Patrick Edward Connor and the Military District of Utah: Civil War Military Operations in Utah and Nevada 1862-1865

Max Reynolds McCarthy

Utah State University

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PATRICK EDWARD CONNOR AND THE MILITARY DISTRICT OF UTAH:
CIVIL WAR MILITARY OPERATIONS IN UTAH AND NEVADA,
1862-1865

by

Max Reynolds McCarthy

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of
MASTER OF SCIENCE

in
History

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

1975
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ABSTRACT

Patrick Edward Connor and the Military District of Utah:

Civil War Military Operations in Utah and Nevada,
1862-1865

by

Max Reynolds McCarthy, Master of Science

Utah State University, 1975

Major Professor: Dr. S. George Ellsworth
Department: History

Troops, requested by the federal government for the security during the Civil War of the overland mail, telegraph, and emigrant routes, were provided by California for those portions of the routes which crossed the territories of Utah and Nevada. A force, never exceeding 1,200 in strength, commanded by Patrick Edward Connor, was assigned a geographic responsibility, the Military District of Utah.

Connor's California Volunteers established principal troop locations at Fort Churchill and Fort Ruby in Nevada, and at Camp Douglas and Fort Bridger in Utah Territory during mid-1862. Major actions were conducted against the Indians at the battle of Bear River and by the campaign of Spanish Fork canyon, both in early 1863. Thereafter, a series of treaties achieved peace with various Indian tribes.
Connor also utilized his troops in a variety of activities peripheral to his primary military mission. Important examples were a colonization effort at Soda Springs, continued and thorough area reconnaissance, and early efforts to develop the territorial mineral resources.

Considerations of Mormon intentions, often believed by Connor to be inimical to Union interests, occupied much of Connor's time.

Many writers record a generally unfavorable impression of Connor in Utah. However, it is the view of this author that the missions assigned to the federal troops in the District of Utah during the Civil War were important and were effectively carried out.

(203 pages)
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Thesis Statement and Scope

In terms of numbers of troops engaged, battles fought, and casualties experienced, the Civil War military operations which occurred east of the Mississippi greatly overshadowed, in both the official and public views, those conducted in the West. In terms of national priority, the military issues of the Civil War were clearly to be resolved on such battlefields as those of Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Tennessee, and the other border and Confederate states. There were, however, significant military operations which occurred in the West, although the relative troop strengths were small. The loss to the Union of the West due to secession, or to Confederate invasion, or to an inability to continue operation of the physical links east-to-west was a real possibility.

Portions of the Civil War operations concerned with the military security of the West were conducted by the commander and troops assigned to the Military District of Utah.¹ These troops were charged with an important

¹The time period receiving primary emphasis by this study is that during which the District of Utah was in existence, commencing on August 6, 1862, when Connor assumed command and terminated on February 24, 1865, when the Territory of Utah was, by War Department order, transferred from the Department of the Pacific to the Department of Missouri.
mission which was effectively carried out under frequently difficult circumstances. The results achieved were salutary to the interests of the federal government and to the purposes for which the troops were deployed and utilized.

Although the military presence and field operations conducted in the District of Utah during the Civil War were important and singularly successful, the treatment by some historians of the events does not reflect their importance or the efficiency with which they were accomplished. While the historical literature contains many favorable reactions to the military operations at the local community levels in Utah, Nevada, and California and at the military Departmental level, such favorable assessments were by no means universal.

For example, General Halleck’s report summarizing federal military operations of 1863—a most active year for the District of Utah—devotes only four sentences to that subordinate command. The report of the Secretary of War for the same period included no mention of the District of Utah or of its immediate, higher military headquarters. A definitely negative evaluation is established by most of the widely read historical writers. History in general has not dealt kindly with the federal troops in Utah during the Civil War, nor with their commander, Patrick Edward Connor. A pattern is clear. The

\[\text{U.S., Congress, House, Message of the President of the United States and Accompanying Documents . . ., Report of the Secretary of War, December 5, 1863, 38th Cong., 1st sess., House Ex. Doc. No. 1, p. 30 (x1184).}\]
earliest histories of the period are replete with adverse opinions and undocumented statements. These views have subsequently received extensive, but generally unwarranted, credence by the later historical writers. Some variances appear to exist between some historical fact and some of the commonly accepted historical versions. The wide divergences between the more commonly accepted writings concerning Connor and the federal troops in Utah and what extensive research and analysis suggested the facts to be impressed this author. A conscious desire to redress this deficiency became a prime motivation of this thesis.

**Thesis Organization**

This thesis will address itself to the questions of why federal troops were sent to Utah Territory during the Civil War; how the troops were raised, stationed within the Territory, and reinforced, when necessary; how they were employed in specific field operations against the Indians; how the troops were used in certain quasi-military endeavors; and what were the characteristics and accomplishments of the military commander.

After having thus described the military operations, the final chapter will address specific areas of historical controversy concerning the troop missions and locations. Evolution of some of the historical concepts is traced; attempts are made to resolve the inconsistencies. However, it is acknowledged that irrefutable historical evidence necessary for the resolution is often lacking and, in these cases, subjective judgments result.
Historical Precedents

There are factors, such as territorial political structure and personalities and historical experience, which strongly influenced, if they did not actually control, the actions of the military commander in the District of Utah.

The geographic area of Connor's command was initially defined by the boundary limits of the territories of Utah and Nevada in 1862. The large area approximated 180,000 square miles and covered eleven degrees of longitude and five degrees of latitude.

Relations between the white inhabitants of this vast area and the representatives of the federal government are of special concern. A territorial government had been in existence in Utah for twelve years before the arrival of Connor. The experience of that local extension of the federal government with the Mormons did not assist Connor in establishing cordial relations. Since 1854 relations between the representatives of the federal government and the Mormons had been extremely strained. The so-called "Utah War" of 1857-1858 was the nadir of these relations.

Nevada, which achieved statehood in the midst of the period covered by this thesis, on October 31, 1864, was a far less complex matter. There were no significant problems between the federal troops located in Nevada and the officials of the territorial or state governments.

Before Connor's arrival in Utah, significant military activity featuring such names as Frémont, Stansbury, Gunnison, Beckwith, Steptoe, Johnston,
and Simpson had resulted in a vastly improved general knowledge of the area, and new, better routes traversing the Great Basin in both east-west and north-south directions.

From a military point of view, then, garrison locations from which Connor's troops would operate were fixed or suggested long before his arrival. Forts Bridger and Churchill were in existence in 1862. A military reservation in Rush Valley had been laid out by Steptoe in 1854 and used in turn by Johnston. Both Frémont and Stansbury had concerned themselves with a military post on the emigrant trail—a possible genesis of Camp Connor at Soda Springs. Simpson sought a location for a military post part way across the Basin. Frémont was the first to see the need for a military post near the great Salt Lake; Steptoe recommended stationing troops in Utah; Johnston established Camp Floyd in Cedar Valley—a location dictated by considerations incident to the Utah War.

Of greater importance to Connor, however, was the recent experience of mutual distrust and friction between the Mormons and the United States troops under the command of Albert Sidney Johnston during the Utah War of 1857–8 and the accompanying military occupation of Utah to 1861. 3

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Military Policy and Organization

The effects of national military policy and organization on a commander operating within the existing military structure are decisive. The United States military policy did not create a military organization which could be highly effective in the West. Cavalry troops were recognized as the most efficient force to use against the highly mobile Indians, but costs precluded their availability in required numbers. The necessity to correlate the economy-structured military organization, heavy with infantry, with the military mission would challenge the most resourceful commander. To a great extent, the nature of the military forces dictated the tactics to be employed.

Command of the forces in the field on a geographic basis had long been an effective feature of United States military structure. The establishment of army subordinate, geographic commands was provided for during the Civil War by Army Regulations of 1861. Commanders of these geographic departments exercised virtually complete autonomy over the manner in which they created defenses and employed their troops.

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Department of the Pacific

The geographical department most closely associated with the defense of the overland mail and telegraph and the emigrant routes was the Department of the Pacific, which initiated its operations on January 15, 1861, in accordance with Headquarters of the Army General Order No. 10, November 22, 1860. The new department, with headquarters at San Francisco, embraced the areas of its predecessor Departments of California and Oregon, and included the states of California and Oregon, and the territories of Washington and Utah.

Two officers occupied the position of commander of the Department of the Pacific during the period of existence of the Military District of Utah. Colonel George Wright assumed command of the Department of the Pacific on October 20, 1861. Wright was an experienced Indian fighter; he was the victor in significant battles against the Indians at Four Lakes and Spokane Plains (near present Spokane, Washington) in early September, 1858. By the first of November, Wright had been promoted to brigadier general. For nearly three

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7 Nevada did not become a separate territory until March 1861.


years Wright held this position, to be superseded by Major General Irvin McDowell on July 1, 1864. ¹⁰ No further changes in command occurred during the Civil War years.

The Department of the Pacific itself was divided into various subordinate geographic commands, according to the number of troops assigned, their missions, and the existing or potential threats to mission accomplishment. Although the department subordinate geographic structure changed from time to time, the date of June 30, 1863, provides a typical organization. ¹¹ At that time the Department of the Pacific consisted of the troops in the immediate vicinity of San Francisco and which were commanded directly by department headquarters; the District of Humboldt; the District of Southern California; the District of Oregon; and the District of Utah. Command of the geographic areas subordinate to the Department of the Pacific was typically exercised by a colonel or brigadier general.

The establishment of district boundaries was somewhat flexible. Several examples exist of coordination between districts—particularly Utah and Oregon—indicating mutual concern for joint action. ¹²

The Military District of Utah

Most of the activity directed toward the defense of the mail, telegraph, and emigrant routes took place within the Military District of Utah. This military district, comprising the territories of Utah and Nevada, came into being on August 6, 1862, when Colonel Patrick Edward Connor, enroute to Utah Territory with troops from California, reached Fort Churchill, the first military location in the area of his new command. The organization within the District of Utah was principally defined by the locations at which Connor's troops were stationed.

District boundaries were occasionally changed. Department of the Pacific General Order 195, August 20, 1863, modified District of Utah area of responsibility. "The District of Utah will include the Territory of Utah, Camp Ruby, Nev. Ter., and the new post established at Soda Springs, in the Territory of Idaho." The effects of this directive were to remove Fort Churchill from the District of Utah and to add the post (Camp Connor) which had been


16 Fort Churchill subsequently had no troops which had been assigned to Connor; after the deletion from the Utah District, the post was part of the District of California. Official Records, vol. L, pt. 2, p. 711-713.
established by Connor outside his area of responsibility. Even though Nevada achieved statehood on October 31, 1864, there were no further changes in the area responsibility of the District of Utah until February, 1865.

In the spring of 1865 several events occurred to bring about the discontinuance of the District of Utah. Anticipating an extensive campaign against the Indians in his Department of Missouri, Major General Grenville M. Dodge recommended to the War Department the addition of the Territory of Utah to his department. This was done by the War Department on the 17th of February. Dodge, on March 28, 1865, merged the districts of Utah, Colorado, and Nebraska into one command under Connor; it was called the District of the Plains, with headquarters initially at Denver. The Territory of Utah retained its military geographic identity as the West-Sub-district of the District of the Plains. Lieutenant Colonel Milo George, 1st Battalion, Nevada Cavalry, commanded from Camp Douglas. The Department of the Pacific re-allocated the remainder of Connor's District of Utah command as follows: Camp Ruby and all troops in Nevada were placed in the District of


California. All troops in Idaho Territory (including Camp Connor) were incorporated into the District of Oregon.

**Unit Organization**

The troops involved in the District of Utah included two regiments—one infantry and one cavalry. Regiments were composed of a headquarters of field (line) and staff officers and their assistants and an authorized number of companies. An infantry regiment was authorized ten companies, a cavalry regiment, twelve. The infantry and cavalry companies were designated by letters starting with A and running through K and M, respectively. (The letter "J" was not used in the designation of army companies.)

Personnel organizations of infantry and cavalry regiments are shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Infantry Regiment</th>
<th>Cavalry Regiment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colonel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lieutenant Colonel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjutant</td>
<td>1 (Lt.)</td>
<td>1 (Lt.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quartermaster</td>
<td>1 (Lt.)</td>
<td>1 (Lt.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Footnotes**


22 Army Regulations of 1861, 505. See also Francis A. Lord, They Fought for the Union (New York: Bonanza Books, 1960), 60 and 71.

The organizations of infantry and cavalry companies were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Infantry Company</th>
<th>Cavalry Company</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Captain</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Lieutenant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Lieutenant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Sergeant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissary Sergeant</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quartermaster Sergeant</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sergeant</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporal</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musician</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wagoner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamster</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farrier</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saddler</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>64–82</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>83–101</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
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Inclusion of a band was optional with the regimental commander. If included, the number of privates assigned to the band was deducted from the total regimental authorization. Army Regulations of 1861, 19.

Whereas the infantry and cavalry forces in the District of Utah were organized in prescribed manners, this was apparently not true for the artillery. Although Connor had from six to nine pieces of field artillery at all times during his tenure in the District of Utah and although there were frequent references to a "field battery" or a "light battery," no special organization of artillery-men existed. Utley indicates that the gun crews for artillery pieces in the frontier army were normally drawn from infantry or cavalry units and trained as "instant artillerymen." This was probably true in the District of Utah. Artillery was involved in the campaigns against the Indians at Bear River and at Spanish Fork Canyon. In both cases the artillery was under the command of Lieutenant Francis Honeyman. Lieutenant Honeyman was a member of Company I (and later other companies), Third Infantry Regiment, California Volunteers.

The term, "Third Infantry Battallion, California Volunteers," appears in some of the literature pertaining to the later periods of the history of the District of Utah. A batallion was a headquarters used to command several

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27 Utley, 28.


29 Orton, 585.

companies, but fewer than the full regimental authorization. When the Third Infantry Regiment was formed, the period of service was "not to exceed 3 years . . . ."\(^{31}\) Therefore, considerable personnel losses would occur in the fall of 1864. Decision was made not to provide further recruits to the regiment.\(^{32}\) Consolidation of organizations to contain all of the men who remained in service occurred on October 29, 1864.\(^{33}\) A battalion of four companies (A, B, C, and D) resulted. A battalion was also used to command the two companies of Nevada Cavalry which were used in Utah Territory.

Some caution needs to be applied regarding the degree of adherence to prescribed organizations—particularly among volunteer units. Modifications were frequently made to adjust to local condition.

\(^{31}\) Army Regulations of 1861, 505.


\(^{33}\) Orton, 505. See also Fred B. Rogers, Soldiers of the Overland: Being Some Account of the Services of General Patrick Edward Connor and His Volunteers in the Old West (San Francisco, California: The Grabhorn Press, 1938), 247.
CHAPTER II
DECISION TO DEFEND

Facilities to be Defended

Communications routes through Utah and Nevada territories were extensive and important. Oldest were the emigrant routes: the Oregon Trail, the California Trail, and the many less-known "cut-offs" and interconnecting routes. The central route of the overland mail bisected the area, and by March 1861, the central route had replaced the southern Butterfield route for the daily U.S. mail. In October 1861, the overland telegraph was completed.

If the problems inherent in the military protection of these routes are to be appreciated, an insight into their physical descriptions is important. The most obvious, common characteristic is their length. These emigrant, stage, mail, and telegraph routes were nearly 1,000 miles long, through the territories of Utah and Nevada and, although all were generally east-west in orientation, they did not follow a single, common path. The emigrant routes, especially, utilized diverse paths throughout the northern half of the territories.

Another feature of importance in any consideration of protection is the mobility of many of the elements of value or concern--the emigrant parties and the passenger and mail stages. At any given time, the emigrant parties or the stages could be located any place along the lengthy routes.
The stationary facilities associated with the overland mail and the
overland telegraph also complicated plans for protection. Several types of
facilities were located along the overland mail line. Each fifteen to forty miles
there was a very simple facility, a "swing station," manned by a crew of three
or four men, and which provided a change of horses and very austere rest for
the stage passengers. ¹ These stations were often associated with ranches
which grew the forage for that particular location. Every third or fourth
station along the line was a more elaborate "home station," which featured a
main building including sleeping rooms, a dining room, and frequently a tele-
graph office (after October 1861). In general, the detachments manning either
the swing or home stations were small. The stations were constructed in a
much sturdier fashion later in the period. "Some of these (mail station) houses,
in the areas where Indians were hostile, were regular little fortresses. Those
stations rebuilt after the Indian difficulties in Nevada in the summer of 1860,
were constructed of stone or adobe and were sixty feet square with walls eight
to ten feet high." ²

¹ LeRoy R. Hafen, The Overland Mail, 1849-1869: Promoter of
Settlement—Precursor of Railroads (Cleveland, Ohio: The Arthur H. Clark
Company, 1926), 304. Andrew L. Neff, History of Utah 1847 to 1869 (Salt
Lake City, Utah: The Deseret News Press, 1940), 726. Oscar Lewis, The
War in the Far West 1861-1865 (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and

² Hafen, 176.
The telegraph facilities included the wires crossing the country and repair stations at approximately fifteen-mile intervals. In general, the route of the telegraph followed the stage and mail lines as they existed in 1861.

The continued, uninterrupted use of these communications facilities and routes was vital to the United States. Utley saw these communications as the symbol of unity of Pacific and Atlantic under the U.S. flag. Whitney quotes the Lincoln telegraph message of October 20, 1861, to Acting Governor Fuller of Utah: "The completion of the telegraph to Great Salt Lake City is auspicious of the stability and union of the republic." There were a variety of more practical reasons for keeping the overland lines open. Travel by sea was subject to disruption by Confederate privateers. Also, the federal government was in need of western bullion.

The extensive investments by private business in the various communications were also important considerations in any plan for defense. "Big business, in the form of highly subsidized mail companies, ceaselessly urged that the government adequately protect the unguarded highway." Then, too, there were the interests of the territorial residents. "Probably no people were more interested in the protection of the Overland

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3 Neff, 730.

4 Utley, 230.


6 Neff, 627.
Stage and Mail route which maintained regular contact between Salt Lake City and points east and west than the citizens of Utah. 7

The identification as to what needed protection and why were clear to all. There are numerous examples of concern. The Department of the Pacific instructed the commanding officer at Fort Churchill on September 17, 1861, to advise the Indian chiefs in his area that if they "wish to retain the good will of the Government they must prevent their people from all interference with the mail stages or stations, or the iron wire that passes through their country." 8

A typical treaty with the Indians included Indian agreement not to molest the telegraph and overland stage lines and to permit military posts to be built along the routes. 9

The Threats

As we have seen, several factors considered in combination provided the bases for determination that a military defense was required. One factor was the importance of the facilities or activities. A second was their relative vulnerabilities to disruptive or destructive actions. A third factor in the

7 Kate B. Carter, comp., Our Pioneer Heritage (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1963), 6:3.


decision was whether a threat against the facilities existed, or was believed to exist. Possible threats to the continued effective operation of the stage, mail, and telegraph lines may have come from an Indian threat, a Confederate or secessionist threat, or a threat resulting from possible internal civil disorder, that is, a Mormon threat.

The Indian Threat

The Indian threat was genuine; its scope and intensity are clearly documented by history. Although accurate data is, of course, not available, it has been estimated that approximately 35,000 Indians populated the Great Basin area about the time of the Civil War. 10 As a generality, Shoshoni, including the Bannock and the Snake, were to the north, the Ute to the east, and the Goshiute (Goshute) to the west. The Shoshoni and the Ute were relatively more culturally advanced 11 and, therefore, capable of more serious actions against white interests.

Although there were a multitude of festering reasons to provoke the Indians to hostilities, two events in particular brought the issues to a climax. The plight of destitute Indians was aggravated by severe winter conditions during 1861-1862; the Indians were faced with the dilemma--plunder or

10 Neff, 369.

starve. The withdrawal of federal troops from the frontier for the battle-
fields of the Civil War during the summer of 1861 provided an opportunity
for the Indian to attempt redress of his grievances. "Some tribes took
almost immediate advantage of the absence of the 'long knives.' Others
reacted only a little more slowly."  

The mobility of mail, express, and passenger stages and of emigrant
parties along the extensive overland routes made them particularly vulnerable
to Indian attack. The numerous, isolated, small, lightly manned stage stations
and the wires, poles, and repair stations of the overland telegraph were also
highly vulnerable. As might be expected, provisions, livestock, and other
means of sustenance were the usual objectives of an Indian adventure. These
items of booty were sought wherever they could be found with an acceptable
element of risk to the Indians. Isolated mining parties, stage stations, and
stage coaches offered particularly tempting circumstances. Since the

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13 Colton, 207; Neff, 622; Lewis, 72, 95.
14 U. S., Department of the Interior, Soldier and Brave: . . . (New
16 Hafen, 242.
telegraph offered little in the way of "booty appeal," the lines probably were not usually the objectives of Indian attacks. 17

An inevitable result of the Indians' efforts to obtain material things from the whites was the destruction of life and property. Station keepers, drivers, passengers, and an occasional soldier were killed. 18 Stage stations and stages were burned. 19 Particularly objectionable were the pillage and the burning of U.S. mails. 20

That the Indians had sufficient capability in terms of numbers and military potential so as to constitute a genuine threat to the overland mail and to the security of the West in general appears obvious--particularly under circumstances of the United States preoccupied with a civil war.

17 Numerous authors such as Margaret M. Fisher, Utah and the Civil War (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1929), 21; Rogers, 150; and Pedersen, 151, report Indian damage to and disruption of the telegraph lines. Neff, 731, indicates, however, that, because of Indian superstitions and lack of awareness of the importance of the telegraph, "frequently when stage and freight were in jeopardy, the single span of wire was unmolested."

18 Fisher, 112. Hafen, 250.

19 Edward W. Tullidge, The History of Salt Lake City and Its Founders (Salt Lake City, Utah: Star Printing Company, 1886), 252; Colton, 166.

20 Fisher, 133.
The Confederate or Secessionist Threat

There were no incidents of overt Confederate action within the territories of Utah and Nevada. However, there was a considerable body of political dissent, generally termed secessionist, existing in California and in western Nevada, which had significant military impact on both the Department of the Pacific and the troops for the District of Utah.

The California secessionists were most vocal in the southern part of the state. Rogan reports that the secessionist element was strong and divisive even in Stockton, Connor's home, and that Connor was a "mark of especial detestation" to some of the California southern sympathizers. In Nevada the southern "hotbeds of treason" were Virginia City, Carson City, and Gold Hill.

An understandable concern by the military in the existence of a threat from the Confederacy and the secessionists is easily documented. This concern manifested itself in several ways, including the deployment of troops. For example, the First Infantry California Volunteers, originally called to

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22 Rogan, 7.

23 Lewis, 32 and 34.

federal service for use on the overland routes, was diverted by General Wright to southern California because of increasing, dangerous disaffection there. 25

General Sumner used the existence of a secessionist threat as his basis for urging the "absolute and immediate necessity for a government of some kind in Nevada Territory." 26

Connor, enroute to Utah, wrote to Department of the Pacific from Fort Churchill on August 3:

I find since entering this Territory that there are many sympathizers with the Southern rebels along our entire route. . . . they are known and can be identified as open and avowed secessionists. I have not as yet taken any steps to check them by arrest and punishment, but await further instructions from headquarters. 27

A culmination of over a year of official apprehension about secessionist activity and of Connor's personal experience in both California and Nevada was reflected in Connor's Orders No. 1, August 6, 1862:

... Being credibly informed that there are in this district persons who, while claiming and receiving protection to life and property, are endeavoring to destroy and defame the principles and institutions of a Government under whose benign influence they have been so long protected, it is therefore most rigidly enjoined upon all commanders ... to cause to be promptly arrested and closely confined until they have taken the oath of allegiance to the United States, all persons

who from this date shall be guilty of uttering treasonable sentiments against the Government .... Traitors shall not utter treasonable sentiments in this district with impunity ....

The Mormon Threat

There are a large number of scholarly treatises which address in detail the general subject of the relations between federal civil and military representatives in Utah and the Mormons immediately prior to and during the Civil War period. It will suffice here, for the purpose of suggesting the possibility of a threat from the Mormons to the federal military forces or to the accomplishment of their mission, to consider relatively broad generalities. Particularly important at this stage are those factors which may have influenced the decision to send troops to Utah and Connor's attitudes concerning the Mormons prior to his arrival in Utah.

Only slightly over four years had elapsed between the passage of Johnston's army of the Utah War through Salt Lake City (June 26, 1858) en route to the establishment of Camp Floyd, and the arrival of Connor (October

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28 Official Records, vol. L, pt. 2, p. 55. This portion of Connor's initial order was deeply resented by some historians for what must have been an assumption that it was directed specifically at the Mormons. It was not; the proclamation was directed to "traitors"--the secessionist variety. Rogan, 22, quotes Whitney (below) and then falls into the same morass of faulty history in citing this action by Connor as an initiation of his personal vendetta against the Mormons. "Even the mild-mannered historian Orson F. Whitney comments that this [Connor's] proclamation in its wording indicates that Connor expected to find traitors .... This proclamation foretold the difficulties that would arise once Connor entered the stronghold of Mormonism."
The problems causing the dispatch of the Utah Expedition were fresh in the memories of men and must have influenced Connor and his troops.

