieta, or Pigeon's Ranch, N. Mex.

Reports of Col. W.R. Scurry, Fourth Texas Cavalry.

SANTA FE, N. MEX.,

March 30, 1862.

GENERAL: I arrived here this morning with my command and have taken quarters for the present in this city. I will in a short time give you an official account of the battle of Glorieta, which occurred on the day before yesterday, in the Canon Glorieta, about 22 miles from the city, between the confederate troops under my command and the Federal forces, commanded by Colonel Slough, of the Colorado Volunteers, (Pike's Peakers), when another victory was added to a long list of Confederate triumphs.

The action commenced at about 11 o'clock and ended at 5:30, and, although every inch of the ground was well contested, we steadily drove them back until they were in full retreat our men pursuing until sheer exhaustion we were compelled to stop.

Our loss was 33 killed and I believe, 35 wounded. Among the killed was that brave soldier and accomplished officer Major Ragnet, the gallant and impetuous Major Shropshire, and the daring Captain Buckholts, all of whom fell gallantly leading the men around the foe. Major Pyron had his horse shot under him, and my own cheek was twice brushed by a Minie ball, each time just drawing blood, and my clothes torn in two places. I mentioned this simply to show how hot was the fire of the enemy when all the field officers upon the ground were either killed or touched. As soon as I can procure a full report of all the casualties I will forward them.

Our train was burned by a party who succeeded in passing undiscovered around the mountains to our rear. I regret to have to report that they fired upon and severely wounded Rev. L.H. Jones, our chaplain, of the Fourth Regiment. He was holding in his hand a white flag when fired upon.

The loss of the enemy was very severe, being over 75 killed and a large number wounded. The loss of my supplies so crippled me that after burying my dead I was unable to follow up the victory. My men for two days went unfed and blanketless uncomplainingly. I was compelled to come here for something to eat.

At last accounts the Federals were still retiring towards Fort Union.

The men at the train blew up the limber box and spiked the 6- pounder I had left at the train, so that it was rendered useless, and the cart- burners left it.

Lieutenant Bennett writes for more ammunition. Please have it sent. As soon as I am fixed for it I wish to get after them again.

From three sources, all believed reliable, Canby left Craig on the 24th.

Yours, in haste,

W.R. SCURRY.

P.S. -- I do not know if I write intelligently. I have not slept for three nights, and can scarcely hold my eyes open.

W.R.S.

SANTA FE, N. MEX.,

March 31, 1862

MAJOR: Late on the afternoon of the 26th, while encamped at Gallisteo, an express from Major Pyron arrived, with the information that the major was engaged in a sharp conflict with a greatly superior force of the enemy, about 16 miles distant, and urging me to hasten to his relief. The critical condition of Major Pyron and his gallant comrades was made known to the command, and in about 10 minutes the column was formed and the order to march given. Our baggage train was sent forward under a guard of 100 men, under the command of Lieutenant Taylor, of the Seventh Regiment, to a point some six miles in the rear of Major Pyron's position, the main command marching directly across the mountains to the scene of conflict. It was due to the brave men making this cold night march to state that where the road over the mountain was too steep for the horses to drag the artillery they were unharnessed, and the men cheerfully pulled it over the difficulties of the way by hand.

About 3 o'clock in the morning we reached Major Pyron's encampment at Johnson's Ranch, Canon Cito. There had been an agreed cessation of hostilities until 8 o'clock the next morning. Too much praise cannot be bestowed upon the courage of the officers and men engaged in the affair of the 26th.

As soon as daylight enabled me I made a thorough examination of the ground, and so formed the troops as to command every approach to the position we occupied, which was naturally a very strong one. The disposition of the troops was soon completed, and by 8 o'clock were ready to receive the expected attack.

In this position we remained until the next morning. The enemy still not making their appearance, I concluded to march forward and attack them. Leaving a small wagon guard, I marched in their direction with portions of nine companies of the Fourth Regiment, under their respective officers, Captains Hampton, Lesueur, Foard, Crosson, Giesecke, Alexander, Buckholts, Odell, and Lieutenant Holland, of company B, Captain Scarborough being unwell, four companies of the Seventh Regiment, under Captains Hoffman, Gardner, Wiggins and Adair, four companies of the Fifth Regiment, under Captains Shannon and Ragsdale and Lieuts. Oakes and Scott, three pieces of artillery, under Lieutenant Bradford, together with Captain Phillips' company of independent volunteers.