Further, in June, 1862, just prior to Connor's departure from California, the "Morrisite War" had occurred. This event was emphatically civil disorder in the area where Connor was to operate and could readily be conceived by anti-Mormons as bloody, religious persecution.

Overt actions by the Mormons to threaten directly federal interests in the Territory of Utah did not occur. However, the presence of the large concentration of Mormons athwart the overland routes and suspicions as to their motives and intentions during the national travail of civil war could easily be conceived as causes of concern.

One area of concern had overtones of religion. Mormons believed that the coming of the Civil War was in fulfillment of a prophecy and revelation by Joseph Smith in 1832. Thus, the Mormons could manifest "no surprise or dismay,"29 and could readily dissociate themselves from involvement in its outcome.

Other factors considered possibly to contribute to difficulties between a military commander and Mormon elements of the population in his area of

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responsibility were identified in an official Army report in July, 1861. 30

a. A large percentage of Mormons are foreign, with little understanding or regard for American government, laws or institutions.

b. The Mormon Church is a closely structured hierarchy in itself and would compete with any local government for the allegiance and obedience of the people.

c. Based on their experience, the Mormons are taught to hate Americans as "slayers of the founder of their religion, as the persecutors of their people."

The relative ease of determining the Mormon potential to disrupt federal interests in Utah and the extreme difficulty in ascertaining their intentions must be recognized. The critical considerations, however, were not what the Mormons intended to do, but what they were capable of doing if they so elected, and particularly what Connor's assessment of the situation was.

There are many indications, summarized below, that Connor sincerely believed in the existence of a Mormon threat to the accomplishment of his mission. This belief by Connor was first influential in the missions ultimately assigned to his troops and in their locations within Utah Territory. 31 By March 1863, the

30 Official Records, vol. L, pt. 1, p. 548. This report, prepared by Major James H. Carleton, commander of Camp Fitzgerald, near Los Angeles, was intended to analyze the political sentiments of the people in his area, some of whom were Mormons. The impact of this report is not known. However, it certainly was known to Department of the Pacific and may have been known to Connor.

threat was considered to be of such magnitude that Connor considered that pre-emptive use of his forces against the Mormons may be necessary for survival. 32 Apprehension of Mormon intentions resulted in the cancellation of a planned expedition against the Indians. 33 That civil disorder in Mormon-dom had the potential to disrupt the mails—and Connor's mission—was dramatically illustrated at this time by "worried Gentiles" of Salt Lake City who, on May 9, 1863, "wired the government that unless quick action was taken to remove the troops and the obnoxious officials, ensuing difficulties might result in the disruption of the mail and telegraph lines." 34

Belief in the seriousness of the Mormon threat and the possibility of its use against the authority of the United States was also held by General Halleck. 35

The Decision

In view of the nature, importance, and vulnerabilities of the overland communications routes and the threats as they existed or were perceived to exist to their continued effective operation, a decision to provide military protection was inevitable.

32 Orton, 511.

33 Ibid.


35 Dwyer, 17.
One of the preliminary steps to implement such a decision was legislative. Congressional action--an "Act to Authorize the Employment of Volunteers to Aid in Enforcing the Laws and Protecting Public Property," was approved July 22, 1861. This act, in general, authorized the call to federal service of volunteers for service in artillery, cavalry, or infantry units for periods of from six months to three years. Volunteer units so raised were to organize and operate under basically the same regulations and laws as did the units of the regular army.

Units were obtained in response to specific calls from the secretary of war to the governors of the respective states and territories. Individuals and the units they comprised were received into the service of the United States by muster.

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36 Army Regulations of 1861, 504-508.

37 Francis B. Heitman, comp., Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, vol. 2 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903), 285, indicates that under these procedures California provided a total of 15,725 men during the Civil War, and Nevada, 1,082. Although portions of the Utah militia were employed on federal service in 1862, Heitman does not include the Territory of Utah among those political entities which provided federal forces. Cavalry and infantry volunteer units from California and cavalry from Nevada were utilized in the Military District of Utah.

38 Army Regulations of 1861, 481. Muster was a military procedure whereby the membership of a given organization was verified and reported to the Adjutant General.
A variety of early, tentative, temporary, expedient, and frequently ineffective military measures to protect the overland routes, taken prior to the deployment of Connor's troops, influenced Connor's operations. Fort Churchill was established in July 1860, in response to requests from a wide variety of sources for protection along the overland route. Commanders of existing military posts were directed to provide escorts to mail coaches. A Protective Corps headed by a military officer as "superintendent of the emigration" was detailed during the summer of 1861.

As an illustration of the gravity of the situation, in July 1861 the War Department suggested to General Scott, commanding the army, the possibility of using paroled companies of Confederate prisoners "to take part in Utah." This plan was not implemented; the adjutant general subsequently determined that the proposal was a violation of parole.

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42 *Official Records*, vol. L, pt. 1, p. 537. The Confederates had the practice of paroling captured federal troops immediately after their capture. Initially, such troops were discharged on their return to federal control on parole, since a condition of parole was an oath "not to bear arms or to aid the United States directly or indirectly until ... exchanged." Later, paroled troops were kept in special camps under military control as a disciplinary measure. See Lord, 319.
The last military effort prior to the arrival of the California Volunteers along the western portions of the overland routes involved the Mormons. In April 1862, Indian depredations against the overland mail were extensive to the east of Salt Lake City, and more particularly to the east of Fort Bridger. "The Colorado troops, who would have been the logical ones to handle this situation, were busily engaged ... in northern New Mexico." 43 In addition, volunteer troops from neither Ohio to the east 44 nor California to the west were yet deployed along the overland routes. A request for assistance brought help from the Utah militia. A small party of twenty-four volunteers under Robert T. Burton was placed on the routes to the east of Salt Lake City during the period April 26-May 31, 1862. A second force, the Lot Smith company of cavalry, operated in the same area, but for a longer period, April 28 to August 14. 45

department of the pacific planning for the utah operation

The first national call to California for volunteers came by telegram and Pony Express relay on July 24, 1861. "The War Department accepts for

43 Hafen, 246.

44 The Eleventh Cavalry Ohio Volunteers had responsibility, under the District of Nebraska, for defense of the overland routes immediately to the east of the District of Utah.

45 Fisher, Utah and the Civil War, provides the most complete account of the operations of the Utah Militia in defense of the overland routes. The book consists primarily of diary entries of participants, including Burton and Smith.
three years one regiment of infantry and five companies of cavalry to guard the overland mail route from Carson Valley to Salt Lake and Fort Lawrence [sic]."⁴⁶ This call resulted in the muster and organization of the First Infantry California Volunteers, commanded by Colonel James H. Carleton. This regiment was diverted, however, on September 17, 1861, from its intended mission of guarding the overland mail route to one of settling disaffection in southern California.⁴⁷

Headquarters of the army was notified of the diversion of the First Infantry California Volunteers on the 27th of September. The headquarters of the army position was stated by Major General McClellan, Commanding U.S. Armies, to General Wright on November 13:

Will you please order the necessary force (probably one or two regiments), if possible under Colonel Carleton, to protect the Overland Mail Route; the number of troops to be employed is left to your discretion. Please confer with Louis McLane about the location of the troops.⁴⁸

General Wright responded on the 20th of November that he had "recalled Colonel Carleton from his command in the southern district, and as

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⁴⁸ Official Records, vol. L, pt. 1, p. 720. The California Volunteers from which the "replacement" troops would be drawn were in existence or were being organized as a result of a second War Department call, August 14, 1861, for "four regiments of infantry and one regiment of cavalry, to be placed at the disposal of General Sumner." Of interest to this study were the Third Infantry California Volunteers and Second Cavalry California Volunteers. See Orton, 12.
soon as he arrived I shall organize his command of at least one regiment, for the protection of the Overland Mail Route." General Wright also indicated that, in coordination with Mr. Louis McLane (mail company agent), tentative locations along the route for troops had been selected for Simpson’s Park (326 miles from Sacramento), Ruby Valley (98 miles from Simpson’s Park), and Camp Floyd (217 miles from Ruby Valley). Governor Nye was notified of Wright’s "design to establish troops at Simpson’s Park, Ruby Valley, and Camp Floyd." 

Extremely adverse weather during the winter of 1861-1862 caused delays in the contemplated troop movement and hardships to the soldiers, most of whom were living in temporary camps pending their deployment to Utah Territory. In mid-January General Wright wrote of "unprecedented rains and storms (in California) which have continued uninterruptedly for the past six weeks [which] have submerged and saturated the whole country to such an extent that it is absolutely impossible to move." Four months later the effects were still being felt. Wright wrote again: "The season is more than a month later than usual. The snow on the Sierra Nevada Mountains is very deep..." His estimate was that Connor could not move until approximately the middle of June.

After a delay of three months, a communication from the War Department on March 21, 1862, took on an almost imperative note.

The Secretary of War directs you to make the necessary preparations and disposition of your troops to protect emigrants and the Overland Mail Route from Indian hostilities and depredations. 53

Wright's response of the 26th of March disclosed his plans for "protection to the Overland Mail Route as far as Salt Lake or Fort Bridger," 54 The protecting troops were to be provided by two companies of cavalry already at Fort Churchill and three more companies of cavalry and six companies of volunteer infantry in California, but ready to move as soon as the roads were passable.

Colonel Carleton could not be spared from extremely important duties in southern California, but Wright assured his superiors: "I have an active and reliable colonel of volunteers, well suited for this service." 55 Although the new commander was not mentioned by name, this is the initial shift in the identification of the commander for troops in Utah.

On March 27th, General Wright reassured the War Department that the instructions of the secretary of war for protection of the overland mail route would be carried out as soon as practicable, that is, as soon as troops

and supplies could cross the mountains. Units in California designated to constitute the force were "three companies of cavalry near this city (San Francisco) and the six companies of the Third Infantry California Volunteers, now at Benicia Barracks ...".\footnote{56}

On April 29th Wright wrote that the troop and supply movement could not commence before the end of May, but that in the meantime the necessary supplies were being accumulated. He assured his superiors that the route through his area of responsibility could be "traveled in perfect safety; had it been otherwise, I would have forced a passage over the mountains and thrown troops on the line at any cost.".\footnote{57}

The matter of locations of military posts along the overland route was again discussed. "The distance from Sacramento to Fort Bridger is about 800 miles, and it will be important to have a careful examination of the whole route made and suitable points selected for posts. Ruby Valley is well spoken of; it is about midway between Fort Churchill and Camp Floyd."\footnote{58}

Another reassurance to the War Department was sent by General Wright on May 22.

Colonel Conner, with seven companies of his regiment ... will move on the 26th instant and encamp beyond Stockton, preparatory to crossing the mountains at the earliest moment


\footnote{58}{Ibid.}
practicable, and advance on the Overland Mail Route. The cavalry force designated for the same service will be thrown forward at an early day. 59

The 30th of May saw yet another communication to the War Department concerning troops for the overland mail route.

Supplies are being collected and transportation preparing for crossing the Sierra Nevada, as soon as the roads are practicable for wagons, probably about the 20th of June. I have two companies of cavalry at Fort Churchill, and one company temporarily near Pyramid Lake, which with the two companies of the same regiment, Second Cavalry California Volunteers, now near this city, will constitute the mounted force I designed for Colonel Connor's command. Three companies of the Third Infantry California Volunteers are now serving in the District of Humboldt. I propose as soon as their services can be spared, to order them to join Colonel Connor. ... Unless otherwise instructed, I shall advance Colonel Connor to the neighborhood of Salt Lake, establishing one, possibly two, intermediate stations between Fort Churchill and Utah. 60

Consideration of the facilities on the overland route and their importance and vulnerabilities to the threats perceived to exist led inevitably to a decision to employ military defensive measures. Almost a year passed between the decision to defend and the final designation of a force of California Volunteers, under the command of Colonel Patrick Edward Connor, to provide that defense. The delay in placing troops along the western portions of the overland routes resulted from the time necessary to raise and equip volunteer units, a change in the designation of the major troop unit to be employed, and

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the late winter season of 1861–1862. The planning completed, in early 1862 the preparation of Connor's force for duty in the District of Utah was underway.
CHAPTER III

DEPLOYMENT OF THE CALIFORNIA VOLUNTEERS

Troop Preparations

Coincident with General Wright's actions informing the War Department of his plans to use elements of the Third Infantry and Second Cavalry California Volunteers for the overland routes were certain preparatory actions concerning the troops.

The Third Infantry was organized and mustered during late 1861 at Camp McDougall, near Stockton (Headquarters and Companies A, B, D, I, and K) and at Benicia and Benicia Barracks (Companies C, E, F, G, and H). The Second Cavalry was mustered at Camp Alert in San Francisco.

Almost immediately upon organization, some of the companies of both regiments were committed to defensive roles. Four companies (A, B, C, and D) of the Third Infantry were assigned to posts in the Humboldt area. Two companies (A and H) of the Second Cavalry were deployed early to Fort Churchill, to be joined later by a third company (M) to operate in that same general area.

On March 28 Connor was directed by General Wright to put his command (Third Infantry) in readiness for movement at an early date. 1 The first

step was to recover the four companies, which had been deployed to the Humboldt, to rejoin the other companies of the regiment at Benicia Barracks. By June 30 the assembly of that portion of the regiment designated for Utah was complete; seven companies were at Benicia Barracks.²

On May 19, as a preliminary step for the march across the mountains, the Third Infantry was ordered to move to the vicinity of Stockton.³ The troops arrived on the evening of the 26th, and established their camp, which they named Camp Halleck, at the fair grounds.⁴

The other unit to comprise a major portion of Connor's force, the Second Cavalry, was alerted on June 16 to prepare for movement by the 1st of July.⁵ The regimental headquarters and Companies K and L from Camp Alert were to join the other three companies already in Nevada.

The Third Infantry continued its preparations at Camp Halleck. On June 26th General Wright inspected Connor's regiment at that location and reported: "The regiment made a fine appearance; the arms, clothing, and equipments were in high order."⁶ After thus reassuring himself as to the condition of his troops, orders were quickly issued on July 5, 1862, by

General Wright's headquarters to provide the official designation of troops for the protection of the overland mail route.

1. Under instructions from the War Department to protect the Overland Mail Route within this department, the Third Infantry California Volunteers and the headquarters, with five companies of the Second Cavalry California Volunteers, are designated for that purpose.

2. Col. P. Edward Connor, Third Infantry California Volunteers, the senior officer of the column, will move, with his headquarters and seven companies of his regiment, now encamped near Stockton, as soon as practicable, crossing the Sierra Nevada Mountains and advancing on the Territory of Utah.

3. Col. Columbus Sims, Second Cavalry California Volunteers, will move from his camp near this city at an early day, with his headquarters and two companies of his regiment, by water to Sacramento, and thence by land along the mail route.

4. After crossing the Sierra Nevada Mountains, Colonel Sims will report to Colonel Connor, by whose orders he will be governed in his further movements.

5. Colonel Connor will establish a post at Ruby Valley, with the headquarters of the Second Cavalry and Companies H and K of the same regiment, and then advance to the vicinity of Salt Lake with his seven companies of infantry, Price's company of the Second Cavalry, and his field battery, and select a suitable position for a post.

First Movement

After engaging in an extended hassle with the supporting quartermaster over wagons to transport supplies, at 9 o'clock in the morning on


8 For reasons to be discussed later, troop units of the Second Cavalry were not used at Ruby Valley.
July 12, Connor's command of seven infantry companies departed in compliance with departmental orders issued on the 5th of July. At this stage, Connor's column consisted of approximately 750 men. Accompanying were 55 wagons, each carrying 3,000 pounds of supplies, several carriages for officers' families, at least five and probably six pieces of field artillery, and three wagon-ambulances. Departure was through Stockton to the jaunty military tune, "The Girl I Left Behind Me." One week later the regiment was just west of Placerville, and on the 25th the mountains had been crossed.

**Fort Churchill**

August 3 saw the column at Fort Churchill, a post established in July 1860, and garrisoned continuously since that date. The command arrived "in excellent health and spirits" and having "stood the trip remarkably well." Here, on August 6, 1862, at the first military post in the area to comprise his district, Connor assumed command.

A halt here was necessary to overhaul and repair the wagons and harnesses; besides, Colonel Sims and the Second Cavalry had not yet arrived.

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Connor was concerned that a large westward emigration along the route that season would have depleted the supply of grass for his animals. He planned to move his command from Fort Churchill to Ruby Valley in two increments.

The Headquarters and Companies K and L, Second Cavalry California Volunteers, had departed Camp Alert on July 21, crossed the Sierra Nevada Mountains at Henness Pass, and arrived at Fort Churchill on August 11. 13 Their arrival brought more problems for Connor. Colonel Sims had experienced severe disciplinary problems with his troopers. Thirty men had deserted along the route of march. The commander of Company K was under guard. The remaining men and officers were reported to be in a state of insubordination. Connor reported to the Department of the Pacific:

... I am informed by Major McGarry and other officers that if the companies designated for that purpose are left at Ruby Valley with Colonel Sims in command there will not be thirty of them left in sixty days. On the route the officers threatened to leave the colonel and march their companies to this post without him. 14

This situation necessitated some adjustments to the planned, future assignments. On August 15th two companies of infantry were designated to

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14 *Ibid.* By Department of the Pacific orders, Sims was superseded in command of his regiment on the 19th and ordered to remain at Fort Churchill, but was not to assume command there. Connor was by the same directive required to submit a report concerning Sims' behavior on the march across the mountains. Major McGarry was placed temporarily in charge of that portion of the Second Cavalry Regiment with Connor. On January 31, 1863, Sims resigned from the service and George S. Evans was placed in command, in compliance with orders of December 6, 1862.
man the Ruby Valley location. The Headquarters, Second Cavalry, with Companies A, H, and K, were designated to continue the march toward Utah under regimental control. Company M was ordered to march with the Third Infantry. Company L, Second Cavalry remained at garrison Fort Churchill.

The Third Infantry California Volunteers (seven companies) and Company M, Second Cavalry California Volunteers, departed Fort Churchill on August 15.\textsuperscript{15} By December 31, 1862, Company L, Second Cavalry, had been augmented by the arrival at Fort Churchill of Company A, Third Infantry, recently relieved from duty in the Humboldt area.\textsuperscript{16}

\textbf{Fort Ruby}

Two and one-half weeks were consumed before the column of seven infantry companies (C, E, F, G, H, I, and K) and one cavalry company reached Ruby Valley on the 1st of September. The road was rough; the dust was deep; and extremely high daytime temperatures on the Nevada desert necessitated marching during twilight hours. Dress parades were held regularly, despite the heat, sand, and sage.\textsuperscript{17} Connor's force, under his immediate control, now totalled approximately 1,000 men. General Wright

\textsuperscript{15} Rogers, 22.


\textsuperscript{17} Hunt, 190.
was able to report to Washington that: "The command is in good health and under the admirable discipline established by Colonel Connor is perfectly reliable for any service required of it." 18

Location of federal troops in Ruby Valley had been contemplated since the inception of plans for defense of the overland routes. References to the possibility of locating forces at Ruby Valley appear under dates of November 20, 1861, and April 29, June 21, and July 5, 1862. 19 However, not until July 25 did General Wright direct the establishment of a post at Ruby Valley. 20

The troops were set to cutting timber for construction of winter quarters for the garrison and a storehouse for the fort at the southern end of Ruby Valley. A reservation of six miles square was established. 21 The fort was officially dedicated on the 20th of September.

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18 Official Records, vol. L, pt. 2, p. 95 and 97. Major McGarry, with Company K, Second Cavalry, had not departed Fort Churchill until August 31. Rogers, 259, quoting a soldier’s diary, Third Infantry, indicates the arrival of Companies A and H, Second Cavalry, at Ruby Valley on 15 September. General Wright, in the reports cited in this footnote indicates three companies of cavalry arrived at Ruby Valley on September 1. In all probability, he was unaware of the manner in which Connor had directed his command at this stage of the march.


The matter of a garrison for the new fort was an issue between Connor and departmental headquarters. The initial plan (June 16) had been for the Second Cavalry Headquarters and Companies H and K to garrison the Ruby Valley location. In view of the disciplinary problems with Sims, this plan was changed on August 15 and a garrison of two infantry companies was directed. By September 19 the matter was still active. Department of the Pacific strangely directed Connor: "As no provision has been made for cavalry at Ruby Valley [no mention of the August 15 plan], you will leave [Major] Gallagher and two companies of infantry at that point." Unless the other three companies of his regiment still in California were to join him in Utah that winter, Connor recommended on the 20th that only one infantry company be left at Fort Ruby. Wright was adamant: "The other companies will not join you this winter. Two companies will be left at Ruby." Companies C and F, Third Infantry California Volunteers, constituted the first garrison for the new fort.

The provision of supplies from California to be placed along the route was another bothersome concern for Connor. The contractor, James Street, was unable to keep up. When Connor arrived at Ruby Valley on the 1st of September, he reported to General Wright: "No supplies here or ahead." A report of continuing deficiencies in supplies was made on September 16.


\(^{23}\) Rogers, 28.
Not until the 1st of October had the supply situation been resolved sufficiently to permit the onward movement of the troops to Utah.  

Because of the supply-enforced delay in movement of his troops from Ruby Valley, Connor made a personal visit to Salt Lake City by stage during the period of September 5th to the 13th. This preliminary visit to the city of the Mormons had a marked effect in formulating Connor's views concerning its inhabitants, and, in all probability, influenced both Connor's concept of his mission and the subsequent official statement of that mission by his higher military headquarters. Following his return from Salt Lake City to Fort Ruby, Connor's official report to the Department of the Pacific included these observations:

It will be impossible for me to describe what I saw and heard in Salt Lake, so as to make you realize the enormity of Mormonism; suffice it, that I found them a community of traitors, murderers, fanatics, and whores. The people publicly rejoice at reverses to our arms, and thank God that the American Government is gone, as they term it, while their prophet and bishops preach treason from the pulpit. The Federal officers are entirely powerless, and talk in whispers for fear of being overheard by Brigham's spies. ... I have a difficult and dangerous task before me, and will endeavor to act with prudence and firmness. 

It is difficult to conceive the circumstances that would have provided the bases for so antagonistic a view of the Mormons as held by Connor. His stay in the city could not have exceeded five days; sources of the information,

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other than personal observation, on which his opinions were based are not disclosed. That Connor held the extreme views he voiced, however, cannot be disputed--nor can the fact that his opinions influenced his concept of his duty in Utah.

However, a direct military benefit came from the reconnaissance. Connor reported: "The country between this point [Ruby Valley] and Salt Lake is an alkali desert, scarce of wood and water ... " Knowledge gained from the journey could be the means of saving the command "much suffering for want of water." 26

While the troops were delayed at Fort Ruby, it became necessary to send a force to suppress some Indian disturbances on the Humboldt. 27 Details are discussed in Chapter IV.

At Fort Ruby in late September another event of some significance to the California Volunteers occurred. At the request of the officers and men of his regiment, Colonel Connor telegraphed a request to Major General Halleck, General-in-Chief in Washington, for duty for the Third Infantry California Volunteers on the battlefields of the East. The regiment "pledges General


Halleck never to disgrace the flag, himself, or California. The men enlisted to fight traitors .... We desire to strike a blow in this contest. 28 The request included an authorization for the government to withhold $30,000 in pay then due, or if that were not sufficient to offset the transportation costs, the men would pay their own transportation expenses to Panama. Of course, this request came to naught, and the records fail to disclose General Wright's views on the action of the regiment.

On the 2nd of October, 1862, the march of Connor's column from Fort Ruby to Utah was resumed. In column at this time were five companies of the Third Infantry (E, G, H, I, and K) and two of the Second Cavalry (A and M)—a total of slightly over 700. Their exact destination remained somewhat

28 Official Records, vol. L, pt. 2, p. 133. Rogers, 25, utilizing additional sources, has a very complete description of this event. Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of Utah 1640-1886 (San Francisco, California: The History Company, 1890), 611, interprets this gesture, typical of the effusive patriotism of the day, as one of "disgust when it became known that Zion was their destination." Whitney, 2:73-75, providing no historical documentation other than their September 24th "demand" to General Halleck, manages to devote three pages to the disappointment and "humiliation" of Connor's troops at the "galling, undignified" prospect of service in Utah and their "burning with impatience to go to the seat of war." Such distortion, if left in isolation, does not provide an important misrepresentation of history. However, later scholars, such as Rogan, 23-27, and William Fox, "Patrick Edward Connor, 'Father' of Utah Mining" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1966), 12, cite Whitney's views as apparently authentic evidence of "insubordination among the troops and officers," a "state of dissatisfaction," and an attitude of being "slighted and insulted." The implications relative to the ability of Connor and his troops for unbiased, effective service in Utah are all too obvious.
imprecise. General Wright was to base his decision regarding the exact location of troops in Utah on the recommendations of Colonel Connor, and these could not be submitted until Connor had personally seen the area. Until that time, the prospective post in Utah would be described as "in the vicinity of Salt Lake ... to be the headquarters of Colonel Connor." 29 Connor's initial visit to Utah occurred during the second week of September, and his discussions via dispatches with General Wright of the options available for troop locations--abandoned Fort Crittenden or "another location ... on a plateau about three miles from Salt Lake City" 30 --immediately followed. General Wright approved the location near the city, and so advised the adjutant general of the army. 31

On the evening of the 17th, Colonel Connor advised General Wright cryptically: "Have just arrived. Will cross the Jordan to-morrow." 32 This event was considered by many of the troops to be a milestone in the progress of their march. Rumors--entirely unconfirmed or abetted by Connor, who had "a fashion of keeping his own counsel"--were circulated that "the Mormons objected to our close proximity to their city and would forcibly resist an attempt on our part to cross that stream." The possible origin of such rumors from

investors in the property of old Fort Crittenden and who desired to further its sale at handsome profit to the newly arrived army was also noted. "... like the Israelites of old [we would] ... cross the Jordan, or else have a fight ...."  

The rumors of forcible opposition were false; the crossing was uneventful and on Monday forenoon, the 20th of October, 1862, Connor's troops were ready to end their march. Correspondent Anderson indicates the selection of a route six miles longer than an alternate available, but which would take the California Volunteers through the very center of the "metropolis of the modern Saints." Just outside the city itself, the column was halted and organized for the grand entrance. The order of march was as follows:

- Advance Guard of Cavalry
- Connor and Staff
- Cavalry Brass Band
- Companies A and M, Second Cavalry California Volunteers
- Light Artillery Battery
- Infantry Field Band
- Companies E, G, H, I, and K, Third Infantry California Volunteers
- Staff
- Quartermaster and Commissary Wagons
- Rear Guard of Infantry

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33 John A. Anderson, chaplain of Connor's regiment and a correspondent for the San Francisco Bulletin, in dispatches dated October 17 and 18, 1862, as quoted by Rogers, 41-46. Also, see Stenhouse, 602.

34 Rogers, 54.

35 Rogers, 50. Rogan, 37.

36 This grouping is sometimes listed as Third Infantry Battalion since only five of the regiment's ten companies were present at this time in Salt Lake City.
Into the city they marched, and, after a brief halt for an official welcoming address by Governor Harding in front of the governor’s mansion, moved on to their selected camp site. Correspondent Anderson reports of their passage through Salt Lake City: "Every crossing was occupied by spectators, and windows, doors and roofs had their gazers. Not a cheer, not a jeer greeted us. ... there were none of those manifestations of loyalty that in any other city in a loyal territory would have been made." At 9:30 p.m. that evening, Colonel Connor telegraphed General Wright: "Just arrived. Encamped on site of new post. Command in good health and discipline."  

Camp Douglas

From the campsite on the bench overlooking the city—a troop location then designated as "Camp No. 49, near Salt Lake City"—Headquarters, District of Utah officially established Camp Douglas, named in honor of Senator Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, on the 26th of October, 1862: "Pursuant to orders from departmental headquarters a military post [comprising approximately 2,560 acres] is established at this camp, to be called Camp Douglas." The military attractiveness of the location selected is well stated in a report from Colonel Connor to the adjutant general of the army soon after Connor’s arrival. 

37 Rogers, 51.  
38 Official Records, vol. L, pt. 2, p. 187. The initial camp was near the location of the present post cemetery.  
Camp Douglas is, Connor wrote,

...situated at a distance of three miles east of Great Salt Lake City, at which place there is a post-office and telegraph office, with good facilities for communications both east and west daily. ... It is on an elevated spot which commands a full view of the city ... with a plentiful supply of wood and water in its vicinity, and in the neighborhood of numerous quarries of stone adapted to building barracks. If it is contemplated to establish a permanent post in this Territory, I know of no spot so desirable as this. Besides the above advantages, it is the center from which diverge three roads to California, two to Oregon, and the great Overland Mail Route to the east. The low price of forage for animals is an additional advantage which it possesses, and the health of the soldiers has also materially improved since their arrival here. 40

The first order of business was to lay out the camp and to construct adequate protection for men, animals, and supplies against that would prove to be a very long and severe winter. The diary of Corporal Tuttle, Company K, Third Infantry California Volunteers, rather understates the situation with the observation that the winter of 1862-1863 was not a mild one. 41 He reported six separate snow storms during December and the occurrence of the last snow storm of the season on April 23.

Nevertheless, Colonel Connor described a reasonably substantial frontier military installation in a report of February 26, 1863.

The quarters ... are temporary shelters of tents placed over excavations four feet deep, with good stone and adobe fireplace. They are warm and comfortable, capable of accommodating twelve men each, are all dry, well ventilated, and convenient to good water. They are kept clean and in good order. ...
The officers' quarters consist of thirteen small buildings constructed of logs and adobes over ground excavations of from three to four feet deep and covered with boards, straw, and earth. They have good fireplaces, and average four rooms each. The building occupied by the commanding officer is above ground, constructed of adobes, contains five rooms, two of which are occupied as adjutants' offices. The above are all temporary structures and only adapted to shelter this winter.\(^{42}\)

Also, there were two above-ground, stone and adobe buildings used as a guard house and a bake house. Commissary and quartermaster offices and stores were under a single cover, made of paulins stretched over a substantial 200-foot frame. Hospital facilities were provided by a small log structure and three tents, made warm by boards and earth. The four cavalry stables, two quartermaster's stables, and the blacksmith shop were constructed of willows bound together by uprights and well lined and covered with straw and earth. Connor added a final touch to his description: "The buildings combine comfort with economy."

Fort Bridger

Connor had scarcely had time to begin even the preliminary work to develop the post of Camp Douglas before another problem required attention, and he so advised the Department of the Pacific on December 2:

On Saturday last they [Indians] stole 100 horses from Fort Bridger Reserve ... and fears are entertained that they will attack some of the stations of the Overland Mail.\(^{42}\)

have therefore ordered Company I, Captain Lewis, of my regiment, to garrison Fort Bridger this winter. I shall order detachments of his company to the different stations in this district east of here, if I find it necessary. 43

Following Connor's initiative by only four and seven days, respectively, came two telegraphic messages from Major General Halleck in Washington to General Wright in San Francisco suggesting strongly the propriety of garrisoning Fort Bridger. 44 Halleck's second message reported that others--the Overland Mail Company, the Post Office Department, and the Department of the Interior--were urging "the removal of Colonel Connor's command to Fort Bridger and Ham's Fork, as a check upon the Indians." 45

When General Wright received Halleck's first telegraphic message, he had not yet received Connor's message of the 2nd of December, but, nonetheless, he informed the adjutant general in Washington that "Colonel Connor, the commandant of that district ... [had not intimated] ... the necessity of posting troops at Fort Bridger." However, in view of its importance and the existence there of good quarters already built, he advised Washington that Connor would be directed to garrison Fort Bridger with one or two companies.

43 Official Records, vol. L, pt. 1, p. 182. Hunt, 194, erroneously contends both that the War Department ordered that Fort Bridger be garrisoned and that Connor protested the dividing of his command, when he complied with the War Department order.

44 Fort Bridger was established in the valley of Blacks Fork of the Green River as a private business venture by Jim Bridger in 1842. It passed to Mormon control in 1853 and was burned by them with the approach of Johnston's army in 1857. Johnston established troops at the location, however. They were withdrawn in the summer of 1861.

The resulting directive to Connor was a permissive one. "In addition to the garrison sent to Bridger ... occupy such other points on or near the overland route, as you may deem essential for its proper protection, retaining, however, your present position." 46

General Wright had one of two options concerning the Halleck suggestions. He could consider that:

(1) The Indian threat was not as great as portrayed to Washington.

(2) The suggestion to move Connor was based upon ulterior motives of unknown individuals. Wright's motivation also may have been to substantiate or further reinforce his decision to approve the location of troops at Salt Lake City.

After being ordered by Connor on December 2, troops of Connor's command in at least company strength were to garrison Fort Bridger during the entire period covered by this study.

Camp Connor

The establishment of Camp Connor and its associated civil community, Morristown, at the big bend of the Bear River in Idaho Territory, in late May, 1863, is the subject of a separate chapter. The camp is mentioned here only to include it specifically in the list of military posts established or garrisoned under the direction of the District of Utah.

The initial garrison at Camp Connor was provided by Company H, Third Infantry California Volunteers, and so it remained until Company C was substituted for Company H upon reduction in the number of companies in the regiment with the consolidation action in October 1864. General Connor finally withdrew the troops in February 1865 to assist him in his anticipated campaign on the plains.

The Minor Posts

Three additional military posts established by Connor and his troops complete the inventory.

In 1854, Colonel Steptoe had established a military reservation, subsequently used by Johnston, in Rush Valley. In early 1864, because of a reduced need for cavalry troops and a desire to obtain forage for the cavalry animals, Connor ordered two officers of the Second Cavalry to select a cavalry camp west of Great Salt Lake. The general location selected was in Rush Valley; two posts were established--Camp Conness, named after Senator John Conness of California, and Camp Relief. \(^{47}\) The official returns for June 30, 1864, disclose that, on that date, the bulk of the cavalry--four

\(^{47}\) Rogers, 115. It is interesting to note that Richard H. Orton, throughout his book, erroneously places Camp Conness in Idaho Territory--possibly because of the spelling similarity with Camp Connor. Orton is not the sole source of confusion on this matter. Official Records, vol. L, pt. 2, p. 958 and 981, erroneously refer to Camp Connor as being in Utah Territory, but the correct location, based on the troop units involved, was obviously Camp Conness.
companies, Second Cavalry, and two companies, First Nevada Cavalry--
were stationed at Camp Conness.\footnote{Official Records, vol. L, pt. 2, p. 885.}

A third minor installation, Camp Schellbourne, near the overland
mail station at Schell Creek, is identified by the Department of Interior study,
Soldier and Brave.\footnote{U.S., Department of the Interior, 197.} Troops stationed there in 1862 were assigned to patrol
Schellbourne Pass and Egan Canyon. Troops to garrison Camp Schellbourne
were probably provided from Fort Ruby, a major District of Utah troop loca-
tion.

From the discussion in this chapter concerning the manner in which
Connor's troop elements were deployed, we may now progress, in subsequent
chapters, to a consideration of how they were utilized.
Figure 1. Military posts, District of Utah.
CHAPTER IV

EXPEDITIONS, ENGAGEMENTS, AND SKIRMISHES

The Pattern Established

Civil War military operations within the District of Utah were conducted in accordance with many controls—either explicit as in the official troop mission or implied or general as was the case regarding Indian policy. The primary thrust of such military operations was against Indians along the overland routes. A consideration of the policies under which these operations were carried out is important, particularly so since Connor's methods of dealing with the Indians are subjects of considerable criticism among many writers.

Prior to any discussion of Connor's Indian policy, several factors need to be placed in perspective. First, Connor was not primarily involved in the formulation of Indian policy. His principal task was the accomplishment of his military mission, that is, the protection of emigrant and transportation commerce over the overland routes through the area of the District of Utah.

Second, how he was to accomplish the mission charged to him was controlled or influenced by external policies which were at the best general and frequently vague and contradictory. The manner in which Connor attempted accomplishment of his military mission was not significantly at variance with the policies of his immediate civil counterparts or military superiors.
Although there were philosophical divergences within American society between humanitarians and advocates of a stern policy oriented toward advancing white interests as to a proper national Indian policy, as proximity to the Indian became reality, the implementation of policy took on most evident tones of harshness. When brought into focus on the frontier, that body of opinion favoring a national policy of dealing firmly with the Indians— with military force, if necessary—found unequivocal and almost universal expression.

A quotation from Governor Doty illustrates both the frontier attitude and a harmony between civil Utah territorial policy and Connor's implementation of that policy. On August 9, 1863, in writing to Brigadier General Wright, he said:

... some of the Goshute tribe in Tooele Valley, who are suing for peace—protest that they are friendly to the whites and are afraid the soldiers will kill them. This is the condition in which I desire to see all the tribes in this Territory. They now realize the fact that the Americans are the masters of this country, and it is my purpose to make them continue to feel and to acknowledge it. Without this there can be no permanent peace here and no security upon the routes of travel. This has been mainly accomplished by the vigor and bravery of the troops under your command. ¹

As Connor's policy toward the Indians was guided by that of the territorial governor, so must it be in conformance with the policies of his military superiors. General Wright clearly demonstrated a strong desire to

avoid hostilities, but retributive punishment was to be applied as a matter of policy in the event of failure to persuade the Indians to follow the path of peace. 2

In general, salutary results were attributed to the policy of severe punishment to those Indians who opposed white interests by active resistance. General Wright gave his assessment to the War Department on November 18, 1862, and June 9, 1863, as follows:

... result of his [McGarry's] expedition to ... punish Indians engaged in the late massacres on the Humboldt River. The swift retributive punishment which has been meted out to those Indians will doubtless have the effect of preventing a repetition of their barbarities. It is the only way to deal with those savages. 3

The active and energetic campaigns which have been made against the Indians in the Owen's River Valley, Cal., and in the District of Utah during the past winter and spring have had the most happy results in bringing those Indians to sue for peace. A very large number of Indians have been killed, and the great mass of the survivors have laid down their arms and met the commanders of those districts in council. 4

A final factor deserving of consideration is that, until approximately mid-1863, Connor's activities with respect to the Indians were primarily reactions to hostilities initiated by the Indians. Subsequently, Connor, having

2 The Indian policies and attitudes of General Wright may be found by consulting Official Records, vol. L, pt. 1, p. 735, 745, 746, 753, 766, 770, and 798. See also Army Regulations of 1861, p. 246; Hance and Warr, 37 and 41; and Lewis, 77.

3 Hance and Warr, 41.

made his presence and influence felt among the Indians, was relatively free
to pursue his own policy—or, more precisely, the results of his military
implementation of national and regional Indian policies.

**Mormon Indian Policy**

Although the Mormon policy toward the Indians was not a controlling
factor in Connor's operations, it was most certainly one strongly influential.
Mormon Indian policy was itself an outgrowth of several influences. The most
important of these, and the one which imparted the most unique characteristics
to the Mormon policy, was one of religious conviction. Mormon religious
doctrine, as espoused by the *Book of Mormon* and by early leaders of the
church, announced a deep concern for the welfare of the Indian. The Mormons
considered that they had an obligation to bring about the redemption of this
"fallen" people.  

The Mormon religious and humanitarian concern for the Indians was
also tempered by an element of frontier realism. When necessary, the
Mormons would fight. Arrington expresses the dilemma as "two opposing
principles."

(1) In all their dealings the Mormons must keep in mind that
the Indians, however bloodthirsty, depressed, and miserable,
were their brothers and that they deserved understanding and
help.

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5 Dean L. Larsen, *You and the Destiny of the Indian* (Salt Lake City,
Utah: Bookcraft, 1966), deals extensively with the general subject of Mormon
religious beliefs concerning the Indians.
(2) On the other hand, God's Kingdom could not be established if his servants were wiped out, so survival and the development of the Kingdom required tactics aimed at physical protection.  

However, being on the frontier and in close contact with the Indians, the Mormon policy would be to avoid trouble whenever possible. A recognition that it was more economical to feed and clothe them than to fight them became a hallmark of Mormon policy.  

Measures designed specifically to improve the lot of the Indians and to decrease the causes for friction between them and the Mormons included establishment of community storehouses or bins from which food could be drawn for the Indians when the need arose. Indian farms and missions were also established.  

In practice, Mormon Indian policy tended to be viewed with suspicion by many non-Mormon whites. Mormon doctrine was considered by many as potentially disruptive in giving the Indians an exaggerated sense of their position in society. Mormon missionaries were ordered out of Indian country by local residents as "disturbers of the peace." Mormon efforts were resisted as unwarranted "tampering" by federal Indian agents. But the greatest criticism of Mormon policy came from federal officials and troops who


regarded Mormon actions as probably treasonous and most certainly exhibiting a gross lack of concern for the welfare and survival of fellow white men. There would be at least three parties to any Indian-white dispute in the Great Basin—the Indians, the Mormon, and the non-Mormon whites. Issues would not be contested on the basis of "whites against the Indians," and this was incomprehensible to the non-Mormon whites.

**Materialization of the Indian Threat**

The most significant influence on military operations in the District of Utah was the extent to which the Indian potential to disrupt operations on the overland routes developed. The existence of the threat caused the deployment of troops to the threatened areas; the Indian decision to exercise their potential for attack dictated to a great extent the military operations.

Indian hostilities were major problems both for federal officials and inhabitants in Utah Territory. "In Utah Connor found Shoshonis, Bannocks, and Utes in hostile array, the mail and telegraph route under attack east and west of Salt Lake, and the Oregon Trail from the Platte to the Snake all but closed." The "trouble center was among Shoshones or Snakes who roamed northern Utah along the line of the Overland emigrant and mail route."

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9 Utley, 223.

10 Neff, 390.
A chronological tabulation of reported instances of Indian hostilities in Utah during the period 1860 to 1865 clearly shows the sporadic nature of the attacks. After relatively quiet years of 1860 and 1861, most of 1862 and roughly the first half of 1863 provided an unwelcome contrast to the near peace that prevailed earlier. During this period, numerous Indian attacks occurred all along the emigrant and mail routes from the Platte River bridge (near present Casper, Wyoming) in the east to Gravelly Ford and Pyramid Lake in the west. Mail stations and coaches, telegraph stations, military escorts, emigrant parties, and several hundred livestock all felt the effects of Indian belligerence. Lives of many whites were sacrificed to the resurgence of Indian aggression. Many others were wounded. ¹¹

By mid-July 1863, the pendulum had swung to the opposite extreme. During the last half of 1863 and all of 1864 not a single Indian attack is mentioned in all of the literature consulted. In late May and early June of 1865, two stations on the overland route were attacked and a skirmish with soldiers near the Platte bridge occurred. ¹² Otherwise, there had been almost two years of relative peace and quiet along the overland routes.


¹²Rogers, 160.
Connor's Indian Policies

Connor's methods of dealing with the Indians are characterized by several readily discernible features. There was a distinction to be made between "good" Indians and "bad" Indians. Good Indians were those who would manifest a peaceful disposition; bad Indians, by contrast, were those who interfered with the orderly operation of the emigrant and overland routes or with the property of the citizens using those routes. Whereas peace and goodwill of a beneficent government would prevail for good Indians, a terrible retribution would be brought to bear on the bad ones. Bad Indians were to be thoroughly whipped and taught the consequences of their bad behavior. The development of a genuine fear by the Indians of severe retribution for past or future transgressions was important. Parleys with Indians believed to be guilty of depredations would follow the administering of the "chastisement" while the punishment for transgressions was fresh in mind. In addition to punishment in battle, the retribution included the systematic destruction of Indian shelter and means of sustenance.

Although an effort was made to ascertain specific guilt for depredations and to identify the "bad" Indians, certain practical difficulties were experienced. It was hoped that "friendly" Indians would turn over the guilty culprits on request, or that the taking of Indian hostages would motivate other Indians to a spirit of cooperation with the soldiers. Execution of hostages was occasionally resorted to for non-compliance with ultimatums from Connor's
commanders, but with little improvement in results. Also, some hostages were released on occasions to carry a warning back to their tribes of the consequences of bad behavior. In the absence of information to the contrary, presence of male, adult Indians in the general area of recent depredations was accepted as evidence of guilt. Indian women and children were specifically excluded from the intended military retribution, notwithstanding the systematic destruction of shelter and means of sustenance, but the identification of Indians by sex during a general military engagement was extremely difficult.

Another feature of Connor's actions with the Indians was that implementation was sometimes more severe than warranted by the actual policy statements guiding Connor and his troops. During the first forays against the Indians by Connor's troops--the McGarry expedition from Fort Ruby during October 1862--the frequency of reports of Indian prisoners shot while "attempting to escape" strongly suggested initial excesses by inexperienced troops. Also, during battle, the motivation of revenge to redress past offenses was strong on both sides. 13

Connor's own words provide a good summary of his policy:

The policy pursued toward the Indians has had a most happy effect. That policy, as you are aware, involved certain and speedy punishment for past offenses, compelling them to sue for a suspension of hostilities, and on the resumption of peace, kindness and leniency toward the redskins. They fully understand that honesty and peace constitute their best and safest policy. In consequence every chief of any importance in the district has given in his

13 Orton, 176.
adhesion with profuse promises of future good conduct. Throughout the length and breadth of the Territory peace exists with all the wandering and heretofore savage and marauding bands. During the past winter and spring at various times the several chiefs and petty leaders have visited Camp Douglas, where they have been kindly received and hospitably treated by the command. In default of ability on the part of the Indian Department to provide fully for their wants, and also in pursuance of what was esteemed sound policy, I have from time to time distributed among them small quantities of provisions, such as flour, sugar, etc., to meet their immediate necessities, and in testimony of the good will of the military authorities toward them as long as they behave themselves and manifest a peaceful disposition. 14

Harsh though the application of certain of these methods appears today, it is the view of this author that they offered the only approach to effective mission accomplishment by Connor. The small number of troops available, the lack of mobility by the infantry, the vast distances to be covered, the nature of the Indian enemy, and the nature and vulnerability of the facilities to be protected mitigated against adoption of a purely defensive strategy.

**Tactical Conduct**

Several features of the conduct by Connor or his troops of tactical operations against the Indians were both unique and commendable. A prominent characteristic of orders by Connor's headquarters for tactical operations against the Indians was their detail and completeness. Connor was not inclined to leave an excess of freedom of action to his subordinates.

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Cavalry was recognized as decisive against the mobile Indians, and insofar as possible, the maximum amount of his cavalry force was kept under Connor's centralized control. So long as the Indians constituted a threat, cavalry was almost continuously in the field. In May 1863, Major Gallagher, at Fort Ruby, assured recently promoted General Connor that the use of cavalry was always as directed by Connor and that cavalry troops "have not at any time been kept at this post longer than was absolutely necessary to rest and shoe their horses." 15

Connor strongly adhered to the principles of surprise and deception. Night marches were usually directed. Guides were utilized to improve prospects for success in finding the Indians.

Connor wisely attempted to blend the characteristics of all of his forces so as to achieve optimum effectiveness in their combined use. Connor's use of artillery was especially significant. When infantry and artillery were to be used in conjunction with cavalry, these two types of forces, whose rates of movement varied so widely, were started at different times so that the slower moving forces would arrive at the battle area prior to or simultaneously with the cavalry. 16


16 Infantry or artillery, with supporting wagon trains, could average perhaps 10 to 25 miles per day, dependent on terrain. Cavalry could, in the same period cover over sixty miles. See Official Records, vol. L, pt. 1, p. 714, and Orton, 175.
Once an Indian camp had been located and the approach march completed, every effort was made to surround the camp before commencing the attack.  

Selection of the season and weather for an attack would also tend to reduce the Indian's basic advantage in mobility. Connor was "clear in the opinion that the winter or early spring is the only time when Indians can be successfully pursued, punished, and brought to terms." During the summer and early fall periods, the Indians tend to scatter in the mountains, particularly if warned of a threat from the soldiers.

In addition to the garrisons by major units, defensive measures along the overland routes were provided by location of small troop detachments at selected mail and stage stations and, when necessary, by provision of military escorts for stages operating over particularly threatened sections of the routes.

Connor never lost an opportunity to remind the Indians of his district of what was expected of them in the way of behavior. Whenever and for whatever purpose troops were in the field, Indians were sought out and advised of the benefits resulting from good behavior and the dire consequences of the bad.

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Engagements and Skirmishes

Heitman and Dyer provide a listing of "battles, actions, combats, skirmishes, military events, etc." and "battles, campaigns, etc. in the Territories," respectively. Although the criteria for inclusion in these various categories are not provided, it may be assumed that contact with the enemy and the degree of involvement in terms of numbers of troops engaged and casualties suffered are some of the criteria. In any case, contacts of Connor's troops with the Indian, based on the above two references, are classified in this study as "engagements" or "skirmishes" and are listed chronologically as follows: (Minor "actions" have been deleted.)

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<td></td>
<td>November 23</td>
<td>Skirmish, Cache Valley</td>
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<td>1863</td>
<td>January 29</td>
<td>Engagement, Bear River</td>
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<td></td>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>Skirmish, Cedar Fort</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April 4 and 15</td>
<td>Engagements, Spanish Fork Canyon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>April 12</td>
<td>Skirmish, Pleasant Grove</td>
</tr>
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20 The reader is cautioned that an analysis of military actions by Connor's forces against the Indians based solely or primarily on a purported listing of battles, engagements, skirmishes, etc., as have been prepared by Heitman or Dyer, is very likely to be extremely faulty for several reasons. First, the temporary relocations and deployments of troops to counter the Indian threat are omitted, and yet the results of such deployments were potentially very significant in controlling the Indians. This was especially true in 1864 after the Indians had become generally subdued, but military preventive deployments continued. Temporary relocations of troops were typical of Connor,
In the Sections of this Chapter immediately following, the principal skirmishes and engagements involving Connor's troops are discussed as a means of providing typical, specific illustrations of his Indian fighting methods and procedures. Such discussion is not intended to imply a full coverage of all of his combat activities.