From details and other causes they were reduced until (all combined) they did not number over 600 men fit for duty. At about 6 miles from camp the advance guard gave notice that the enemy was near in force. I hastened in front to examine their position, and found they were about one mile west of Pigeon's Ranch, in Canon Glorieta. The mounted men who were marching in front were ordered to retire slowly to the rear, dismount, and come into action on foot. The artillery was pushed forward to a slight elevation in the canon and immediately opened fire.

The infantry was rapidly deployed into line, extending across the canon from a fence on our left up into the pine forest on our right.

About the time these dispositions were made the enemy rapidly advanced in separate columns both upon our right and left. I dispatched Major Pyron to the right to check them in that direction, and placing the center in command of Major Ragnet I hastened with the remainder of the command to the left. A large body of infantry, availing themselves of a gulch that ran up the center of an inclosed field on our left, were moving under its cover past our left flank to the rear of our position. Crossing the fence on foot, we advanced over the clearing some 200 yards under heavy fire from the foe, and dashed into the gulch in their midst, pistol and knife in hand. For a few moments a most desperate and deadly hand- to- hand conflict raged along the gulch, when they broke before the steady courage of our men and fled in the wildest disorder and confusion.

Major Pyron was equally successful, and Major Ragnet with his force charged rapidly down the center. Lieutenant Bradford, of the artillery, had been wounded and borne from the field. There being no other officer of the artillery present, three guns, constituting our battery, had been hastily withdrawn before I was aware of it. Sending to the rear to have two of the guns brought back to the field a pause was made to reunite our forces, which had become somewhat scattered in the last re-encounter. When we were ready to advance the enemy had taken cover, and it was impossible to tell whether their main body was stationed behind a long adobe wall that ran across the canon or had taken position behind a large ledge of rocks in the rear. Private W.D. Kirk, of Captain Phillips' company, had taken charge of one of the guns, and Sergeant Patrick, of the artillery, another, and brought them to the ground.

While trying by the fire of these two guns to ascertain the locality of the enemy, Major Shropshire was sent to the right, with orders to move up among the pines until he should find the enemy, when he was to attack them on the flank. Major Ragnet, with similar orders, was dispatched to the left. I informed these gallant officers that as soon as the sound of their guns was heard I would charge in front with the remainder of the command. Sending Major Pyron to the assistance of Major Ragnet, and leaving instruction for the center to charge as the fire opened on the right, I passed in that direction to learn the cause of the delay in making the assault. I found that the gallant Major Shropshire had been killed. I took command of the right and immediately attacked the enemy who were at the ranch. Majors Ragnet and Pyron opened a galling fire upon their left from the rock on the mountainside, and the center charging down the road, the foe was driven from the ranch to the ledge of rocks before alluded to, where they made their final and most desperate stand. At this point three batteries of eight guns opened a furious fire of grape, canister, and shell upon our advancing troops.

Our brave soldiers, heedless of the storm, pressed on, determined if possible to take their battery. A heavy body of infantry, twice our number, interposed to save their guns. Here the conflict was terrible. Our officers and men, alike inspired with the inalterable determination to overcome every obstacle to the attainment of their objective, dashed among them. The right and center had united on the left. The intrepid Ragnet and the cool, calm, courageous Pyron had pushed forward among the rocks until the muzzles of the guns of the opposing forces passed each other. Inch by inch was the ground disputed, until the artillery of the enemy had time to escape with a number of their wagons. The infantry also broke ranks and fled from the field. So precipitate was

their flight that they cut loose their teams and set fire to two of their wagons. The pursuit was kept up until forced to halt from extreme exhaustion of the men, who had been engaged for six hours in the hardest contested fight it had ever been my lot to witness. The enemy is now known to have numbered 1400 men, Pike's Peaker miners and regulars, the flower of the U.S. Army.

During the action a part of the enemy succeeded in reaching our rear, suprising the wagon guard, and burning our wagons, taking at the same time 16 prisoners. About this time a party of prisoners, whom I had sent to the rear, reached there, and informed them how the fight was going in front, whereupon they beat a hasty retreat, not, however, until the perpetration of two acts which the most barbarous savage of the plains would blush to own. One was the shooting and dangerously wounding of the Rev. L.H. Jones, chaplin of the Fourth Regiment, with a white flag in his hand, the other an order that the prisoners they had taken be shot in case they were attacked in their retreat. These instances go to prove that they have lost all sense of humanity in the insane hatred they bear to the citizens of the Confederacy, who have the manliness to arm in the defense of their country's independence.