The McGarry Expedition along the Humboldt

While the column for Utah was still at Ruby Valley, Colonel Connor was advised from Fort Churchill that Indians had murdered twenty-three emigrants at Gravelly Ford on the Humboldt overland route and on September 16 Connor informed Department of the Pacific that he would attend to it. An expedition under Major McGarry, Second Cavalry, was formed on September 30 and consisted of Companies H and K of McGarry's regiment. The troops were directed to proceed towards Salt Lake City via the northern route and the City of Rocks. A final rendezvous point ten miles north of Salt Lake City was designated. McGarry was directed to leave his troops at that point and

once the threats to the military mission permitted decentralization of forces. In addition both the Heitman and Dyer lists are grossly incomplete, Actions initiated from Fort Churchill or Fort Ruby tend to be omitted. Also, use of company or installation returns (routine, periodic, official reports) has been neglected.


report to Connor in person if Connor were at that time in the vicinity of Salt Lake City, or, if not, to await further orders at the point designated. McGarry specifically was not to enter Salt Lake City with his small force before Connor's arrival.

Connor's orders to McGarry concerning treatment of the Indians were detailed and explicit.

On the route ... you will examine every valley or place where you have reason to believe ... hostile Indians are congregated, whom you will capture; but if they resist you will destroy them. In no instance will you molest women or children. If ... friendly Indians deliver to you Indians who were concerned in the late murder of emigrants, you will (being satisfied of their guilt) immediately hang them, and leave their bodies thus exposed as an example of what evil-doers may expect .... You will ... destroy every male Indian whom you may encounter in the vicinity of the late massacres. This course may seem harsh and severe, but I desire that the order may be rigidly enforced, as I am satisfied that in the end it will prove the most merciful.22

By the 5th of October McGarry and his troopers had reached Gravelly Ford without having encountered any Indians. On the 9th, 11th, 14th, and 15th contacts with Indians were made and prisoners were taken. Twenty-two of these prisoners were killed by troopers after having been disarmed and while "attempting to escape." Additionally, four hostages were executed on the 14th when prisoners subsequently released had failed to bring into McGarry's camp those Indians responsible for the massacre of the emigrants.23


McGarry reached the rendezvous point north of Salt Lake City on October 28 and reported to Connor at Camp Douglas on the next day.

Connor's endorsement to McGarry's report included these comments:

I am satisfied from verbal information received from officers of the expedition that the Indians who have been punished were a part of those who had committed the late murders, and that the punishment was well merited. I hope and believe that the lessons taught them will have a salutary effect in checking future massacres on that route. 24

Rescue of the Emigrant Boy in Cache Valley

Within one month's time Major McGarry was again ordered to the field against the Indians. His troops consisted of approximately 60 men of Captain Smith's Company (Company K). His mission was to rescue a ten-year old emigrant boy whose parents and older brother had been murdered during the summer, at which time he and three sisters were taken captive by the Indians. The sisters later died while in captivity. The boy's uncle, Zachias Van Orman, had located the lad among a group of Indians under Bear Hunter, encamped near Providence in Cache Valley. The uncle requested military assistance in recovering the boy and offered to serve as a guide for the troops.

Connor's instructions were again complete.

You will march by night and by a trail which will be shown you by a guide who will accompany your command. Surround the Indians,
if possible, before they become aware of your presence, and hold them prisoners while you ... [search for] ... a large number of stock stolen from murdered emigrants .... You will search the Indian camp thoroughly for the emigrant boy, and if you should not find him you will demand him of the Indians, and if not given up you will bring three of their principal men to the post as hostages. You will also investigate as to their complicity in the massacres of last summer, and if you have reason to believe any of them are guilty you will bring all such to the post for trial. You will not fire upon the Indians unless you find it necessary to the proper execution of your instructions. 25

This military operation was brief. The troops left Camp Douglas on November 20 and by 11:00 p.m. on the 22nd they had traversed the 100 miles to Franklin in Cache Valley. The Indian camp was located early on the 23rd and was surrounded, but, except for two squaws, the Indians had fled during the night. At about 8 o’clock in the morning about thirty to forty mounted Indians, armed with rifles and bows and arrows, appeared from a canyon to the east. The cavalry mounted and approached the Indians and were fired upon. The fire was returned for a brief period after which Chief Bear Hunter asked for a termination of the fighting. Bear Hunter and four other Indians were taken as hostages and held for exchange of the boy. The boy was returned at noon on the 24th and the hostages were released. The stock, reported to be there, was not recovered. Three Indians were killed and one wounded during the skirmish.

The troops left Cache Valley on the morning of the 25th and were back at Camp Douglas on the afternoon of November 27.

The Bear River engagement, which occurred on January 29, 1863, is treated separately in Chapter V. It is mentioned at this point only to indicate chronological continuity with respect to the other military actions against the Indians.

The Campaign at Spanish Fork Canyon

The Spanish Fork Canyon campaign was precipitated by some Indians, believed by Connor in April 1863 to have been Goshute, who had wintered among the Mormons in Tooele Valley, and who were suspected by Connor of being the perpetrators of attacks against overland facilities west of Salt Lake City in the spring of 1863. Connor also believed that these Indians were being encouraged in their misdeeds by Mormons in an effort to force troop withdrawal from Camp Douglas and the stationing of the troops nearer to the locations of actual Indian attacks.

26 Dyer, 983 and 989, identifies a skirmish on January 26 at Bear Run/Bear River with which he erroneously associates troop casualities of fourteen killed and forty-nine wounded. These casualties correctly should be associated with the Bear River engagement of January 29. Other than Dyer's listing there is no information available supporting any troop action at a location named Bear Run on January 26. It must be concluded, therefore, that Dyer is totally in error in listing such a skirmish on that date. A marker on U.S. Highway 91, near Richmond, Utah, commemorating the Battle of Bear River, also erroneously indicates January 26 as the date of the engagement.

The campaign was begun at 6:00 p.m. on the 26th of March when Lieutenant Ethier and twenty-five men from Company A, Second Cavalry, departed Camp Douglas in an attempt to make contact with these Indians, rumored to be heading south through Cedar Valley in the vicinity of the site of Fort Crittenden. During the next five days, Lieutenant Ethier and his party reconnoitered Skull and Cedar valleys extensively, without contacting the elusive Indians. On the 1st of April while in Rush Valley, Lieutenant Ethier received a directive to return immediately to Camp Douglas. While enroute via Fort Crittenden the troops spotted some Indians emerging from Trough Canyon. Since his horses were in extremely poor condition from a week of hard riding, the Lieutenant obtained a stage coach from the Fort Crittenden overland station to transport him and thirteen of his men. The coach, accompanied by eight men on the best horses, transported the small detachment to battle.

Approximately 100 Indians were prepared for battle in the vicinity of Cedar Fort. The lieutenant received what he regarded as false reports from Mormon sources concerning the Indian deployments and numbers, and these reports were ignored. The action was begun on his best estimate of the Indian situation. Firing was brisk on both sides. The military broke off the engagement when reports reached them that their horses were in danger of capture.

Further Mormon treachery was suspected relative to tentative plans to leave a small troop detachment to guard Cedar Fort. Seeing Mormons in
consultation with the Indians made Lieutenant Ethier suspicious and he left no troops to guard the Mormon settlement.

The lieutenant returned to Fort Crittenden from which location General Connor was advised of the developments. As a result, a larger body of troops was sent from Camp Douglas. Lieutenant Ethier reported to Captain Price, commander of the larger troop detachment, at Cedar Fort on the morning of April 3.

Captain Price with fifty-one men from Company M, Second Cavalry, had hurriedly departed Camp Douglas at 1:00 a.m. on the 2nd of April. Shortly after noon and after having travelled forty-five miles, Price's detachment had joined up with Lieutenant Ethier at Cedar Fort and had moved on to Fort Crittenden. The Indians were moving southeast from Cedar Valley. Price moved his detachment, now totalling nearly seventy-five men, to the head of Cedar Valley, crossed into Utah Valley, and by 2:00 p.m. on the 3rd the troops were at Goshen, the southern-most settlement in Utah Valley.

At 3:00 p.m. on the 4th the troops were at Spanish Fork where they received reports from Mormons that no Indians had been seen for ten days. With only about an hour of daylight remaining and contrary to what the Mormon reports would indicate, two Indians were spotted. A scouting party pursued these two Indians into Spanish Fork Canyon where forty to fifty armed Indians were encountered. The Indians were reported to have fired the first shots. The Indians were chased about three-quarters of a mile up the canyon, at which time the troops broke off the engagement because of darkness and the
defensively strong position provided to the Indians by the canyon. The Indians harassed the troop withdrawal.

Attempts were made to maintain contact throughout the night through the use of troop pickets. The pickets established that the Indians had not departed via the mouth of the canyon, but a scouting party sent up the canyon on the 5th of April found no Indians. They were apparently in full retreat up the twenty-five mile long canyon enroute to San Pete Valley.

With these developments, Captain Price terminated this phase of the operation. Price's cavalrmen had covered 165 miles in five days. Horses were tired; rations were running low. The Indian force opposing them was estimated by local citizens to be at least 200. After camping at Provo on the night of the 5th, the detachment was back at Camp Douglas by 3:00 p.m. on the 6th of April.

Captain Price observed his satisfaction with the performance of his troopers. "My officers and men conducted themselves fully in keeping with previous reputation."

By the 11th of April a more substantial troop effort against the Indians was underway from Camp Douglas. Colonel Evans, Commander, Second Cavalry, was to command the expedition. His troops consisted of forty-seven men from Company A, Second Cavalry, commanded by Lieutenant Ethier; forty-nine from Company H, commanded by Lieutenants Clark and Bradley; and one howitzer and five gunners from the Third Infantry, under the supervision of Lieutenant Honeyman.
The plan called for the establishment of a base of operations at
Pleasant Grove, a settlement situated about forty miles south-east of Camp
Douglas and about thirty-five miles north of Spanish Fork Canyon, where the
Indians were believed to be located.

The first troop element to move to the designated base of operations
included Lieutenant Honeyman and his gunners, with the howitzer and its
ammunition concealed in an ambulance wagon for deception. They departed
Camp Douglas on the morning of April 11 and reached Pleasant Grove on the
morning of the 12th. He placed his twelve mules in a corral of a Mormon
settler and awaited the arrival of Colonel Evans and the cavalrymen.

At 6:00 p.m. that evening about 100 Indians infiltrated the town and
surrounded Honeyman's location. For protection he occupied an adobe house
where his ambulance and mules were located and fired two howitzer shots from
the house. The adobe walls cracked and there was danger that the house would
collapse. The howitzer fire was stopped. The house was riddled with fire
from Indian weapons until about 8:00 p.m., but miraculously none of the
artillerymen was hit. Five of the mules had been killed, however. At 8
o'clock the Indians stopped firing, collected the surviving mules and the other
government property, and departed with their booty.

Colonel Evans' report of Honeyman's skirmish at Pleasant Grove is a
severe indictment of Mormon attitudes to United States military forces.

... all this occurred in the town of Pleasant Grove ... in the
heart of a Mormon town, where there were perhaps not less
than 100 or 150 white men (Mormons), in the broad daylight
75 or 100 savages attack and attempt to murder six American
citizens and do carry off mules, harness, and other government property, and not a hand is lifted to assist or protect them ... but on the contrary they stand around the street corners and on top of their houses or haystacks complacently looking on, apparently well pleased at the prospect of six Gentiles (soldiers) being murdered.\textsuperscript{28}

Colonel Evans and the main body of cavalry reached Pleasant Grove at 3:00 a.m. on the 13th. As soon as daylight came, scouts were sent out in different directions to locate the route the Indians had taken.

Reinforcements were received from Camp Douglas. On receipt of word of the events of the 12th, General Connor sent Captain Price and sixty men of his Company, together with replacement transportation for Lieutenant Honeyman's howitzer, to assist Evans. They reached Pleasant Grove at 11:00 p.m. on the 13th.

The 14th was spent in further reconnaissance, following what were subsequently believed to have been deliberately false reports from the Mormons as to the Indian location. Late that day a major track was detected that suggested that the Indians were again en route to Spanish Fork Canyon. Evans encamped near Provo, and believing that the Mormons were keeping the Indians informed of the troop locations and actions, engaged in some further deception. He made oral contracts for the delivery the following morning of hay and grain for the mules and horses, thus suggesting an intent to remain in camp until after the scheduled morning delivery. However, at midnight the troops made quiet preparations to move.

The mouth of Spanish Fork Canyon was reached just at daylight on the 15th of April. Eighty of the cavalry were dismounted and the horses secured on a picket line under a small guard. Forces of dismounted flankers and skirmishers were formed to move up both sides of the canyon. About fifty men, including Honeyman and his howitzer, under Evans operated in the center. At about 5:00 a.m. the Indians had been contacted about one mile into the canyon and the battle commenced. Honeyman and his small artillery piece proved decisive in this battle. Covered by Honeyman's accurate artillery fire, the force in the canyon center was able to advance steadily. After the center force had closed to within revolver range, the Indians broke, and the "forward" and "charge" calls were sounded on the bugle. By 11:00 a.m. the Indians had been chased fourteen miles up the canyon and had scattered "like quails." The engagement was terminated as a success.

The Indians, who were estimated to number about 200, had suffered thirty killed and an unknown number wounded. The troops experienced one killed and two wounded. Evans proudly noted that "both officers and men behaved as soldiers should [and] ... sustained their well-earned fame as the 'Fighting Second'."

Peace with the Indians

By June 2, 1863, some encouraging developments were being experienced with the Indians. Connor reported to the Department of the Pacific:
"Indians are suing for peace. I leave for Bridger today to meet 500 of them. My policy will win." 29

On June 10, Connor summarized the situation in a communication to the commander of the District of Oregon.

While at the lower ferry, in the vicinity of Fort Hall, I met about 200 Snake Indians with whom I had a talk. They are friendly, and will remain so. Those also in the vicinity of and on the road to Bannock City are friendly. I had a talk with 700 Snake Indians at Fort Bridger last week. They say they are tired of fighting and want to be at peace. They gave me up 150 horses and mules which they had stolen. The fight of last winter is telling on them. There are two small bands at large yet, who are hostile. They number about 100 men. Troops are now in pursuit of them, and I hope soon to destroy them. I have no fears for the safety of the emigration to the Bannock Mines. How it will be to the Boise Mines I am unable to say.

... The Ute Indians, with whom Colonel Evans had a fight at Spanish Fork this spring, have sent word that they desire to make peace with me. On the whole, I consider the Indian troubles in my district very near at an end. 30

On July 3, 1863, Connor's work with the eastern Shoshoni was given official stature when Connor and Governor Doty officially concluded a treaty of peace with Indians at Fort Bridger. There were certain problems associated with the treaty system and its application to the Indians. Regarding this initial treaty, Hafen had this comment: "The troops along the line however, were


31 Neff, 392; Hafen, 252.
undoubtedly a more effective guarantee of peace than the treaty signed at the fort."  

Other treaties quickly followed. On July 14th a peace council was held by Doty and Connor with about 700 Utes near the mouth of Spanish Fork Canyon. Shortly afterward, Connor could confidently predict "the end of the Indian difficulties on the Overland Stage Line and within this district from the Snake River, on the north, to Arizona, on the south and from Green River to Carson Valley." On the 30th of July, the northwestern Shoshoni, and their chiefs, Pocatello and Sanpitch, came to terms at Box Elder (Brigham City). The next day General Wright advised the War Department: "The different tribes of Indians living within the District of Utah appear anxious for peace. Most of them already made treaties of peace with General Connor." On the 1st of October, Governors Doty and Nye jointly negotiated a treaty with the western Shoshoni at Ruby Valley. The Goshute made their peace with Doty.

32 Hafen, 252. The "problems" relating to treaty implementation were not solely on the side of the Indians. Delays by the United States government were notorious. The Fort Bridger treaty was finally ratified by the U.S. Senate on March 7, 1864, but was not proclaimed in full force until June 7, 1869. Neff, 393.


and Connor at Tooele Valley on October 12. A final treaty with the Bannock at Camp Connor was completed in late October.

With this act, Connor was able to report to General Wright on October 27:

... I have the honor to report the settlement of terms of peace with all the Indians within this military district from the Snake River on the north to the lower settlements of Utah, and from the Rocky Mountains on the east to Reese River on the west, a region heretofore constantly infested by roving bands of savages, and desolated by their horrid barbarities on passing emigrants for a long series of years. For the first time in the history of the country it may now be truly announced that the great emigrant roads through the Territory may be safely traversed by single persons without danger to life or property or fear of molestation by Indians. ... the Indians ... are evidently seriously inclined to peace in the future, and, after the severe experiences of last winter, spring, and summer, will hesitate long ago ere they again provoke hostilities.

**Evaluation**

Actions against the Indians while Connor commanded the District of Utah may best be evaluated in terms of the significance of the several treaties which evolved and the results achieved by the positioning of District of Utah troops. Governor Doty addressed the first of these points:

The importance of these treaties to the government and to its citizens can only be appreciated by those who know the value of

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37 Colton, 170.


the continental telegraph and Overland stage to the commercial
and mercantile world, and the safety and security which peace
alone can give to emigrant trains, and to the gold discoveries
in the north. 40

Colonel Maury, First Oregon Cavalry, addressed the second point in
June 1864, in a report to his district headquarters: "I learn unofficially that
General Connor has established a camp of one company of cavalry at the mouth
of Raft River. ... [This will bring] ... much benefit to the security and
peace of the immigration to Oregon and California." 41 This same point of
benefit to peace and security was also made concerning the establishment of
Camp Connor at Soda Springs.

Abraham Anderson, writing about Connor in his informal history of
Soda Springs, expresses a frontiersman's perspective of Connor's Indian
policy. "In some cases the punishment that had to be administered [by Connor
to the Indians] ... was necessarily severe." 42

40 Pedersen, 67.
(Blackfoot, Idaho), January 11 and 19, 1929.
CHAPTER V

THE BATTLE OF BEAR RIVER

A few miles northwest of present-day Preston, Idaho, occurred on January 29, 1863, one of the most significant engagements between organized troop units and the Indians in the history of the American West. And yet the battle was and remains little known. History has given its attention to the larger fields of the Civil War, and contemporary and subsequent controversy surrounding the troop commander has served to dim the significance of his victory.

The battle is a classic in frontier military planning. The advance preparations and tenacity of the Indians in defense and the gallantry and perserverance of the federal troops in the attack under the most severe challenges of weather and terrain deserve more attention from historians.

This was a battle in which each side deliberately selected its role in advance. Chance did not bring on the battle; chance did not force the Indians to combat. The issue was vigorously contested on the field of battle. It is a distortion of events to characterize the resulting large number of Indian casualties as a massacre. The Indians were severly defeated in a combat they courted. The results of their defeat were important to the tranquility and development of the intermountain west.
Contributory Events

A series of events, occurring over an extended period of time, eventually culminated in a military expedition against the Indians in northern Cache Valley. In view of the Mormon practice of providing food and other necessities to the Indians, winter encampments of the Indians were likely to be in relatively close proximity to Mormon settlements. Such was true in the winter of 1862–1863 when a large body of Shoshone and Bannock Indians, under Chiefs Bear Hunter and Sagwich, located near the mouth of a small stream which emptied into Bear River, approximately twelve miles northwest of Franklin. Demands and pressure of these Indians on the settlers became so great that many outlying homes were abandoned and the settlers withdrew to Franklin and other settlements.¹

Schindler and others attribute a more aggressive, retaliatory attitude on the part of the Indians as a response to the execution of four hostages by Major McGarry at Bear River ferry in early December 1862.² In any event Indian hostilities became more serious and more frequent. In late December, a party of miners, including one William Bevins, from the Salmon River mines attempted to reach northern Utah settlements for supplies. The party was attacked by Indians near Franklin and one man was killed. After reaching

¹Rogers, 67; Colton, 164.

²Harold Schindler, Orrin Porter Rockwell, Man of God, Son of Thunder (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1966), 321.
Salt Lake City, Bevins appeared before Chief Justice Kinney on January 19, 1863, and prepared an affidavit concerning the attack on his party. He also reported that another party of ten individuals had been slain by Indians a few days earlier in the same general vicinity. At about this same time A. H. Conover reached Salt Lake City with a report that two men who had departed Bannock City on November 25th carrying mail and gold dust had last been seen near the head of Marsh Valley. Presumably these two couriers had also been slain by Indians.

In response to these events Chief Justice Kinney issued a writ for the arrest of the Indian Chiefs believed to have been involved—Bear Hunter, San Pitch, and Sagwich. Enforcement of the writ of arrest was placed in the hands of U. S. Marshal Isaac L. Gibbs, who, anticipating opposition from the Indians, requested a military escort of Colonel Connor to protect him in serving the writ.

By law, Connor did not possess the authority to utilize his troops as requested by Marshal Gibbs until a "civil posse had been called, tried and failed." However, under the authority of his military mission in the territory, Connor was already planning an expedition against the marauding Indians prior to Gibb's request. Connor's official report to Department of the Pacific, following the Battle of Bear River, provides his basis for planning his punitive

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3 Whitney, 2:77.

4 Orton, 175.
expedition and his reaction to the request for a military escort for the U. S. Marshal.

... information received from various sources of the encampment of a large body of Indians on Bear River, in Utah Territory, 140 miles north of this point, who had murdered several miners during the winter, passing to and from the settlements in this valley to the Beaver Head mines, east of the Rocky Mountains, and being satisfied that they were a part of the same band who had been murdering emigrants on the Overland Mail Route for the last fifteen years, and the principal actors and leaders in the horrid massacres of the past summer. I determined, although the season was unfavorable to an expedition in consequence of the cold weather and deep snow, to chastise them if possible. ... previous to my departure Chief Justice Kinney ... made a requisition for troops for the purpose of arresting Indian chiefs Bear Hunter, San Pitch, and Sagwich. I informed the marshal that my arrangements for our expedition against the Indians were made, and that it was not my intention to take any prisoners, but that he could accompany me. 5

Marshal Gibbs did, in fact, accompany the expedition, although, as Whitney comments, "for what purpose is not clear," since Connor had declined his request for assistance in serving the writ of arrest. 6

The Plan

Based on the troops available at Camp Douglas and his scheme of employment, Connor designated the following troop elements to comprise the

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5 Official Records, vol. L, pt. 1, p. 185 and 187. Connor's statement, "It was not my intention to take any prisoners," is generally interpreted as a commitment to "no quarter" in the anticipated engagement. It logically could have meant a denial of his intention to act as a posse.

6 Whitney, 2:78.
expedition: 7

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<th>Element</th>
<th>Strength</th>
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<td>Infantry: Company K, Third Infantry, Captain Hoyt commanding</td>
<td>69</td>
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<tr>
<td>Artillery: Two howitzers under the supervision of Lieutenant Honeyman</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cavalry: Companies A, H, K, and M, Second Cavalry</td>
<td>220</td>
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<tr>
<td>Command and staff: 8</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Train: Fifteen wagons carrying twenty days of supplies.</td>
<td>309</td>
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In addition to the military force, a competent guide, to compensate for the unfamiliarity of the California Volunteers with the territory, was required. A Mormon, Orrin Porter Rockwell, went on the federal payroll on January 22, at Salt Lake City, to fill this need. 9

The scheme of employment included the principle of surprise as an essential ingredient to success. "Feeling assured that secrecy was the surest way to success, I [Connor] determined to deceive the Indians by sending a small force in advance, judging, and rightly, they would not fear a small

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8 Colonel Connor was in command. Surgeon Reid of the Third Infantry was present by virtue of his position and the anticipated combat. In addition, Majors Gallagher and McGarry, three captains, and four lieutenants, present at Camp Douglas for a general court martial, were members of the expedition on a volunteer basis.

9 Schindler, 322.
Accordingly, the infantry, artillery, and the supply train elements were to move as a single unit, marching during daylight. This grouping was Connor's "small force in advance" intended to lull the Indians into a feeling of security and to preclude their scattering if they detected the presence of a strong military force. Whether the ruse was the cause or not, the Indians chose to remain in their position and fight.

Connor, Rockwell, and the cavalry were to depart Camp Douglas several days later than the small, advance force. By marching the cavalry only at night, it was hoped to retain the element of surprise.

**Troop Movement to the Battle Area**

The advance force of infantry, artillery, and the train, under Captain Hoyt, left Camp Douglas, amid falling snow, on the afternoon of Thursday, January 22. By Tuesday, the 27th, this force had reached Mendon in southern Cache Valley.

The cavalry force was held at Camp Douglas until sundown on the 25th. The night was clear but intensely cold; the cavalry force was required

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11 Utley, 224, indicates, without further explanation, that "Bear Hunter probably had no intention of fleeing."

12 Pedersen, 56.

13 Rogers, 69.
to move into the very face of a biting north wind. Despite these adverse weather conditions, the cavalry force traversed sixty-eight miles to Box Elder (Brigham City) during their first night march. The cavalry overtook the infantry force at Mendon on the night of the 27th. 14

From Mendon the two elements of the force used different routes and different timing in reaching the small settlement of Franklin. The infantry and attached units left Mendon at 11:00 o'clock p.m. on the 27th and had travelled the thirty miles to Franklin by 4:00 o'clock p.m. on the 28th. The cavalry delayed at Mendon until 4:00 o'clock a.m. on the 28th, at which time they departed for Summit (Smithfield). They rested there until 9:00 o'clock p.m., so as to insure their arrival at Franklin at night. They reached Franklin at midnight.

Arrival at Franklin

Franklin served as a rendezvous point for the troops before their movement against the Indian encampment. By coincidence Bear Hunter was in Franklin on the afternoon of the 28th to collect wheat from the Mormons when the infantry force approached the settlement.

He did not seem worried when he saw the infantry approaching the town, and did not leave until the soldiers came quite close. An inhabitant said to him, "Here come the soldiers. You may get killed," to which he replied, "May-be-so soldiers get killed too." Out of town, he evidently quickened his pace, for he

14 Whitney, 2:78.
lightened his load by dumping the sacks of wheat along the way to his camp.  

Connor's plan of maneuver visualized the arrival of both the infantry and cavalry forces at the Indian encampment at the same time, so as to surround the encampment before daylight. Hoyt's infantry and the two howitzers were to leave Franklin for the Indian encampment twelve miles away at 1:00 o'clock a.m. on the morning of January 29th. Some difficulty was encountered in locating a local guide to show the troops the way over the snow-covered fields to the ford of the Bear River, and Hoyt's force was delayed about two hours in leaving Franklin.  

The cavalry would, in conformance with the plan, depart Franklin two hours after the infantry. The delay involving the infantry posed a problem, for, if the plan were followed, the combined force would now arrive at the Indian encampment after daylight. Connor was apprehensive that, with the coming of light, the Indians would discover the strength of his force and flee. Connor altered his plan in view of existing circumstances and moved the cavalry by rapid march from Franklin at 4:00 o'clock a.m.  

The cavalry passed the infantry and artillery about four miles from the Indian encampment, near present-day Preston, Idaho. At daylight the

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15 Rogers, 70.  
cavalry had reached the high bluff near the east (left) bank of Bear River "in full view of the Indian encampment ... about one mile distant."\(^{17}\)

**The Indian Position**

The Bear River flows a winding course through a relatively narrow defile in the vicinity of the location of the Indian encampment. To the east is a high bluff overlooking the river and its narrow flood plain. A mile or so to the west of the river begin low foothills covered with stunted cedar trees. The Indian encampment, consisting of approximately seventy-five shelters made of brush and wagon canvas and an Indian population of 500 to 600\(^{18}\), lay in a ravine which led from the west-side flood plain toward the foothills. In the small section of the area in which the battle occurred, the river ran generally east-west and the ravine in which the Indian village was located ran north-south. Through the lowest portion of the ravine ran a small creek, known after the battle as Battle Creek, and which drained into the Bear River. The river, swift in places and four to six feet deep, was crossed at a ford which was located about three-quarters of a mile east of the battle area.

The ravine, which provided a naturally strong defensive position for the Indians, was about three-quarters of a mile long and six to twelve feet deep,


\(^{18}\)This population figure is an estimate derived from the number of Indians reported killed (224 to 368), the number of squaws and papooses captured (160), and the number of braves reported to have escaped (22-100).
with nearly perpendicular sides, and was thirty to forty feet wide. At the bottom of the ravine, where most of the lodges were located, was a heavy thicket of willows. Other willow thickets existed within the ravine just below the embankment top. These upper thickets had been supplemented, where necessary, by artificial covers of willows to facilitate hiding the Indian warriors from observation—a form of both natural and man-made camouflage.

Firing steps had been chipped into the frozen east-side embankments by the squaws also to assist in cover and concealment for the Indian braves. Rifle supports had been prepared of forked sticks and woven willow loopholes.

The natural geography of the area was also important. Escape from the ravine was possible to the north into the foothills or to the south onto the narrow flood plain of the river. When approaching the ravine from the east over the flood plain, the view is generally "up hill" to a ground observer; nothing can be seen below the crest of the embankment. "The troops, to approach the ravine, had to pass over two 'benches' or slight declivities, which necessarily exposed them to the fire of the Indians before they could have time to see the position of the latter."  

The season and the weather served also to enhance the security of the Indians' position. The river bottom was frozen to hard ice and large ice chunks

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19 Deseret News, February 11, 1863, as quoted by Schindler, 323.

20 Orton, 176.
floated in the cold waters. In addition, most of the area was under a two-foot layer of snow.  

From the extent of the preparation of their position, it seems conclusive that the Indians intended to fight and to fight defensively, but the decision may have been based on possible reports, if Connor's ruse were successful, of a relatively small opposing troop force. The extent of their satisfaction with the potentials of their situation is illustrated by Orton: "they undoubtedly fancied themselves in perfect security. ... they had all their ponies tied up together, and the squaws and papooses were about the lodges as usual."  

To oppose Connor's troopers from the formidable defensive position were approximately 300 warriors, mostly well armed with rifles and having plenty of ammunition.  

The Engagement  

Although Connor's troops had departed from Camp Douglas with a total strength of slightly over 300, only approximately 200 were available to take part in the battle. This great reduction in effective strength resulted from those left along the route to Franklin because of frost-bite (75 men),

21 Daily Union Vedette, January 30, 1864.  
22 Orton, 176.  
those with the supply train and the howitzers, and those guarding the cavalry horses. 24

Once the troops reached the vicinity of the Indian encampment, preparations for battle were rapid. The cavalry quickly descended from the bluffs to the river ford and, with difficulty, crossed the river. After the companies made the crossing they were dismounted and every fourth man was detailed to hold horses. Companies K and M were the first to cross, followed immediately by Companies A and H.

Colonel Connor had ordered Major McGarry, who commanded the cavalry element, to surround the Indians before attacking them. 25 However, several circumstances tended to preclude achieving this goal. First, almost as soon as the cavalry reached the west side of the river, an Indian sniper fired and wounded a trooper, thus forcing the cavalry to dismount. Second, the nature of the terrain did not lend itself to a troop maneuver to surround the Indians. Third, the Indians engaged in inflammatory provocations intended to goad the volunteers to attack.

Schindler, utilizing contemporary news accounts in the Deseret News as a source, describes these provocative actions. "As the first rays of sun illuminated the scene, a Shoshone chief in full battle regalia ... appeared on the breastworks above, and waving a lance at the soldiers, raced ... along the

24 Ibid.
embankment crown." 26 Other Indians chanted military orders in derision, punctuated by the taunt "come on you California sons of bitches." As the battle was joined and as a final gesture of contempt "braves flaunted the dried scalps of white women at the oncoming bluecoats, then retreated behind the embankment to begin the slaughter." 27

At about 6:00 o'clock a.m. the battle was started with McGarry leading his dismounted cavalrymen as skirmishers in a frontal attack on the Indian position. This tactical effort was attempted for about twenty minutes without success, and during which time most of the troop casualties were experienced.

Connor, who had initially remained on the east bank "to give orders to the infantry and artillery," made the assessment, on reaching the immediate scene of the fighting, that it was "impossible to dislodge them [the Indians] without great sacrifice of life" 28 by continuation of the frontal attack. He, therefore, ordered Major McGarry and twenty men to turn the Indians' left flank which was left "hanging" or exposed where the ravine entered the foothills.

At about this time, the infantry arrived at the river ford and attempted to cross but were unable to do so. Connor ordered the cavalry detachment with the "led" horses to assist the infantry across the river.

26 Deseret News, February 11, 1863, as quoted by Schindler, 324.

27 Whitney, 2:78, places a slightly different interpretation on these events. He sees the Indians as having utilized a pre-emptive engagement to force the troops to abandon the effort to surround the Indian encampment.

Upon arrival on the battlefield, Hoyt’s infantry was ordered to reinforce McGarry’s flank attack on the Indian left. The flanking attack succeeded; cavalry and infantry crossed the north end of the ravine and, in a half-circle, moved down both sides of the ravine, subjecting the Indians to a destructive enfilading fire.

Elements of Company A now broke through the Indian position from the east and entered the ravine. Portions of Companies K and M, Second Cavalry, were positioned at the mouth of the ravine; the Indians were now surrounded. Some Indians broke and ran, "but few tried to escape ... but continued fighting with unyielding obstinacy, frequently engaging hand to hand with the troops until killed."\(^{29}\) The troops at the mouth of the ravine extracted a "terrible execution" upon the Indians. In a single spot, forty-eight dead Indians were counted.\(^{30}\) Most of the Indians who did escape from the mouth of the ravine were shot while attempting to swim the river or killed in the dense willow thickets that lined the river bank.\(^{31}\) The battle was over by 10:00 o’clock a.m.

Due to the deep snow, the artillery did not reach the field in time to be used in the action.

\(^{29}\) Ibid.

\(^{30}\) Whitney, 2:79.

Troop casualties were heavy; approximately one-third of the force in action was killed or wounded. Fourteen of Connor's troops were killed on the field and four officers and forty-nine men were wounded. Of the wounded, one officer and six men later died. To this number must be added the seventy-five who were incapacitated due to frost-bite.

Indian casualties are more difficult to assess. Connor's report indicated that the troops had found "224 bodies on the field" but "how many more were killed I am unable to say." A detailed inspection of the battlefield to ascertain Indian casualties was not practicable since the condition of Connor's wounded necessitated their immediate evacuation. Among the dead were Chiefs Bear Hunter and Lehi.

The Tullidge account cited in footnote 34 indicates that ninety of the dead Indians were women and children. The suggestion that the killing of other than Indian males was intentional is contradicted by a diary entry of one

32 Utley, 224; Official Records, vol. L, pt. 1, p. 184, under a date of February 20, indicates that five of the wounded men had died.


34 Official Records, vol. L, pt. 1, p. 187; Whitney, 2:79, expresses the view that the number reported killed was doubtlessly exaggerated. To the contrary, the number reported killed was probably too small. Tullidge, 290, quotes a Colonel Martineau, who wrote a military history of Cache Valley, as stating that an eye-witness from Franklin had counted 368 dead Indians. To this must be added an unknown number of wounded who would later die.
of Connor's troopers. "As soon as the squaws and children saw that the soldiers did not desire to kill them they came out of the ravine and walked to the rear of the troops, where they sat down in the snow 'like a lot of sage hens'." 35

Disposition of the captured Indians and their stores was quickly made. One-hundred and sixty squaws and children were left on the field with a small quantity of captured wheat for their sustenance. Seventy lodges and a large quantity of wheat were destroyed. Arms and 175 captured Indian horses were retained by the troops.

The number of Indian warriors who escaped is unknown. Rogers indicates 22, Whitney, 50, and Tullidge (again quoting Colonel Martineau), about 100. 36

**Return to Camp Douglas**

On the afternoon of the 29th the troops recrossed the river and camped for the night. Of the total force on the field only one officer and twenty-five men were considered fit for guard duty. 37

Evacuation of the wounded back to medical facilities at Camp Douglas was of primary importance. The Mormon guide, Rockwell, went to Franklin

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35 Rogers, 74.

36 Rogers, 73; Whitney, 2:79; Tullidge, 290.

37 Rogers, 74.
and "commandeered" ten teams and sleighs to transport the wounded. The first day the wounded reached Mendon, and on the second day were at Ogden. At Farmington they were transferred from the sleighs to carriages and wagons. They reached Camp Douglas on the night of February 2.

The dead were returned in baggage wagons, and were buried in the post cemetery at Camp Douglas.

The main body of troops experienced considerable difficulty in their return to Camp Douglas due to deep, drifted snow in the pass from Cache Valley between Wellsville and Brigham City and were forced to return to Wellsville. Mormon Bishop W. H. Maughan of Wellsville turned out men and teams from his settlement to assist the movement through the pass.

On the evening of February 4, the main body of troops returned to Camp Douglas. First in the procession was a drove of 100 captured Indian horses. Then came Connor and the guide, Rockwell, in a carriage loaned from one of the settlements along the way. Major McGarry led the cavalry companies. Last were the infantrymen, mounted on captured Indian horses. The infantry had been gone for two weeks, the cavalry a few days less.

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38 Schindler, 327.
39 Rogers, 75.
40 Rogers, 76. Schindler, 327, indicates the date of return as February 3.
Connor's official report of his expedition included these observations concerning Mormon attitudes: ". . . in my march from this post no assistance was rendered by the Mormons, who seemed indisposed to divulge any information regarding the Indians and charged enormous prices for every article furnished my command."41 Concerning the material captured in the Indian camp, Connor reported that he had destroyed a large quantity of wheat and other provisions which had been furnished the Indians by the Mormons. Captured arms, so rumor said, were "received [by the Indians] from inhabitants of this territory in exchange for the property of massacred emigrants."42

In view of the facts that Mormons had provided two guides--Rockwell and one from Franklin--had assisted in the transportation of the wounded from the battlefield, had fed and entertained some of the troops at Logan subsequent to the battle,43 and had assisted the troops in the passage of the snow-blocked route south from Wellsville, Connor's report would appear to be incomplete or misleading. Tullidge takes Connor to task on this point. "Colonel Connor ... did an injustice to the people of Cache Valley . . . . The records of Cache speak of the absolute sympathy of the entire people of Cache with the California Volunteers, and their gratitude to them for redeeming them from Indian

43 Tullidge, 290.
Indeed, the victory at Bear River was viewed by the Mormon branch in Logan as an "interposition of Providence in behalf of the settlers." 

**Recognition**

Connor's report of the Bear River expedition particularly cited Major McGarry, Major Gallagher, and Surgeon R. R. Reid with "highest praise for their skill, gallantry, and bravery throughout the engagement ...." Speaking of all of his troops he stated: "Of the good conduct and bravery of both officers and men California has reason to be proud."

When General Wright forwarded Connor's report to Washington, he commented that the victory should "commend the Column from California and its brave commander to the favorable notice of the General-in-Chief and War Department."

General Halleck recommended the promotion of Connor to brigadier general "for the heroic conduct of himself and men in the battle of Bear River." The recommendation was approved by Secretary of War Stanton and, on March 29, 1863, Connor was appointed a brigadier general.

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44 Tullidge, 288 and 289.
45 Tullidge, 290.
Significance of the Battle

The view that the Battle of Bear River was highly significant to the history of the West is generally endorsed by all historians. Rogers calls the campaign "one of the most successful expeditions of the West against hostile Indians." Tullidge, Whitney, Bancroft, Hafen, Neff, Ricks, and Utley all see the battle as decisive in bringing the Indians to peace and in the development of the West. However, there is also an undercurrent of objection to the number of casualties inflicted on the Indians. Neff states that the "unsuspecting natives were practically exterminated." Bancroft, after praising the imposition of peace on the Indians resulting from the battle, rather inconsistently comments: "Had the savages committed this deed, it would pass into history as a butchery or a massacre." Whitney provides a view more in consonance with the facts as developed by this author.

If the battle in its latest stage had possessed less the elements of a massacre, Colonel Connor and his command would have been more generally praised by some people; but perhaps it would not then have provided a lesson so well remembered by the savages. As it was, it completely broke the power of the

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48 Rogers, 76.

49 Tullidge, 290; Whitney, 2:80; Utley, 224; Bancroft, 631; Hafen, 249; Neff, 392 and 630; Joel E. Ricks and Everett L. Cooley, (Eds.), The History of a Valley: Cache Valley, Utah--Idaho (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret News Publishing Company, 1956), 51.

50 Neff, 735. The judgment, "unsuspecting," is absurd.

51 Bancroft, 631.
Indians, and conveyed to them a warning that it has never been necessary to repeat. 52

The extent to which the genuine significance of an historical event can be distorted, misrepresented, or diminished is illustrated by a quotation from an unidentified critic of Connor in Utah in July 1885.

It is neither patriotic nor brave to pounce upon a snow-bound freezing and starving band of Indians and cruelly slaughter bucks, squaws and pappooses [sic]. The traveller to the north is to this day, and will be for generations to come, pointed to the cove on Bear River, "where Connor massacred the Indians," and never is heard a complimentary word for the hero of the awful butcher. 53

52 Whitney, 2:80.

53 Fox, 31.
CHAPTER VI
AN ARMY ENDEAVOR IN WESTERN SETTLEMENT

In May of 1863 Brigadier General Patrick Edward Connor led a party of troops and civilians from Camp Douglas, Utah Territory, to Soda Springs in neighboring Idaho Territory. Here simultaneously were established a new military post, Camp Connor, and a new civilian settlement, Morristown. This operation is of interest because of Connor's motivation in moving beyond the geographic limits of his own command, as an example of federal official and church friction in Utah, and as an effort by the army to influence solutions to primarily civilian problems.

The establishment of a settlement at the great bend of the Bear River at a location known to the Indians as Tosoiba—sparkling waters—and, less elegantly, to the trappers and early emigrants as "Beer Springs" resulted from several seemingly unrelated events, one of the most important of which was the discovery of gold in Idaho successively on the North Fork of the Clearwater (February 20, 1860), near Florence (August 12, 1861), and in the Boise Basin (August 2, 1862). The discovery of gold in Idaho Territory and in Montana greatly increased the emigrant traffic along the Oregon Trail to a degree reminiscent of the peaks of the early 1850s. As a means of illustration, the first permanent settlement in Idaho was made in 1860 and, thus, the 1860 census records no data for Idaho. However, by 1870 Idaho had a
primarily adult population of 14,999 with a labor force of 10,879 of whom 60.5 percent were employed in metal mining. The outbreak in 1862 of Indian attacks and depredations over an extended area endangered the rather extensive travel to the gold fields.

A second occurrence affecting the establishment of a new troop location and settlement in Idaho Territory was the so-called "Morrisite War." Prior to the arrival of Connor's troops in Utah, an armed conflict occurred in June 1862, in the vicinity of Ogden between an apostate religious group called Morrisites and the Territory of Utah. Following this encounter some of the Morrisites dispersed to Carson Valley in California and to Montana; some gave up their beliefs and remained in Utah; and some adhered to their religion under the protection of federal troops at Camp Douglas.

The presence of the Morrisites at Camp Douglas was a potential source of further friction with the Mormons.

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2 The name "Morrisites" is derived from that of the leader of the group, Joseph Morris. A complete treatment of the Morrisite affair is contained in John Banks, "A Document History of the Morrisites in Utah" (Unpublished B.A. thesis, University of Utah, 1909). The fact that the predominant portion of the inhabitants of Utah were Mormon suggested to many an element of religious persecution associated with the Morrisite episode.
Connor indicated his plan to establish a new post "on the overland emigrant route about 150 miles north of this post, in Idaho Territory" to Department of the Pacific on April 22, 1863. The plan was unique in several respects. First, for over ten years Fort Bridger and Fort Hall had been adjacent installations on the Oregon Trail; a need for an intermediate station or settlement had not been demonstrated. Second, a settlement at Soda Springs would "leap frog" by approximately 75 miles the then-existing limits of settlement, if Salt Lake City is considered as the center of the settled areas. The northern-most location in Cache Valley, Franklin, was settled on April 14, 1860, in what later proved to be Idaho. Preston would not be settled until 1866. Bear Lake Valley would not have a settlement until September 26, 1863, at Paris. Both Marsh Valley and Malad Valley would not receive their first settlements until 1864. Third, the proposed location for the settlement at Soda Springs was entirely out of the command territory of Brigadier General Connor, although there is evidence of prior coordination with the commander of the District of Oregon, within whose area Soda Springs was located.

Connor, perhaps anticipating a requirement for some justification, listed several reasons for his contemplated action: the importance of the position on the emigrant trails to both Oregon and California; the proximity of

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important mines; the need to protect overland emigrants; the fact that the location is in the vicinity of a summer rendezvous of hostile Indians; and "to form the nucleus of an anti-Mormon settlement, and a refuge for all who desire to leave the Mormon Church and have not the means to emigrate farther."  

Certainly one of the limitations in controlling the Indians was the necessity to move troops great distances in any campaigns against them. Immediate response to hostile actions was impossible. Location of troops in outlying areas was a valid consideration. There would, also, be prestige benefits from the presence of Connor's troops on the Oregon Trail.

Further, movement of the Morrisites out of Utah should minimize the possibilities of further civil conflict with the Mormons and enhance the tranquility of Connor's command. The idea of a non-Mormon settlement was, insofar as can be determined from the official records, entirely Connor's. His letter of April 22, which has already been cited, also sets his expected date of implementation of his plan as "next week." There was hardly time for nonconcurrence from his commander in San Francisco.

The official purpose of the expedition is recorded as being the establishment of "a new post in that region for the protection of overland emigration to Oregon, California, and the Bannock City mines." Pertaining to the


6 Official Records, vol. L, pt. 1, p. 226-229. This citation is from Connor's official report of June 2, 1863, concerning his expedition. This same report, as an original source, has been used for subsequent quotations regarding the expedition itself.
Morrisites, Connor observed:

Prudential reasons, applying as well to this command as to the Morrisites themselves, rendered it advisable that they should be removed from the vicinity of this camp [Camp Douglas] and beyond the evil influences and powers of the Mormon hierarchy.

The party under Connor's command moved in two elements and by two generally different routes from Camp Douglas to their destination, "a point at or near the great bend of Bear River known as Soda Springs." The first element or main body, consisting of 160 Morrisites (53 families, seven single men, and four widows) escorted by Company H, Third Infantry California Volunteers, under the command of Captain Black, departed Camp Douglas on May 5, 1863. Their route northbound was to Brigham City (Box Elder), Bear River, and by an "old beaten road through Cache and Marsh Valleys and across the mountains, via Sublett's Cut-Off" to Soda Springs.

The second element, under Connor himself, and including Company H, Second Cavalry California Volunteers (Lieutenant Clark, commanding) departed Camp Douglas on May 6 and overtook the main body 25 miles to the north. The combined parties reached Brigham City on May 8.

Here Connor's element embarked upon a mission of area reconnaissance. The party of cavalry crossed the Bear River at its lower ferry and moved thence up the plateau between the Malad and Bear rivers. After crossing the divide between the Great Basin drainage area and that of the Columbia and its tributary, the Snake, the party used a route down the western side of Marsh Valley to a crossing of the Port Neuf River north of Sublett's Cut-Off.
The east (right) bank of the Port Neuf was followed on a bearing a little east of north to the Snake River ferry (near present-day Glenns Ferry). It was now May 13 and Connor's group was approximately 200 miles from Camp Douglas.

Exhibiting the practices of a constant, capable military commander, Connor used every opportunity for reconnaissance and seeking hostile Indians. After his party left Brigham City, he employed two night marches hoping to surprise some Indians who had escaped from the field at the Battle of Bear River and who were rumored to be in the vicinity. He also negotiated with Indians encountered at the crossing of the Port Neuf and at the Snake River ferry. All Indians contacted were friendly and cooperative.

Connor's expedition resulted in significant improvements to the early road and trail network in southeastern Idaho and northern Utah. When Connor had reached the Snake River ferry he was down river (northwest) of Soda Springs approximately 70 miles via Fort Hall. The normal route from the ferry to the Bannock City mines was to proceed nearly 70 miles from the ferry back up the Snake to a point generally due north of Soda Springs. Connor sought and found a shorter, direct route from Soda Springs north to the mines.

Connor's party of cavalry arrived at Soda Springs on May 17 and, finding the main body not yet there, he reconnoitered a route south from Soda Springs toward the settlements in Cache Valley. The route ran from Soda Springs along the west (right) bank of the Bear River, through a gap in the
mountains, to the crossing of the Bear near the Indian battleground. This route was 40 to 50 miles shorter than the Marsh Valley approach.

On May 20 the main body arrived at Soda Springs. "A suitable and eligible location was selected on the north bank of Bear River, near the great bend, and four miles east of where the Soda Springs Valley opens into Old Crater Valley" [northern Gentile or Gem Valley].

Connor was careful to record the advantages of the site selected: good and abundant water easily diverted for irrigation; abundant wood for fuel and timber for building; the fertility of the soil and its suitability for cultivation as deduced from the presence of a good vegetation. As possible disadvantages, he was almost prophetic in noting "the shortness of the season and the altitude of the place . . . ."

**Morristown**

Immediately following site selection, a land survey and development of the settlement were begun. Two hundred acres were surveyed and set aside for a township. Each family was allotted a parcel of land 25 feet by 130 feet. Streets were laid out parallel to the river and were intersected by streets parallel to Soda Creek. This resulted in a plat roughly triangular in design with a few lots west of Soda Creek, but none south of the river. Houses
were one-room structures with dirt floors and mud packing between logs of the walls.  

The initial town site came to be known alternatively as Old Town or Lower Town to distinguish it from Upper Town—a recognition of a shift in the "center of gravity" of settlement to a new, higher location.