We remained upon the battle-field during the day of the 29th to bury our dead and provide the comfort of the wounded, and then marched to Santa Fe, to procure supplies and transportation to replace those destroyed by the enemy.

Our loss was 36 killed and 60 wounded. Of the killed 24 were from the Fourth Regiment, 1 of the Fifth Regiment, 8 of the Seventh Regiment, and 1 of the artillery.

That of the enemy greatly exceeded this number, 44 of their dead being counted where the battle opened. Their killed must have considerably exceeded 100.

The country has to mourn the loss of four as brave and chivalrous officers as ever graced the ranks of any army. The gallant Major Trashier fell early, pressing upon the foe and cheering his men on. The brave and chivalrous Major Ragnet fell mortally wounded while engaged in the last and most desperate conflict of the day. He survived long enough to know and rejoice at our victory, and then died with loving messages upon his expiring lips. The brave, gallant Captain Buckholts and Lieutenant Mills conducted themselves with distinguished gallantry throughout the fight and fell near its close. Of the living it is only necessary to say all behaved with distinguished courage and daring.

This battle proves conclusively that few mistakes were made in the selection of the officers in this command. They were ever in the front, leading their men into the hottest of the fray. It is not too much to say that, even in the midst of this historic band, among whom instances of individual daring and personal prowess were constantly occurring, Major Pyron was distinguished by the calm intrepidity of his bearing. It is due to Adj. Ellsberry R. Lane to bear teatimoney to the courage and activity he displayed in the discharge of his official duties, and to acknowledge my obligations for the manner in which he carried out my orders.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W.R. SCURRY,
Colonel, Commanding Army of New Mexico.

Maj. A.M. Jackson
Assistant Adjutant-General, Army of New Mexico

While winning the Battle of Glorieta, the Confederates lost most of their horses and supplies, and had no recourse except to retreat. Sibley's plans to subsist on federal supplies and recruit Mexican Americans failed because of the deep distrust the New Mexicans had for the Texans. Further, Sibley's men considered him incompetent, a drunkard and a coward since he had not commanded in any of the battles they fought.

In order to remove the Confederates from Santa Fe and Albuquerque, Cols Slough and Canby coordinated efforts with Slough attacking Santa Fe with troops from Fort Union and Canby faking an attack with troops from Fort Craig on Albuquerque. By April 12, the Confederates evacuated Santa Fe and Albuquerque with whatever supplies they could find. Canby joined forces with the Federal troops from Fort Union and for the first time, Federal forces outnumbered the Confederates. The combined force followed the Confederates southward.

On April 15, 20 miles south of Albuquerque, Canby surprised Sibley's straggling column at what came to be called the Battle (skirmish) of Peralta. The Confederates were Col. Green's Fifth Texas Mounted Volunteers, approximately 500 men, or about 1/3 of Sibley's force. Green's position was a strong one behind the adobe walls of New Mexico territorial Governor Connelly's mansion. An excerpt from Federal Lieut. Bell's diary describes what happened next. " Our attention was almost immediately diverted to the North, however, where a Confederate supply train approached Peralta from the direction of Albuquerque, Consisting of 7 heavily laden wagons, the train was escorted by a detachment of Texans with a mountain Howitzer. The Texans had to stop and defend themselves when the Federal troops charged within 50 feet of the wagons and cannon. One Union man was mortally wounded, and four Confederates were killed." Canby at mid- day sent separate columns under Cols Gabriel and Chivington around the north and west of Peralta to prevent reinforcements.

At about 2 o'clock in the afternoon a dust storm arose during which the Confederates managed to escape, after setting fire to Connelly's mansion.

Peralta was to be the last Civil War Battle in New Mexico. Canby decided that both armies could not subsist on the meager rations of the region and permitted the Texans to escape.

Sibley detoured around Fort Craig through the rugged San Mateo Mountains and reached the Mesilla valley with 1800 weary men. They marched on to Fort Bliss where they spent May and part of June gathering supplies and raiding north into New Mexico for the horses needed for their journey home to San Antonio. Thus ended the Disaster of Sibley's campaign.