Business of the new town was related primarily to traffic on the Oregon Trail. Blacksmithing was the first private business and was a godsend to emigrants, settlers, miners, and loggers. Tasks included making horse shoes, ox shoes, and nails for building, and repairing wagons. Scrap iron was essential and was obtained from emigrants passing through and by a diligent search of the trail for miles to gather discarded metal. Other items containing metal fixtures were occasionally found floating down the Bear River. Axle grease lubricant for the many wagons was produced locally by melting tar or gum from pinion pines and combining this with tallow.

Attempts at farming were very discouraging. Freezing temperature occurred often, even during summer nights. Men tried building fires and smudges in an effort to ward off the effects of the frost, but with small success. During the second winter, more than half the livestock was lost by reason of extreme cold and lack of feed. Five successive grain crops were destroyed by freezing weather.


8 Barnard, Bybee, and Walker, 62.
Camp Connor

While the Morrisites were building their log cabins, General Connor surveyed a military reservation, to be known as Connor's Fort or Camp Connor, one square mile in size located on a hill just to the east of the first town site.

The fort, to be garrisoned by Company H, Third Infantry California Volunteers, was built in the shape of a huge picture frame, with the doors to the various rooms opening onto a central court. Construction was of logs; the building was approximately 100 feet square. Two distinguishing features of the fort were a ninety-foot flagpole of which General Connor was extremely proud and a two-story adobe brick building erected in the center of the enclosure. The lower floor of this building was used for post supply and a store; the upper room was a place for social gatherings and for council and court meeting. This building boasted a shingle roof.

The Decline of Morristown and the Closing of Camp Connor

A combination of several factors by early 1865 brought about the decline of Morristown. The climate was adverse to farming and stock raising.

9 Barnard, Bybee, and Walker, 56.
As an additional consideration, there was a failure to achieve a rallying of all Morrisites to the new settlement, \(^{10}\) and it failed to grow.

Withdrawal of the troops caused the closing of Camp Connor. The Indian troubles in this part of the West had, by early 1865, been reduced to a minimum. A decision was made by Connor to withdraw the troops from Camp Connor for use, under Connor's command, in the District of the Plains. In a letter of February 25, 1865, General Connor wrote as follows to his higher headquarters, Department of the Pacific:

> There is now a thriving settlement at Camp Connor (Soda Springs), who are sufficiently numerous to protect themselves, and deeming that the troops at that post were more needed for the protection of the Overland Mail Line, I have thought it best to withdraw them. \(^{11}\)

The closing of the military camp precipitated the abandonment of the civil settlement. \(^{12}\)

**Evaluation**

Failure is perhaps too strong a term to be used in describing Connor's endeavors at Morristown and Camp Connor. True, his colony and his military post did not survive. Military posts, however, are notoriously ephemeral;

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\(^{10}\) Beal, 182.


\(^{12}\) Soda Springs was later resettled by the Mormons. In 1870 Brigham Young issued a call for volunteers to recolonize Soda Springs. A new survey was completed by Jesse W. Fox and in the spring of 1871 Mormon settlers arrived and the New Town--Upper Town--Soda Springs village was secure in its future.
once the need for them passes, they are closed. Moreover, some continuity remains of the colony. Descendants of some of the original Morriseite settlers still reside in Soda Springs, and descendants of some of Connor's soldiers stationed at Camp Connor remain as respected citizens of Idaho.

Another factor in evaluating the worth of Connor's efforts in establishing a settlement in southeastern Idaho is their effects on later, successful colonization. Reconnaissance and improvement of travel routes by Connor and his contribution to Indian pacification in the area certainly made the tasks of his colonist successors easier and simpler.

Connor's place in the history of the West would seem assured through his "Idaho venture," even had this been his sole constructive accomplishment during three and one-half years as a federal army officer with his headquarters in Utah Territory.
CHAPTER VII

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES

There were, during the existence of the Military District of Utah, many contemporary events and circumstances which strongly influenced the military operations. It is the purpose of this chapter to highlight certain of these which posed particular problems or challenges to Connor, the military commander. It should not be inferred that all "problems and challenges" are identified, nor is it intended necessarily to provide a complete discussion of any of the circumstances selected for consideration. The purpose is merely to illustrate how a variety of largely external considerations tended to define or to limit Connor's operations.

The most important non-military problem facing Connor was his relations with the Mormons. Four other problems of a primarily military nature were also particularly troublesome: the manner and extent by which his command would be reinforced; whether the post established at Camp Douglas would continue to be utilized as the location for major troop units; whether federal troops would be removed from Utah Territory; and the reorganization of the California Volunteers, necessitated by the expiration of their initial terms of service.
Relations with the Mormons

Previously in this study, Connor's perception of a threat from the Mormons to his command or to the accomplishment of his mission has emphasized conditions existing prior to his arrival. There were, however, certain events which occurred after the arrival of his troops in Utah and which had an immediate impact on Connor's military situation. It is not intended to present a detailed coverage of this broad and extremely complex non-military field; rather, coverage is deliberately limited and is provided only to suggest possible or probable influences on Connor's assessment of his situation.

A speech by Governor Harding in early December 1862, offensive to the Mormon territorial legislature, initiated a political crisis of major proportions between the primarily Mormon inhabitants of the Territory of Utah and the federal territorial officials sent there to govern. This crisis culminated in March when a Mormon "committee" called upon the governor and two of the federal judges and requested their resignations and departure from Utah. All refused. ¹

On December 20, Connor reported to General Wright that, since the troop arrival in Utah, Connor had been aware of efforts being made by Brigham Young to dissemble Connor's command under the guise of scattering troops along the line of the overland mail company as a "check against the

¹Tullidge, 291-318.
Governor Harding had also heard of similar efforts, and, on the 19th of February, 1863, he advised General Wright that no one knowing the true situation in Utah would initiate such an order. The governor further suggested reinforcement of Connor with two additional regiments—approximately 1,500 men. If the troops were to be withdrawn "it would be but justice to the federal officers here to order them home also, for there would not remain a shadow of . . . authority in their hands." 3

Connor shared the governor's views concerning the Mormons, and possible troop withdrawal; in February Connor identified his objections to Mormon attitudes to Department of the Pacific. He charged frequent and flagrant violations of the federal law, particularly as concerned polygamy. "Civil law is a perfectly dead letter in the statute books." 4

Connor's further charge of disloyalty and military preparations by the Mormons attracted both departmental and national level military attention:

Brigham has been engaged in mounting cannon, ostensibly for protection against Indian depredations, and by this means has placed himself in a position of formidable importance as an enemy. He has fifteen cannon, 9, 12, and 24 pounders ready for use . . . . I truly believe [he] only awaits a serious reverse to our arms, or a foreign war, to break out into open rebellion. 5

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5 Ibid.
Two months later an added threat, the possibility of involvement with the Indians, "urged on by the Mormons," worried Connor. 6 This matter of friction between Connor and the Mormons because of their Indian policies continued to be a major problem. Connor, almost in retrospect of his experiences in Utah, wrote on April 6, 1865:

The Indians [in Utah] were, I firmly believe, incited to acts of hostility against the mails and immigrants, for the purpose of involving us in a war, and, as we were but few in numbers, thus hoping to get rid of us. ... During the fall of 1862 and winter and spring of 1863 my command was actively engaged against the Shoshone, Ute, and Goshute Indians; and at the battle of Bear River I captured large quantities of wheat, together with many articles which the Indians could not have obtained had they not been on friendly terms with the Mormons. 7

**Reinforcements**

Under these circumstances of extremely strained relations with the Mormons and increasing belligerence on the parts of the Indians in early 1863, Connor reacted by strongly and repeatedly requesting reinforcements for his command. 8 An almost frantic search for means of reinforcing Connor was put in motion by the combination of the Mormon and Indian threats. Two general approaches were explored: Reinforce with currently available troop units,

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or raise new troop units for that purpose. Some of the specific measures within the two general approaches were fruitful; some were not.

As a form of military "wishful thinking," both Wright and Connor recommended immediate reinforcement by units from east of Utah Territory. There is no record of action on these recommendations.

The possibility of raising new units for Connor's command from man-power resources available within Utah was also considered, but did not achieve any positive results. On April 22, 1863, Connor wrote to the Department of the Pacific:

I received on the 15th instant a copy of the dispatch from the General-in-Chief to the general commanding the department, which says I may be able to raise companies in Utah or out of emigrant trains. The latter would be impossible, as the emigrants coming this way are afflicted with the gold fever, and the Mormons are too disloyal to be trusted with arms, even if they would enlist, which I doubt. There is, however, a class of people here known as Morrisites .... A company could be raised from among men to garrison a post which I contemplate establishing on the overland emigrant route about 150 miles north of this post, in Idaho Territory.

Connor's proposal to enlist one company of infantry from among the Morrisites was approved by General Wright on May 6, provided they would enlist for "three years or during the war." Apparently the Morrisites did not choose to enlist for such a period or perhaps the fact that the approval was

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dated one day following Connor's relocation of a major portion of the Morriseites to Soda Springs was the significant factor. There is no further record of action on the proposal.

The "untapped" Utah territorial manpower pool continued to appeal to higher headquarters. In late 1864, General McDowell placed a call on Governor Doty for four companies of volunteer infantry from the Territory of Utah.

I ... request that you will ... raise by voluntary enlistment for the service of the United States four companies of infantry .... As the U.S. forces in Utah are simply for the protection of the overland communications and the keeping the peace between the whites and Indians and maintaining the authority of the United States, and have no special reference to the Mormons, I have supposed the raising of these companies, if practicable to do so, would meet with no opposition from that community. 12

A copy of the request to Governor Doty was provided to General Connor with the request that Connor "afford all facilities in your power to raise these companies in Utah, as it may be difficult to send you forces from this part of the department." 13 When no action on the request to raise Utah troops was apparent after 2 1/2 months, Headquarters, Department of the Pacific, inquired of Connor: "... what, if any, progress has been made in


13 Official Records, vol. L, pt. 2, p. 999. There is no record of Connor action on McDowell's request. However, since Connor's attitude in April 1863 is a matter of record and since McDowell's request to raise troops was to the governor, it is doubtful that Connor did anything.
raising the four companies of volunteers?" \(^{14}\) Connor provided what appears to be an exasperated reply on January 3, 1865:

... Governor Doty ... informs me that he addressed to Major-General McDowell a letter in October last, declining to raise volunteers in this Territory for reasons which commended themselves to his judgment, and which he would be pleased to give if the department commander so desires. \(^{15}\)

The possibility of Mormon defense of the overland routes through the Territory of Utah without the call of troops to federal service was rumored. Connor reported in June 1863 his understanding that Brigham Young had offered "to protect the Overland Mail Line against the Indians for a given sum of money, on condition that the military shall be withdrawn." \(^{16}\) Connor gives his evaluation of the rumored offer. "I may say that I have little doubt that Brigham Young could cause the Indians to desist from attacks on the Overland Mail Line ....," but for other considerations Connor did not recommend acceptance of Brigham Young's offer.

A more feasible source of currently available troop units to be used to reinforce Connor was from within the Department of the Pacific itself and attention was easily focused on Companies A, B, and D, Third Infantry--units of Connor's own regiment which had been deployed in the Humboldt and hence unavailable for service in Utah at the timeConnor departed from California for


the District of Utah. By early December and relieved from the Humboldt mission, Company A was already at Fort Churchill and Companies B and D were at Camp Union, near Sacramento. Company L of the Second Cavalry was also at Fort Churchill. Having to wait until the roads were passable, it was June 10 before a battalion and the two companies of the Third Infantry, under Lieutenant Colonel Jeremiah B. Moore, departed Camp Union. It is significant to note that the reinforcement element for Connor also included a sizeable increase in his field artillery weapons: two brass 6-pounder guns, one 12-pounder howitzer, and one 12-pounder mountain howitzer.

The battalion reached Fort Churchill on the 25th, and, joined by Company A, Third Infantry, and Company L, Second Cavalry, already there, departed in early July enroute to Salt Lake City. At Fort Ruby the composition of the party for Utah was modified slightly; Company B was retained there as part of the garrison and Company C, which had been part of the Fort Ruby garrison for nearly 1 year moved onward to Salt Lake City, together with Companies A and D, Third Infantry, and Company L, Second Cavalry.

In summary, Fort Ruby was now garrisoned by Companies B and F, Third Infantry. Lieutenant Colonel Moore remained at Fort Ruby in command.

The reinforcement force for Salt Lake City was composed of Companies A, C, and D, Third Infantry, and Company L, Second Cavalry. The exact dates of arrival are not known. The return for Company L, which preceded the infantry force, shows that unit at Camp Douglas on September 30; the three infantry reinforcement companies were at Camp Douglas at least by December 31, 1863, and probably two months earlier.

The Nevada Volunteers

General Halleck was fully convinced of the military necessity to reinforce Connor in Utah. On March 19, 1863, he directed General Wright to reinforce Connor as early as possible and authorized Wright to raise additional troops for that purpose in California or Nevada. Under this authorization, First Nevada Volunteer cavalry and later infantry were provided for the District of Utah.

On the 2nd of April General Wright requested two volunteer companies of cavalry and two of infantry from Governor Nye of Nevada. The "not-too-speedy" Governor's Proclamation was not issued until April 26. True to form, interest was greater in the cavalry area, but the requirement that

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21 Orton, 194.
volunteer cavalry units provide their own horses posed a particular problem. Nevada troops were directed to rendezvous at Fort Churchill. By June 14, one cavalry company was ready for muster. Two weeks later, the second cavalry company was projected to be ready soon. But it was not until September 29 that Companies A and B, First Battalion Nevada Cavalry, could be ordered to Camp Douglas. They actually departed from Fort Churchill on October 10. Additional troop units from Nevada were not available until the summer of 1864, and were deployed at that date primarily to replace California units which were about to complete their service commitments of three years.

General Wright described the status of the Nevada Volunteers in April 1864, one year after the initial call, as follows:

Cavalry: six companies were then mustered into the service. Companies A and B had been sent to Camp Douglas the previous October. Companies C, D, E, and F were at Fort Churchill, but it had been possible to equip only one of these four companies with mounts.

Infantry: two hundred men for infantry had been enrolled and were at Fort Churchill, soon to be organized into A and B, Nevada Territorial Infantry.

In late July 1864, the Nevada force was ready for deployment. Companies C and F, Nevada Cavalry, went to Camp Douglas. Companies D

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and E remained to garrison Fort Churchill. Company B, Nevada Territorial Infantry, was ordered to Fort Ruby as potential relief for Companies B and F, Third Infantry California Volunteers. Companies A and B, Nevada Cavalry, organized into a battalion under Lieutenant Colonel A. A. C. Williams, replaced Company I, Third Infantry California Volunteers, at Fort Bridger in early August 1864. 28

However, from whatever the source, there was some question in Connor's mind as to whether reinforcement units could reach him in Utah. He reported to General Wright a Mormon assertion that "I shall not be reinforced, and that if the attempt is made they will cut off the reinforcements in detail and attack me." 29 No attempts to interfere occurred.

Challenges to the Continued Utilization of Camp Douglas

The continued utilization of the troop installation at Camp Douglas was an ever-present problem to General Connor. On July 31, 1863, General Wright wrote simultaneously to the adjutant general, to Governor Doty, and to Connor that he had "it in contemplation to re-occupy Fort ... Crittenden as the principal military post in the District of Utah." 30 The General's reasons included a supposed easier availability of supplies away from the City, but

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28 Rogers, 85.

29 Orton, 511.

related primarily to a desire to reduce the friction and possibilities of confrontation between the Mormons and the troops in Salt Lake City.

In preparation for a possible move to Fort Crittenden, Connor was directed to ascertain what buildings there could be obtained, at what price, and when they could be occupied by troops. General Wright's "contemplation" also involved stopping the reinforcements enroute from California under Lieutenant Colonel Moore at Fort Crittenden, if possible, rather than advance them to Camp Douglas.

The possibility of removal of troops from Camp Douglas raised several questions. This possible relocation of troops within Utah "will not affect the district headquarters, which will still remain in Salt Lake City, should you [Connor] so desire it." Connor was further assured that this proposed relocation to Fort Crittenden did not imply an intent to withdraw the troops from Utah.

There is no record of response by the adjutant general or Connor to General Wright's "contemplation." The governor's response, however, was quick and forceful, and probably more comprehensive than General Wright had intended. On the 9th of August Governor Doty advised General Wright that, because of the Indians, the "continued occupation of the posts at Soda Springs, Fort Bridger, and Ruby I deem indispensable ...." The matter of Camp Douglas was more complex.

This city is the seat of all power in this country, and the only point from which the authority of the Government over the Indians or people can be, I think, successfully maintained. ... I think it would be a detriment to the public service if this post should be abandoned. ... If a collision occurs between the civil officers of the United States and the Mormons this is the place where it must occur, and where those officers will require instant protection and assistance.

The governor concluded his "lecture" on strategy to General Wright with a recommendation that the garrison at Camp Douglas be neither increased nor diminished.

General Wright's position was quickly modified. On the 19th of August, he wrote as follows to Connor:

The instructions ..., relative to changing the position occupied by your command from Camp Douglas to Camp Crittenden ..., are modified ..., to the extent that if, in your judgment, the withdrawal of the troops from Camp Douglas would produce an impression on the minds of the Mormons that the removal was in consequence or disapproval of your course while in command, or in any manner injurious to the interests of the Government, you will retain Camp Douglas as your principal station.32

General Wright must have believed that he could anticipate Connor's reaction, for on the 20th, he rather lamely closed the issue with the adjutant general:

... the 31st of July I advised you that I had under consideration the propriety of removing the troops from the immediate vicinity of Great Salt Lake City ..., but previous to the receipt of the Governor's letter I had determined to maintain our present station at Camp Douglas.33

A Proposal for Troop Withdrawal

A second challenge to the troop deployment occurred in early January 1864, when Utah territorial delegate to the House of Representatives, John F. Kinney, wrote to Major General Halleck, General-in-Chief of the Army, "suggesting that the removal of the command under General Connor would very much accommodate the people I have the honor to represent." Kinney's proposal was for the removal of the troops from the Territory, not merely relocation from Camp Douglas.

His reasons were many. He questioned the continued necessity for the troops, based on the mission they were supposedly dispatched to Utah to perform, that is, defense of the overland routes against the Indians. He noted a season of poor crops, and a resultant general shortage of food in the territory. He alleged that Camp Douglas was located within the corporate limits of Great Salt Lake City and that the troop location on the bench was spoiling water for city domestic use from creeks originating above that area. He further suggested that Connor and his brave officers and men should be accorded their oft-expressed desire to serve directly in "the great struggle ... to subdue this wicked rebellion."

Halleck referred Kinney's letter to General Connor for report and Connor responded at length, with a copy to General Wright, on February 15. After refuting the arguments advanced by Kinney, Connor added: "I deemed it

not only prudent but absolutely necessary to the respect due to and the dignity of the Government that the camp should be located and maintained in the immediate vicinity of the headquarters of Brigham Young and his attendant nest of traitors."35 Connor closed with the observation that regardless of how desirable would be transfer to the active scenes of the East, "neither they [Connor's troops] nor I have constituted Mr. Kinney our spokesman ...."36

General Wright’s comment to the adjutant general on Connor's response was dated March 5, 1864:

During the last year the removal of the troops from Camp Douglas was maturely and carefully considered, and I was fully persuaded that the present location at Camp Douglas was the proper position. I have but little faith in the loyalty of the Mormons. ... I would most earnestly recommend not only that Camp Douglas be maintained, but that it be strongly re-enforced.37

Reorganization of the California Volunteers

Members of the troop units of the California Volunteers utilized in the District of Utah completed their commitments to service (three years) in the late months of 1864. Rather than provide replacements, decision was made to curtail the participation by California units coincident with the departure of the initial personnel. This decision involved several redeployment and reorganization actions.

In October 1864, units of the Second Cavalry, except for Companies L and M which remained at Camp Douglas, were withdrawn to Camp Union, California, and were eventually mustered out there in March 1866. The Third Infantry was reorganized and consolidated into a battalion of four companies—A, B, C, and D—by District of Utah Special Order 87, October 29, 1864. Personnel for these four companies were provided by veterans and new recruits.

The various problems confronting Connor as summarized in this chapter were typical of the wide scope of activities which circumstances may force on any military commander. All required much of Connor's time and attention; only the matters of relations with the Mormons and the measures considered to reinforce his command were serious problems.

38 Orton, 168.

39 Orton, 505. All companies of the Third Infantry Battalion subsequently played roles under Connor in his role as commander of the District of the Plains. The Third Infantry Battalion California Volunteers was finally mustered out on July 27, 1866.
CHAPTER VIII

PERIPHERAL MILITARY ACTIVITIES OF CONNOR'S COMMAND

The major military activities in the District of Utah involved the deployment of the troops, occasional field operations against the Indians, and an attempt to establish a Morriseite settlement, under army sponsorship, at Soda Springs on the Oregon Trail. However, there were additional activities of less importance, but which must be included in a survey of District military operations.

Among these additional activities were measures taken by Connor in response to the secessionist threat, as perceived by him and his military superiors. Although military actions against secessionists in the District of Utah were minor, secessionists continued to concern Connor for a full two years. Of interest is the wide variety of actions taken against a suspected disloyal element.

Overt military operations constituted one option. For example, in late September 1862, Connor directed his commander at Fort Ruby to locate a "band of traitors or guerrillas" rumored to be some place in the vicinity of Humboldt. 1

Administration of the required oath of allegiance to the Union received emphasis. Movement of emigrants through the territories who appeared to

lack the required allegiance or respect to the Union annoyed Connor's troops. The commander at Fort Ruby reported to Connor in June 1863 that he had stopped an emigrant train of sixty men, most of whom reportedly were secessionists, and had "them all drawn up in a line beneath our flag and administered the oath to them in presence of the whole command."\(^2\)

Emigrant control within Salt Lake City received attention. When a provost guard was established by Connor in July 1864, one of the reasons for his action was the control of disloyal emigrants passing through the City.\(^3\)

The possible impact of large numbers of "notoriously disloyal" emigrants on the populations of California and Oregon was a worry. Concerning such people, Connor concluded "it is apparent that administering the oath of allegiance has but little restraining effect..."\(^4\)

Two other categories of activities, having much more impact on Utah territory and its inhabitants, stemmed from the personality and character of Connor himself. Patrick Edward Connor was an energetic military commander with an inquiring mind. These two characteristics led him and his troops into many ventures, some of which had only an indirect or peripheral application to areas of military concern. Two such ventures--reconnaissance and road construction, and mining--extensively involved his troops and are considered here.


\(^3\)Hance and Warr, 62.

Reconnaissance and Road Construction

Connor's reconnaissance of the route from Ruby Valley to Salt Lake City and of conditions in the city itself in September 1862, presaged Connor's later activities of this general type. This man lost no opportunities to discover more about the areas in which he was operating and of applying that knowledge to assist the users of the overland routes.

Chaplain Anderson, writing for the San Francisco Bulletin, discussed one of Connor's many road improvement measures, undertaken while still en route for Utah.

The stage road runs from River Bed around a long mountain spur to Point Lookout—thirty-four miles. While the animals were resting, Colonel Connor discovered a pass from Indian Springs Canyon to Lookout Valley, and, with a large fatigue party, cut a good road where nature had not already made one.  

The diary of one of Connor's troopers records the activity of October 14 as:

"Made a road over the mountain." The chaplain designated the new route, which saved twelve miles, as "Connor's Cut-Off."

The expedition from Camp Douglas to establish Camp Connor at Soda Springs illustrates Connor's intense activity in area reconnaissance and in subsequent road improvement or construction. From Brigham City north to Soda Springs, Connor had deliberately selected for the cavalry a "less frequented

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5 Rogers, 40.

6 Rogers, 259.
road" for the sole reason of becoming familiar with his territory. Also,
Connor was aware that much of the emigrant traffic during 1863 was bound for
mines at Bannock City in what is today extreme southwestern Montana, located
generally north of Soda Springs. The fact that the travel route went from
Soda Springs down the Snake River nearly seventy miles to a ferry and back
up the river to a point north of Soda Springs puzzled Connor. In connection
with his expedition to establish Camp Connor, he determined to investigate
this problem.

With the design of finding a practicable route for a wagon road
through some pass in the mountains whereby a more direct course
could be made, I sent Lieutenant Clark with a detachment of twenty­
five men ... to cross the Blackfoot near its source at the base of
the foothills, and, proceeding up the Snake sixty or seventy­five
miles, turn to the south, seek out such a pass, and join the com­
mand at Soda Springs. This expedition was eminently successful,
finding a good pass for a road ... striking Snake River seventy
miles above and east of the present ferry. 7

To facilitate the use of his new route to the Bannock City mines,
Connor selected a new ferry location over the Snake River which became
known as "Connor's Ferry." This route was extensively used. A Captain
Fish, in the fall of 1863, returning from escorting emigrants to Montana, found
a guard of Connor's men at the ferry and 150 wagons from the Denver area
waiting to cross. 8

8 Pedersen, 90.
Even after all of this reconnoitering effort, Connor and the cavalry arrived at Soda Springs before the infantry and the Morrisite settlers they were escorting. Taking full advantage of the time thus made available, Connor sent detachments both north and south from Soda Springs to explore the country.

Of particular interest to the party exploring to the south was the location of a direct and practicable wagon road to the settlements in Cache Valley. Connor reported:

...the entire practicability of making at small expense of labor a good wagon road from the northern settlements of Cache Valley, crossing Bear River at or near the battle-ground through a gap in the mountains, and thence northerly along the western bank of Bear River to Soda Springs.9

In the fall of 1863, a detachment of sixty of Connor's men under Major John M. O'Neill of the Second Cavalry, "built a wagon road between Franklin and Soda Springs, shortening the route twenty miles."10 Additional road improvement or construction was completed during the summer of 1864 when a detachment of eighty-five men worked for over three weeks to improve the Chalk Creek wagon road between Camp Douglas and Fort Bridger.11

10 Rogers, 108.
11 Pedersen, 83; Rogers, 85.
One of Connor's operations was devoted entirely to reconnaissance. On March 30, 1864, Connor provided a preliminary view of the operation in a rather unusual communication to Department of the Pacific.

The more I think and inquire about the Colorado route the more convinced I am of the necessity and importance of opening the route. Communication at all seasons of the year with navigable water will be of the utmost importance to the speedy development of this Territory. Consequently I have concluded to make a military road from this place [Camp Douglas] to Fort Mojave, and shall start a force for that purpose as soon as the grass has grown sufficiently to sustain the animals. 12

Presumably Connor was thinking in terms of a new, better, shorter, route for the provision of military supplies for his forces. However, he spoke of a measure important to the "speedy development of this Territory." Connor pointed out that such a route would be practicable for year-round traffic and would be approximately 500 miles in length. He inquired of his higher headquarters how many months of the year the Colorado was navigable as far upriver as Fort Mojave and whether commissary supplies would be available there for the return trip of Connor's detachment. It is interesting to note that the Mormons also were considering development of this same communications route.

On April 13, General Wright approved the Connor proposition to open such communications and directed the availability of the necessary commissary supplies.

On the 7th of May, 1864, orders were issued to Captain Price, Company M, Second Cavalry, Lieutenant Conrad, and sixty-one of his men to determine "whether a route from the Colorado River to Salt Lake City can be made superior to the present route from Carson City to Salt Lake, or equal to it." The party, transported by sixty-four horses and four six-mule teams, departed Camp Douglas on May 9th and on the 11th were at Fort Crittenden. They followed the San Bernadino road--excellent from point of view of road condition and available water and grass--to Mountain Meadows. In sixteen days they had covered 302 miles. At Mountain Meadows they erected a monument to the victims of the massacre which had occurred there in September 1857, rested for two days, and departed for Muddy Creek.

Beyond this point the route was difficult and the party suffered. The road was in such poor condition that working parties were sent in advance to improve it. Animal condition had begun to deteriorate seriously. On the 3rd of June the detachment was at Camp 24 on the Muddy, having travelled 396 miles, six furlongs, and twenty-one rods. Only ninety-eight additional miles had been covered in nine days. Side scouts, traveling alternate routes on both sides of the main party, had found no suitable alternate routes. Because of the poor condition of the animals, a detachment of sixteen men, two

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14 Distance measurement was usually by means of an odometer attached to one of the wheels of the six-mule wagons. A one-wheel odometer device was also used occasionally. See Hunt, The Army of the Pacific, 201.
of the wagons, nineteen horses, and eleven mules were left at the camp on the Muddy.

The remainder of the party—the two officers and forty-five men—crossed the desert to Las Vegas "without much trouble," but beyond Las Vegas a shortage of water caused severe problems. Four horses became crazed and had to be shot. Ten men and more animals were left at a camp at Lewis' Springs. Twelve more horses were lost between Lewis' Springs and El Dorado Canyon on the Colorado. This was only forty-five miles from Las Vegas.

On the 16th of June, Captain Price and the remaining portions of his detachment reached Fort Mojave, "completely worn out and exhausted, half the men barefooted, horses scarcely able to walk." This distance from Camp Douglas to Fort Mojave was recorded with amazing detail as 585 miles, four furlongs, and nineteen rods. The party had endured terrible hardships, but most were due, in the opinion of Captain Price, to the poor condition of the animals at the very start of the expedition, rather than to the character of the road.

Captain Price was enthusiastic about the route and drew several conclusions based on his expedition. First, there was no nearer, better, or more practicable route than the present one from Camp Douglas to Las Vegas. Second, the southern terminus of a route to the Colorado River should be in the

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vicinity of El Dorado Canyon, since the river is navigable at least to that point. Third, the road from Camp Douglas to the mouth of El Dorado Canyon is superior to the mail road from Salt Lake City to Carson City. Fourth, the total length of the proposed new road will not exceed 450 miles. This would require a trip of twenty-six to twenty-eight days for a freight team.

On August 24, the expedition ended; Company M returned to Camp Douglas. The returns of the Company include these data:16

Principal route, Salt Lake to Fort Mojave, as measured by odometer-- 1314 miles
Secondary routes checked-- 829 miles
Observation lines-- 555 miles
Total 2798 miles
Time on expedition-- 114 days

Despite the hardships and deprivations endured by Captain Price and his men, the attitude of the Captain following the arrival at Fort Mojave is testimony of his high regard for Connor and a tribute to Connor's leadership. "Whatever of hardships and suffering the expedition may have endured amount to nothing, if success, in his [Connor's] judgment, has not been accomplished by it."17

Connor was pleased. Eight months later, in a report intended to summarize his accomplishments in the District of Utah, Connor wrote:

16 Orton, 184.
Last summer I sent an expedition from Salt Lake City for the purpose of opening a wagon-road communication between that place and the head of navigation of the Colorado River. The expedition was entirely successful, and now goods are shipped by that route. 18

Pedersen describes the effort as a grandiose scheme to link the Utah settlements with California via the Colorado River which subsequently ended in failure. 19

Mining

On the Connor memorial in the Post Cemetery at Fort Douglas are included five accomplishments of his life; one is listed as "The Father of Utah Mining." A summary of Connor's activities and those of his men strongly suggests that the appellation was well deserved. Connor was directly involved in the discovery and assaying of the first silver-bearing galena ore at Bingham Canyon in mid-September 1863. He organized the first mining company in the territory and built the first "precious" ore smelter. He established four mining districts and framed the law for their government. He promised military protection for miners against all types of threats. He encouraged his officers and men to prospect for minerals. He advertised the mining potential of the

19 Pedersen, 148.
territory in an attempt to attract miner immigrants. Connor and his Volunteers also were responsible for the establishment in July 1864 of the first non-Mormon town in the territory, Stockton, named after Connor's home-town in California.

Mining is, of course, not normally a military function. However, the extent to which Connor used his troops in such ventures and the purposes to be achieved made it a military function in his District. Connor issued instructions to his troop commanders in late September 1863 concerning policies for permitting prospecting by the soldiers. These policies were summarized for the Department of the Pacific by Connor on October 26.

...I have considered the discovery of gold, silver, and other valuable minerals in the Territory of the highest importance .... The discovery of such mines would unquestionably induce an immigration to the Territory of a hardy, industrious, and enterprising population as could not but result in the happiest effects, and in my opinion presents the only sure means of settling peaceably the Mormon question. ... I have looked upon the discovery of mines in the Territory as in the highest degree important--first to this people and secondly to the Government .... Having reason to believe that the Territory is full of mineral wealth, I have instructed the commanders of posts and detachments to permit the men of their commands to prospect the country in the vicinity of their respective posts, whenever such course would not interfere with their military duties .... The results so far have exceeded my most sanguine expectations.22

On the 10th of November, General Wright forwarded Connor's dispatch of October 26 to Washington with the comment that the discovery of valuable

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21 Rogers, 116. Stockton was built near Camp Relief in Rush Valley, and was associated with the Rush Valley Mining District.

mines in Utah and Connor's policies would "exercise a powerful influence to
wipe out that damning stain upon the Christian morality of the American
people." 23

The commander at Fort Ruby was not as favorably impressed as had
been General Wright. Lieutenant Colonel Moore complained to Connor's
headquarters that the military duties required of his troops left little time for
prospecting. He found compliance with Connor's directive on mining diffi-
cult. 24

Circulars, published by Connor's headquarters, on November 14,
1863, and March 1, 1864, announced Connor's policies to the general public
and committed military protection, as necessary, to miners. 25

Even when cavalry companies were sent to the field primarily to
observe and influence the Indians to peaceable relations, the necessity to be
alert to the possibility of discovering minerals was not ignored. Instructions,
paraphrased as "thoroughly explore and prospect the country over which you
travel," were included in orders from Connor to the company commanders. 26

Operations involved systematic exploration of the territory for minerals.

Two additional, later reports by Connor re-state his policies with reference to the mineral resources of Utah territory. On July 21, 1864, he wrote:

... my policy in this Territory has been to invite hither a large Gentile and loyal population, sufficiently peaceful means and through the ballot-box to overwhelm the Mormons by mere force of numbers, and thus wrest from the Church--disloyal and traitorous to the core--the absolute and tyrannical control of temporal and civil affairs .... With this view, I have bent every energy and means of which I was possessed, both personal and official, towards the discovery and development of the mining resources of the Territory, using without stint the soldiers of command, whenever and wherever it could be done without detriment to the public service. 27

And in April, 1865, he saw his policies, in retrospect, as follows:

... I turned my attention to a development of the mineral wealth of the Territory, with a view to encourage a different class of emigration, and thus eventually break up a system of religion and government at once infamous and abhorrent to every refined mind. ... my officers and men ... with great energy prospected the country, and succeeded in discovering rich gold and silver bearing rock. It is now a settled fact that the mines of Utah are equal to any west of the Missouri River, and only await the advent of capital to develop them. 28

All of Connor's best efforts did not result in a large influx of Gentile miners to Utah. Little occurred except prospecting until 1869. There were several reasons for this delay. First, even though the majority of the men in the Volunteers had come from mining areas of California and Nevada, they

27 Whitney, 2:110.

had had no experience with smelting the mineral-bearing ore. 29 There were other factors. 30 Richer mines were located elsewhere. Second, the distance of Utah from major transportation terminals in the mid-West or on the Pacific coast made the Utah mining uneconomical at that time. Only the development of railroad transportation to and within Utah and an adequate labor supply would make Utah mining a paying proposition. Finally, the Mormon Church "used its own devices to prevent the kind of subversion the Colonel [Connor] intended." The church was understandably opposed to Connor's efforts to alter drastically the composition of the Utah population.

Historians' evaluations of Connor's motives for attempting to advance the mining industry are not entirely uniform. As an example, Stenhouse saw that Connor "had no occupation for his troops--they were eating the bread of idleness and were discontented at being detained in Utah, and not taking part in the war," 31 Prospecting would appease Stenhouse's assumed boredom of military life for the soldier and also give the possibilities of enriching both themselves and the country. Whitney saw a different motivation, more in accord with Connor's official expressions. "During the first year of his sojourn in the Territory, [Connor] began to evolve a grand scheme for the opening and development of the Utah mines and simultaneously for the

29 Stenhouse, 715.

30 Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, ..., 202.

31 Stenhouse, 713.
overthrow ... of the hated Mormon power."^{32} Arrington observes that, after silver-bearing ore had been discovered, Connor "delightedly planned to solve 'the Mormon problem' by starting a mining boom."^{33}

Neff assumes the motivation to be one of seeking any possible avenue for penetration of the Great Basin economy. Since all other economic possibilities had already been monopolized by Mormons, "here [mining] was the one chance to secure an economic foothold in the Basin, other than through the national payroll."^{34}

Connor's intense concern with various aspects of his surroundings involved his troops extensively in two major operations--reconnaissance and road construction, and mining--which normally had only peripheral application for a military force. However, Connor was ingenious in relating all of his activities directly to the national interest and the Civil War.

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^{32} Whitney, 2:107.

^{33} Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, ..., 201.

^{34} Neff, 633. Neff offers no documentation for this view. His opinion impresses this author as being strongly anti-Connor.
CHAPTER IX

CONNOR--AN EVALUATION

Patrick Edward Connor was the only commander of the Military District of Utah. The purpose of this Chapter is to suggest his significance to the history of the area and to evaluate his effectiveness as a military commander.

Personal Characteristics

Connor was a man of considerable physical courage and calmness under stress. However, possessed of a fiery temper, firm opinions, and capable of decisive action, he was not conciliatory in dealing with people. He was a man of great perseverance and dedication to his concept of his duty. Stenhouse stated: "General Connor never had orders to arrest Brigham Young, or he would have done so--or tried." His great attention to detail has already been illustrated in the preparation of his military orders. During the troop movement to Utah Connor avoided marching on Sundays. Nevertheless, "dress parades and inspections were still ordered regularly"--regardless of the sand

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2 Utley, 223.
4 Stenhouse, 607.
or sagebrush. Hunt saw him as a "fighting general," "an undaunted warrior [who] assumed command with his customary vigor and thoroughness." The Salt Lake Tribune of December 18, 1891, reporting Connor's death, cited his "dauntless soul," "patriotic heart," and "distinct personality." The Telegram of that same date described him as "a man of pronounced opinions, of vigorous character, and of moral and physical courage."

Not all characterizations are favorable. Tullidge saw Connor as "panting for military glory, as well as inspired by patriotism ...." Arrington refers to him as "Superpatriot Colonel Connor." Colton saw him as "pugnacious;" Neff described him as "bellicose."

**Accomplishments**

Connor's report, submitted to the Department of Missouri in April 1865, provides his views as to the major accomplishments during his period of command of the District of Utah. Included were:

5 Pedersen, 22.


7 Tullidge, 274.


9 Colton, 190.

10 Neff, 632.

(1) Subjection of the Indians.
(2) Reconnaissance to the Colorado River.
(3) Discovery of extensive mines and the development of the mineral wealth of the Territory.
(4) Attraction to Utah of a population of loyal (i.e., non-Mormon) men.
(5) Protection to those not belonging to the Mormon Church.
(6) Establishment of a free press.

Items 1, 2, 3, and 4 of Connor's summary have been dealt with at length in prior chapters of this study. A few words of explanation are in order concerning items 5 and 6. Connor held the view that not all Mormon residents of Utah were, in fact, disloyal. He saw the problem as being primarily with the church leadership. He believed that the federal government should provide protection and relief to "a people oppressed and downtrodden by a most galling church tyranny." He saw the hope that "but a few years will elapse before Utah will be redeemed from her infamy and degradation and contribute a loyal and healthy support to our common country instead of being, as she now is, a foul and filthy ulcer upon the body politic."  

Pertaining to the establishment of a free press, the Union Vedette, the Camp Douglas newspaper, was sponsored by Connor and began its publication on the 20th of November, 1863. When it changed to daily publication on January 5, 1864, this was the first daily paper in the territory. The Daily Union Vedette continued publication until October 18, 1867.  

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12 Stone, 215.
14 Dwyer, 259, provides an excellent summary of the early journalistic efforts from Camp Douglas.
Historical writers saw his accomplishments in much the same way as did Connor. Hunt commends his abilities as a military commander and additionally notes his interest in the settlement of the territory and in the development of its mines. Hance and Warr place his military achievements in the founding of Fort Douglas and as an Indian fighter in the forefront, but lament that his other talents and capabilities are not observed in history. Connor is identified as the "first gentile of Utah" for his very considerable influence both economically and politically on the territory. The activities of the "father of Utah mining" and the publication of the first daily paper in the territory are cited as examples. In addition, Connor's abilities as a "master of diplomacy" are asserted for his success in averting hostilities between the troops and the Mormon settlers. Because of Connor's efforts in the development of mining, Anderson characterizes him as "the gentile answer to Brigham Young's doctrine that land is better than gold." Due to his political activities Connor's political friends accorded him the unofficial titles of "Father of the Liberal Party" and "Liberator of Utah."

16 Hance and Warr, 30.
Two Salt Lake City newspapers of December 18, 1891—the Tribune and the Deseret Evening News—provide contemporary evaluations of Connor's contributions.

Deseret Evening News: The first striking event in the career of Colonel Connor in the Territory was his march to Bear River, north of Cache Valley, in January, 1863, when, in the depth of winter, he attacked the hostile Indians who had been a constant terror to the settlers, and completely routed and almost annihilated their camp. ... The people of the North were delivered from Indian scares and will always have cause to remember the valor of Colonel Connor. ... General Connor engaged extensively in mining interests but was not gifted with great business ability and did not succeed financially. He was a natural soldier, and would, no doubt, have gained great military prestige if his lot had been cast in other fields with larger opportunities for the exercise of his military talents. He was a man of much force of character. His faults were those of common humanity and they go with his worn out body to the tomb.

General Connor will remain a notable figure in Utah history and he will be remembered as a brave and gallant soldier.

Salt Lake Tribune: History will not do justice to General Connor's memory. ... He lived in an age filled with heroic names, and the heavier thunder of mighty battlefields in a measure dwarfed the exploits of our soldier. ... we grieve that it could not have been possible for him, on some mighty battlefield of our great war, to have had the opportunity to show to the whole world how grandly he could have led a column on to glory or the grave. ... no one who was not in the west knows how troubled were the times, on how slender a thread at last the Golden State hung in the Union, or how much one such spirit as that of General Connor counted.

In the face of the sullen hate which met him he founded Fort Douglas, and he gave the people who were then here their first idea that behind the flag of the United States there was a majesty and power which must be respected.

... In business he could never keep his details up with his enthusiasm, and he made a mistake when he left the army. He was not educated; he often erred in business judgment, but when it came to country he was true as steel, and his judgment was clear as a diamond. Behind
it all was a courage and a tenacity of purpose which lasted to the very end.

Although Neff is not one of Connor's staunchest supporters, one of his brief comments concerning the chance substitution of Colonel Connor for Colonel Carleton to command the District of Utah assesses Connor's significance as having changed the course of Utah history. 19

**Military Stature**

Connor was an outstanding military commander. The performances of his troops under adverse geographic and climatic conditions and in the presence of a sullen-to-hostile civilian populace were tributes to inspiring leadership. His battle planning and the conduct of actions against the Indians at both Bear River and Spanish Fork Canyon marked him as an Indian fighter of unmatched abilities. The breadth of interest of Connor and his diligence in pursuing his goals add to his stature as a frontier military figure. Such diverse activities as area reconnaissance, extending the bounds of settlement, and the use of troops to assist in the development of Utah mining were further examples of significant military endeavor.

Professional military commanders have been trained for generations to understand and to apply certain fundamentals to the exercise of their commands and to advance the successful conduct of military operations. These fundamentals, termed "principles of war" in the military jargon, were applied

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19 Neff, 629.
with a rare skill by Connor—a volunteer officer whose military competence came through experience. Especially noteworthy were his use of surprise, the maneuver of his troops in battle, and the coordinated utilization of all three of his combat elements—infantry, cavalry, and artillery.

Connor's reputation with General Wright, his military superior until July 1, 1864, and an experienced Indian fighter himself, was unexcelled. The Official Records are replete with examples of Wright's praise for Connor. Phrases such as "admirable discipline," "energy," "sound judgment," "undaunted firmness," "self-possession under all circumstances," "heroic conduct," and "industry and untiring zeal" describe a soldier. Connor was also highly regarded by Governor Harding who described him as that "brave and accomplished commander, in whom we all have so much confidence."

Connor's fine reputation also existed outside the official community. Ben Holladay is quoted as specifically requesting in October 1864 the assignment of General Connor to combat the Indian threat on the Plains.

His familiarity with Indian warfare, prompt and efficient protection to the Western line, and wholesome dread of the savages of his name, point to him above all others as the man for the work of punishing these marauders. The winter is approaching, when Indians can alone be tracked, pursued, and severely punished. It is the right time for the work, and Connor can do it. I but express the firm conviction of all who have witnessed his prompt operation and now see the result in Utah. Everything is quiet here, and

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Connor can well be spared for necessary time to accomplish the work speedily and effectually with means at his command.\footnote{22}Circumstances late in the war placed Connor successively under the command of Major General Irvin McDowell and Major General John Pope, the two stalwarts of the Manassas battlefields of Virginia. In all fairness to historical perspective it must be noted that neither of these commanders reposed the confidence in Connor that had General Wright. McDowell was concerned with the efficacy of Connor's policies towards the Mormons, and Pope found his policies towards the Indians excessively repressive.\footnote{23}

**Influence on Mormon Relations**

Whatever credit is accorded Connor for his accomplishments in Utah, always detracting in some measure are criticisms of two aspects of his policies--his treatment of the Indians, and his relations with the Mormons. These subjects have been dealt with in Chapters II, IV, V, and VII. It is the purpose of this section only to consider the extent to which Connor was individually responsible for the strained relations existing between federal officials and the Mormon inhabitants of Utah during the Civil War period.

Connor's policy toward the Mormons was one of aggressive strength and is best summarized in his own words, as "any indication of weakness

\begin{footnotes}
\item[22]Rogers, 146.
\item[23]*Official Records*, vol. L, pt. 2, 1. 1100; Rogers, 183.
\end{footnotes}
or vacillation of my part would precipitate trouble."\textsuperscript{24}

The historians' assessments of Connor's policy lack uniformity. Whitney suggested the possibility that Connor was the architect of the anti-Mormon sentiment.

It is not improbable that Colonel Connor himself, who was a Mormon-hater and made no pretensions to the contrary, was the cause of Harding's defection from his former friendly attitude. Steeped in prejudice against the Saints ... it is very possible that the warlike Colonel ... took early occasion to engraft his own views upon the weaker mind of the pliant Executive, as well as upon Judges Waite and Drake ....\textsuperscript{25}

Colton supports this view.\textsuperscript{26}

Whitney betrays a lack of consistency in his assessment, however, for he later suggests that Connor's initial anti-Mormon attitudes stemmed from "men less honest and sincere in their opposition to the Saints" than was Connor himself.\textsuperscript{27}

What Whitney's history introduced as a possibility, Neff asserts as fact. Connor is accused of inciting Governor Harding to opposition to the Mormon regime.\textsuperscript{28} Neff also abhors the "undisguised attempt" of Connor to use his influence and his troops in the attainment of the objective to overthrow

\textsuperscript{24} Orton, 517.
\textsuperscript{25} Whitney, 2:82.
\textsuperscript{26} Colton, 184.
\textsuperscript{27} Whitney, 2:113.
\textsuperscript{28} Neff, 652.
Mormon control and institutions in Utah. For these attempts, Neff brands Connor as "an unfortunate obstacle to progress, a retarding factor to the advancement of society."  

Two later historians relieve Connor of the onus of responsibility for the anti-Mormon friction. Governor Harding is identified as the villain.  

A post-war military report by General W. B. Hazen makes this assessment of Connor's Mormon policy: "General Connor ... I think, treated Mormonism too harshly, due probably to his zeal as a Catholic; yet he exercised a strong influence against Mormonism, and was a true man in the interests of the government ...." 

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29 Neff, 633.


31 Dwyer, 50. This report was prepared in February 1867 and submitted to Representative J. Bidwell of California.
CHAPTER X

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES OF SPECIFIC ISSUES

The Salt Lake Tribune, December 18, 1891, in writing of Connor's death, was prophetic in observing that "history will not do justice to General Connor's memory." His accomplishments are largely ignored by historians; the areas of controversy are almost invariably portrayed to his discredit.

Efforts by historians and writers to address the general subject of employment of federal troops in Utah territory during the Civil War have sparked disagreement and controversy. The major controversies are encompassed in attempts to answer the following closely inter-related questions:

(a) Was the protection of the overland mail and telegraph lines a valid military mission?

(b) Did the California Volunteers have another mission or missions—either officially directed or unilaterally developed?

(c) Why were the federal troops in Utah territory located at a new post, Camp Douglas, near Salt Lake City, rather than being stationed at the post of the Utah War, Fort Crittenden?

Illustrative Quotations

The orders with which Connor was complying when he moved his troops to Utah directed him to "advance to the vicinity of Salt Lake ... and
select a suitable position for a post." He was to do this "to protect the Overland Mail Route within this department [Department of the Pacific]."¹

The quotations below provide historians' and writers' reactions to the official description of the mission of the California Volunteers. The sources have been arranged in chronological order and the date of the source book publication has been indicated in parentheses in an attempt to suggest a possible genesis and evolution of some of the ideas.

Stenhouse (1873)

... a body of California volunteers ... were sent on to the Overland Mail Route to protect that and the telegraph-line across the plains, but the commander [Connor] had also instructions to establish posts near Salt Lake City.

... that officer had a programme of his own, and the volunteers continued their march nearer to Salt Lake.²

Tullidge (1886)

Although the Utah militia had been offered for the protection of the Overland Mail and Telegraph line, Secretary Stanton deemed it prudent to entrust the permanent service to the California Volunteers rather than to the Utah militia. Utah was placed under a military surveillance during the war, and California was made her sister's keeper.

... General Connor designed with his troops to reconstruct Utah. ... asking of the Government for the mission of a semi-military dictatorship over Utah.³

²Stenhouse, 601-602.
³Tullidge, 273, 330, and 340.
Bancroft (1890)

Ostensibly for protection against Indians, though in fact because the mail route and telegraph line were not considered secure in the hands of the saints, and perhaps also for the purpose of holding the territory under military surveillance, Colonel Connor was ordered to Utah .... 4

Whitney (1894)

... while ostensibly to protect the mail routes and keep the Indian in check, were really to watch and overawe the Mormon people, the loyalty of whose leaders the Secretary of War had discovered some pretext for doubting. This [was] unnecessary and undignified service ... insulting to the citizens of Utah .... 5

Hafen (1926)

They [Connor's troops] were to garrison the forts and protect the Overland Mail route. 6

Neff (1940)

Bellicose Colonel Connor, officially assigned "to protect the over­ land mail," an easy matter, assumed the undelegated function of combating Mormonism. Marooned in the Basin, and destined to a life of military inactivity, the vigorous and aggressive mind of the General more and more centered on the inhabitants against whom the finger of distrust and suspicion had ever pointed. 7

Dwyer (1941)

Albert Sydney Johnston and his army decamped as the impending struggle between North and South became more menacing, but federal concern for the policing of the Territory resulted in the

4 Bancroft, 611.
5 Whitney, 2:73.
6 Hafen, 247.
7 Neff, 632.
establishment, in 1862, of a more permanent military force with headquarters in Salt Lake City. The advent of Colonel Patrick Edward Connor and his California Volunteers, in the early autumn of that year, marks the beginning of a long-drawn battle between the Mormon majority and the Gentile minority for the political and economic control of the region.

The presence of a military force in Utah, though its avowed purpose had nothing to do with the Mormons or Mormonism, served to accentuate the social and religious conflicts between the members of the dominant sect and the scattered non-Mormons....

Whether the Mormons might have cast their lot with the Confederacy, or whether they might have used a victory of that cause as a signal for the assertion of their own ill-suppressed desire for independence, are, of course, academic questions. Lincoln's administration chose to take no chances; hence, Camp Douglas was established under color of protection for the Overland Trail. 8

Arrington (1958)

Commanded by Colonel (later General) Patrick Connor, these Union troops were instructed to prevent Indian hostilities and "keep an eye on the Mormons." ... Superpatriot Colonel Connor required all those furnishing supplies to his troops repeat an oath of allegiance to the Union. 9

Colton (1959)

Ostensibly this troop movement was for the protection of the Overland Mail route and telegraph lines from Indian depredations. Actually a major determining factor was the belief by high federal officials that the mail route and the telegraph lines in the area were not secure in Mormon hands, and that a military surveillance should be made in the Territory. 10

8 Dwyer, Preface v, 4, and 6.

9 Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom: ..., 201.

10 Colton, 163.
Nevertheless the Government ordered a large detachment of men to Utah ostensibly to keep open the postal and telegraphic communications between the East and West but possibly also to ensure the Mormons' loyalty.

Another puzzling aspect of the situation was that whereas Secretary Cameron's first message had specified that the men were wanted to protect the overland mail between Carson City and Fort Laramie, his request for this second and much larger force stated only that it was to be placed at the disposal of General Sumner.

In 1862 with the rumblings of the Civil War, the Department of the Army, Pacific, apparently determined that another fort should be established in the Utah Territory—ostensibly to serve in guarding the Overland Mail Route—but it is speculated that this new fort in reality was once again established to keep a close watch on the activities of the Mormon settlers. ... the Federal government so far suspected Utah's loyalty as to detail Colonel ... Connor, with 300 California-Nevada volunteers, to duty in Utah.

To insure their [Mormon] continued compliance and free transit of immigration westward, Fort Douglas, overlooking the city, [Salt Lake], was later built and garrisoned.

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11 Furniss, 230.
12 Lewis, 27.
13 Hance and Warr, 22.
Lamar (1966)

[Connor had a] ... threefold purpose of ending Indian depredations, opening the trail, and keeping the Mormons loyal. 15

Review of the above quotations and related material by these authors results in several subjective, personal judgments. The historical evidence does not support the views of the "authorities" quoted.

What has, through repetition, generally come to be regarded as history is based largely on undocumented opinions of the earliest writers. Stenhouse was the originator of the bleak portrayal of Connor's activities in Utah. Tullidge, Bancroft, and Whitney expand Stenhouse's concept of Connor's "programme" into one of military occupation of Utah. None of these authors documents his statements, and their sources on these specific subjects are, in the main, unknown. However, it is acknowledged that Stenhouse, Tullidge, Bancroft, and Whitney were contemporaries of Connor. All--with the possible exception of Bancroft--knew Connor and their personal knowledge and contacts would certainly have contributed to their analysis and history of Connor. On the other hand, whether these contacts would have resulted in beneficial contributions and unbiased history is questionable in view of the circumstances of Connor's post-war activities when their histories were being written. Connor's economic activities in mining and Liberal Party political activities, attempting to end Mormon political domination of Utah, would not endear him to many of the local historians.

15 Lamar, 359.
In any case, the suspicions of Stenhouse and the opinions of Tullidge, Bancroft, and Whitney have come to be accepted as valid history. Their ideas have been accepted and repeated by Arrington, Colton, Hance and Warr, Dupuy, and Lamar. Neff further embroiders the opinions of Tullidge, Bancroft, and Whitney. He and Whitney together have postulated—without documentation or logical analysis—that troop presence in Utah was "unnecessary" and that the defense mission was "an easy matter." Only Hafen, Dwyer, and Furniss have remained reasonably objective—as viewed by this writer.

Consideration of the Troop Mission(s)

The requirements for and the national historical experience of providing protection to the overland routes of communications and travel are clearly established. The withdrawal of regulars from the routes at the outset of the Civil War necessitated alternate means of protection. These means involved temporary, expedient measures, short-term use of volunteers provided by the Utah militia, and the use of volunteer units from California and Ohio. The defense tasks, from a military point of view, were complex. The areas over which protection was required were vast; the specific routes to be protected were diverse; the facilities of the stage and telegraph companies were extremely vulnerable to Indian raids; and the troops designated to provide the protection were too few in number and not sufficiently mobile to compensate for the limited size of the military force.

Most of the quotations stated above express a belief that, in reality, Connor's troops had missions other than protection of the overland routes.
Tullidge, Bancroft, Whitney, Neff, Dwyer, Arrington, Colton, Hance and Warr, Dupuy, and Lamar all state some variation of a mission of military surveillance, a mission to insure the continued loyalty of the Mormons to the Union. Stenhouse and Lewis are less specific, but suggest the presence of something vaguely sinister. The positive declarations by many of the earlier, widely read authors of the period set the pattern. Ideas advanced by them concerning a concept of military occupation of Utah Territory were copied by others, in some instances even in nearly identical language.

The official orders do not give Connor a mission of keeping an eye on the Mormons. Pedersen, doing doctorate level research on an aspect of this subject area, concluded:

Official orders and correspondence give no indication that the troops were ordered to Utah to keep a steady hand on the Saints, but certainly this feeling was expressed privately.¹⁶

Although the official mission charged to Connor's troops was clear, the mission did, in fact, undergo subtle change. Reasons for this change came from several sources.

The attitude of the territorial governor, a federal official, was a potential influence on the uses and usefulness of federal troops in the territory. Governor Harding wrote to Secretary of State Seward on August 30, 1862, almost two months prior to the arrival of Connor's troops, that: "Young was a disloyal tyrant ... who planned to use Indians to wipe out Gentile whites in

¹⁶ Pedersen, 50.
Utah." Harding "begged for a military force to make 'treason dumb'."\(^{17}\)

Harding presented a rambling, inconsistent speech to the assembled troops when Connor reached Salt Lake City. Included was a statement to the effect that he was aware that their mission was one of peace and security, and that he wanted this known by all.\(^{18}\) On the 3rd of February, 1863, Harding again wrote to Seward that: "I am certain, that if it was not for the presence of Connor's Command, it would be unsafe for me to remain."\(^{19}\)

That this attitude was known to Connor is clear. On September 14, 1862, he reported to Department of the Pacific: "The Federal officers desire and beg that I will locate near the City. The Governor especially is very urgent in the matter."\(^{20}\)

The most convincing sources tending to establish the existence of missions, other than the official, obvious mission of the California Volunteers and concerning the troop locations in Utah, came from Connor himself and his military superiors. Connor visited Salt Lake City for a few days in early September 1862 on reconnaissance in advance of his troops. He returned to Fort Ruby on the 13th to rejoin his troops and wrote to the Department of the Pacific the next day concerning his initial, extremely unfavorable impressions

\(^{17}\) Lamar, 362.

\(^{18}\) Rogan, 39.

\(^{19}\) Dwyer, 12.

received during his brief visit. These impressions provided the bases for Connor's recommendation concerning a new troop location in lieu of Fort Crittenden.

It will be impossible for me to describe what I saw and heard in Salt Lake, so as to make you realize the enormity of Mormonism; suffice it, that I found them a community of traitors, murderers, fanatics, and whores. The people publicly rejoice at reverses to our arms, and thank God that the American Government is gone, as they term it, while their prophet and bishops preach treason from the pulpit. The Federal officers are entirely powerless, and talk in whispers for fear of being overheard by Brigham's spies. ... I have a difficult and dangerous task before me, and will endeavor to act with prudence and firmness ....

I found another location, which I like for various reasons .... It is on a plateau about three miles from Salt Lake City; in the vicinity of good timber and saw-mills, and at a point where hay, grain, and other produce can be purchased cheaper than at Fort Crittenden. It is also a point which commands the city, and where 1,000 troops would be more efficient than 3,000 on the other side of the Jordan. If the general decides that I shall locate there, I intend to quietly intrench my position, and then say to the Saints of Utah, enough of your treason; but if it is intended that I shall merely protect the overland mail and permit the Mormons to act and utter treason, then I had as well locate at Crittenden. 21

General Wright approved the location at Salt Lake City and so advised the adjutant general in Washington on the 22nd of September. That "appears to be the best location for the accomplishment of the object in view, viz., the protection of the Overland Mail Route and the due execution of the laws of the United States." 22

21 Ibid.

Connor's mission had now been subtly extended by the last ten words of Wright's sentence. This subtle extension of the mission was necessitated by circumstances found to exist by the local commander, and there is no evidence to indicate that it resulted from the prior intent of higher civil or military authorities, as alleged by Whitney and others. There was a difference between what the troops were sent to Utah to do, and what they were required by local circumstances to do once they got there.

In November 1863, Wright spoke of the forces sent from California "for the protection of the Overland Mail Route and occupation of the Territory of Utah." These facts relating to the views held by General Wright, Connor's superior, do not seem consistent with Stenhouse's assertion that Connor "had a programme of his own ...." Connor was, in fact without exception, always within the strict bounds of military propriety.

In addition to having the approval or direction of his superior military headquarters, it is important to note that Connor was a federal official in Utah territory and his obligations were extensive to his government. He felt these obligations.

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23 The requests of Governor Harding on August 30, 1862, to Secretary Seward for troops, cited earlier in this chapter, must be discounted as influencing either the decision to send troops or their mission in Utah Territory. These expressions were too late to have influenced matters from Washington. The governor's views would, however, strongly impact on Connor, once the two men began an official association.

24 Whitney, 2:73.


26 Stenhouse, 602.
obligations keenly. As he stated, although it was his endeavor to maintain amicable relations with the Mormons and avoid conflict, these endeavors must be "compatible with the strict and proper fulfillment of the obligation resting upon me."  

Connor spoke of the actions necessary to obtain "the respect due to, and the dignity of, the Government," and of the need to "preserve the public peace ...." In commenting on a rumor that the Mormons offered to defend the overland routes for a fee, provided the federal troops were removed, Connor stated his belief that Brigham Young could, in fact, cause the Indians to desist in their attacks "and were the protection of that institution [the Overland Mail] the only or the main object of Government in establishing troops in this Territory, it might be well to accede to his wishes."

The "salutatory" editorial in the initial Union Vedette, the Camp Douglas troop newspaper, November 20, 1863, provides a summarization of the missions and goals of the California Volunteers.

... [there are some who] seek to mislead the multitude as to the intentions and wishes of the Government and its representatives, civil and military, in Utah. ... While as soldiers, we came not to make war on this people neither in this enterprise is it our design to intrude upon their every day life. When we say that the primary object of sending troops to Utah last year, was the protection of the Overland Mail and Telegraph lines, we but repeat what

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27 Orton, 513.
28 Orton, 515; See also Hance and Warr, 68.
every man of ordinary intelligence knows to be a fact. ... it is the desire of the military authorities to live in peace, protect the interests and advance the welfare of the people of Utah, respect for the Government and the institutions of the land, should be voluntarily accorded by one and all ....

Military missions are often subsequently interpreted erroneously in the light of unrelated, but contemporary, events. An individual, Presto Burrell, who had been in California since 1855, is quoted as saying: "Then came the call for men to join Colonel P. Edward Connor's Company, to rescue a religious group [presumably the Morrisites] in difficulty in Utah." Likewise, there is no evidence to support this aspect as being a mission for Connor's troops.

Why Camp Douglas?

Selection of a position in the vicinity of Salt Lake City as a location for the bulk of Connor's troops can be adequately supported purely on the basis of military and other practical considerations. Considering that troops were already designated for Fort Churchill and Fort Ruby in Nevada, a post in Utah was required to provide geographic coverage of those portions of the overland routes which were Connor's responsibility.

Fort Crittenden, the Utah War post of Johnston's army, was not selected. That post had been abandoned in July 1861 to private owners, and by September 1862 was generally in ruins. The price for the government to

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reclaim the existing facilities was considered exhorbitant. An additional consideration was that the abominable location and conditions existing at Fort Crittenden during its military utilization were well known. Finally, there may have been prestige considerations in selecting a location other than Fort Crittenden. There was a feeling that the Cedar Valley location had been forced on the U.S. Army during the Utah War without regard for military requirements.

Location at Salt Lake City offered a better solution. The City was a hub of communications—postal, telegraph, and emigrant roads. A supply of wood and water was readily available, as was forage for the animals. Subsistence for the troops and other support from Mormon sources was also a possibility.

However, the troop locations were inextricibly associated with the troop mission. If the troop mission, in fact, had been expanded to include that of surveillance of the Mormons, what better location than in close proximity to Salt Lake City?

The decision to locate troops in the vicinity of Salt Lake City has generated much extreme comment from some of the historical writers. Rogan,

32 Rogers, 279.


34 See Tullidge, 223, 281; Rogers, 50; and Nels Anderson, 185.
citing Neff as the authority, contends "that Connor's quickly acquired enmity for the Mormons made it dangerous to allow him to select his [troop] locations freely in Utah," and "that Connor took the side of the [Governor] Harding group ....". Such a concept is faulty. First, both Harding and Connor were federal officials. Agreement between the two should not be cited to the disadvantage of either. Second, the inconsistency between giving a military commander a mission of area responsibility and restricting or prescribing locations for his troops inimical to the mission is obvious. The eventual selections of Fort Churchill, Fort Ruby, and Camp Douglas were made for a number of practical and military considerations from a list of potential locations which had also included Simpson's Park in Nevada and Fort Crittenden in Utah. The total list covered planning contingencies commencing in November 1861, and was never intended to represent what Neff had termed "designated military stations."

The fact of the matter is that the objections to the troops being at Camp Douglas were, in all probability, much more closely related to why they were there at all than with the specific location.

Patrick Edward Connor was an important figure both to the history of Utah and of the American West. The degree of his involvement with the events of his time and the stature of his accomplishments far exceed the reputation

35 Rogan, 95.
accorded to him by history. A modest attempt to redress the balance has been a purpose of this thesis.
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The *Union Vedette.* This newspaper, with slightly varying names, was published at Camp Douglas, Utah Territory, between November 20, 1863, and November 27, 1867.


APPENDIXES
Appendix A: Commanders, District of Utah

Unit Commanders

The names of individual unit commanders pertaining to organizations of the District of Utah are of significance to this study and to a comprehension of much of the related literature. Organizations, names of commanders, and dates of command (when known) are tabulated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Commander</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District of Utah</td>
<td>Patrick Edward Connor</td>
<td>Aug 6 '62-Feb 17 '65*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*Utah District added to Dept. of Missouri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Cavalry,</td>
<td>Andrew J. Smith</td>
<td>Oct 1-Nov 13 '61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Volunteers</td>
<td>Columbus Sims</td>
<td>Nov 13 '61-Jan 31 '63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>George S. Evans</td>
<td>Feb 1 '63-May 31 '63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Edward McGarry*</td>
<td>Jul 16 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*Promoted to colonel Nov 21 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company A</td>
<td>Edwin A. Rowe</td>
<td>Sep 10 '61-Oct 10 '62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>David J. Berry</td>
<td>Oct 12 '62-Jan 20 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Edward B. Loring*</td>
<td>Jan 21 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>*Promoted to captain Jun 5 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company H</td>
<td>Daniel McLean</td>
<td>Sep 5 '61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company K</td>
<td>Samuel P. Smith</td>
<td>Sep 27 '61-May 9 '65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company L</td>
<td>Albert Brown</td>
<td>Sep 11 '61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company M</td>
<td>Charles McDermitt</td>
<td>Sep 11 '61-Nov 13 '61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>George F. Price</td>
<td>Nov 13 '61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Orton, 196-293, and 522-589.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Commander</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Third Infantry, California Volunteers</td>
<td>Patrick Edward Connor</td>
<td>Aug 23 '61-Mar 30 '63*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Promoted to brigadier general</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Robert Pollock</td>
<td>Mar 31 '63-Nov 14 '64**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>**Position deleted due to consolidation of the regiment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company A</td>
<td>Thomas E. Ketchum</td>
<td>Oct 10 '61-Sep 23 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>William M. Johns</td>
<td>Sep 24 '64-Mar 31 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company B</td>
<td>Jeremiah B. Moore</td>
<td>Sep 5 '61-May 4 '63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lysander Washburn</td>
<td>Jul 27 '63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company C</td>
<td>John H. May</td>
<td>Oct 26 '61-Mar 31 '63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>James W. Stillman</td>
<td>Apr 1 '63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company D</td>
<td>William M. Johns</td>
<td>Sep 24 '61-Sep 23 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Willard Kittredge</td>
<td>Sep 24 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company E</td>
<td>Charles Tupper</td>
<td>Sep 20 '61-May 30 '63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Josiah Hosmer</td>
<td>May 31 '63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company F</td>
<td>Izatus Potts</td>
<td>Sep 23 '61-May 26 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Francis D. Todd</td>
<td>May 27 '64-Nov 1 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company G</td>
<td>John B. Urmy</td>
<td>Dec 9 '61-Sep 30 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Caleb Gilman</td>
<td>Sep 30 '64-Dec 20 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company H</td>
<td>David Black</td>
<td>Sep 24 '61-Oct 21 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company I</td>
<td>Micajah G. Lewis</td>
<td>Sep 16 '61-Jun 9 '63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Willard Kittredge</td>
<td>Jun 10 '63-Aug 22 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company K</td>
<td>Samuel W. Hoyt</td>
<td>Oct 10 '61-Mar 31 '63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John F. Staples</td>
<td>Apr 1 '63-Feb 29 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joseph C. Morrill</td>
<td>Aug 20 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Battalion, Nevada Cavalry</td>
<td>A. A. C. Williams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Milo George</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company A</td>
<td>N. Baldwin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company B</td>
<td>E. B. Zabriskie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
First Nevada Infantry

Company B  George A. Thurston

Installation Commanders

The commander of the largest tactical unit at a given installation also served as the installation commander. When two or more companies constituted the installation garrison, a specific officer, usually the senior captain or a major or lieutenant colonel, was designated as the installation commander.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Installation</th>
<th>Commander</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Col. Robert Pollock</td>
<td>Mar 30 '63–Nov 14 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LTC Jeremiah B. Moore</td>
<td>Dec 31 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Bridger</td>
<td>Capt. Micajah G. Lewis</td>
<td>Dec 31 '62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capt. George F. Price</td>
<td>June 30 '63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maj. P. A. Gallagher</td>
<td>Dec 31 '63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maj. John M O'Neill</td>
<td>Dec 31 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Churchill</td>
<td>Maj. Charles McDermid</td>
<td>Dec 31 '62–Aug 30 '63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Ruby</td>
<td>Maj. P. A. Gallagher</td>
<td>Dec 31 '62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LTC Jeremiah B. Moore</td>
<td>Dec 31 '63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capt. G. A. Thurston</td>
<td>Dec 31 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp Connor</td>
<td>Capt. David Black</td>
<td>May 20 '63–Oct 29 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Capt. J. W. Stillman</td>
<td>Dec 21 '64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp Conness</td>
<td>Maj. John M. O'Neill</td>
<td>Jun 30 '64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Command Strengths

Command strength—both personnel and pieces of field artillery—are shown in Table 1. Several features of interest are illustrated. First, even though Connor's troops were located at as many as six different locations, his total authorized command strength never exceeded 1,317; the maximum strength present for duty was 1,195. A second feature of significance is the relatively large portion of his authorized strength made up of non-military personnel (e.g., contractors, wagoners, sutlers, laundresses, etc.). Third, Connor was able to maintain present for duty a high percentage of his authorized strength until the dates of termination of the three-year enlistments of his Volunteers approached.

Utley speaks of an undesirable average annual turn-over in military personnel due to desertion, discharge, and death of approximately 28%, and other circumstances that "decreed that actual strengths always [were] ... below authorized strengths by as much as 18%."¹

Maintenance by Connor of high troop strengths in an environment hostile by nature and by the attitudes of a high percentage of the inhabitants of the territory is an accomplishment of major proportions.

¹Utley, 18 and 19.
# TABLE 1

PERSONNEL AND ARTILLERY STRENGTHS, DISTRICT OF UTAH\(^a\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Present for Duty</th>
<th>Pieces of Field Art'y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Off.</td>
<td>Enl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 31, '62</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun. 30, '63</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 31, '63</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>920</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun. 30, '64</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>673</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 31, '64</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>653</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\)Extracted and compiled from the Official Returns of the Department of the Pacific, prepared semi-annually as of June 30 and December 31, and as contained in U.S. Government War Department, Official Records, vol. L, pt. 2, p. 505, 711, 883, and 1109. The Military District of Utah, for the purposes of Table 1, is assumed to have been in existence between August 6, 1862—the date Connor assumed command—and February 24, 1865—the date the Territory of Utah was transferred from the Department of the Pacific to the Department of Missouri.
Appendix C: Stationing of Company-Size Troop Units

The varied locations and considerable redistribution of the companies of Connor's force are illustrated by Figure 2, Disposition of Company-Size Troop Units. A desirable flexibility in their use results.

Several points, by way of explanation of Figure 2, are appropriate:

1. Since the Official Returns, on which Figure 2 is based, were prepared semiannually "as of" June 30 and December 31, the data provided by these sources are valid as of those dates. Whenever possible, dates pertaining to specific troop units have been modified for more preciseness when other relevant data was available.

2. Fort Churchill was detached from the District of Utah on August 20, 1863.

3. The Second Cavalry Regiment was withdrawn from command of the District of Utah in October, 1864.

4. The Third Infantry Regiment was consolidated and reorganized from ten to four companies on October 29, 1864.

5. Research associated with the preparation of Figure 2 has suggested the existence of several errors in the Official Returns of the Department of the Pacific as printed in the Official Records, Part II. Page references following pertain to the errors detected. Page 507: There were only three

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Figure 2. Stationing of Company-Size Troop Units, District of Utah.
companies of the Third Infantry at Camp Douglas on June 30, 1863, rather than four; Company H had been relocated to Camp Connor in May. Company E, Third Infantry, at Camp Ruby, should read Company F. Company E was at Camp Douglas. Pages 713 and 885: The error concerning Company E, which appears in the Return for June 30, 1863, is repeated in the Return as of December 31, 1863. Page 1111: The troop unit, Company B, 1st Nevada, shown at Camp Ruby should read Company B, 1st Nevada Infantry. Company B, 1st Nevada Cavalry, is properly shown at Fort Bridger.
Appendix D: Patrick Edward Connor

Biographic Sketch

Patrick Edward Connor was born in Kerry County, southern Ireland, on March 17, 1820. He emigrated from Ireland to New York City with his parents at an "early age." Connor received some education in New York, limited, however, because of the economic necessity that young Connor work.

On November 28, 1839, Connor enlisted in the First Dragoons and served his five-year enlistment in Company I on the western frontier, after which he returned to New York City and engaged in the "mercantile business." In 1846 he emigrated to Texas where his principal activity was military. On May 6 of that year he joined a company of the Texas Foot Riflemen, Texas Volunteers, as a lieutenant under Colonel Albert Sydney Johnston, the Regimental commander. This organization was subsequently mustered into the service of the United States on July 7 for use in the Mexican War.

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1 Rogers, 2, discusses the modification in the family name from O'Connor to Conner and Connor. Since from early adulthood the preferred name was Connor, such spelling has been used throughout this study. Hance and Warr, 22, erroneously indicate County Kearney as the place of birth.

2 Tullidge, 274; Fox, 1, indicates Connor's age on arrival in New York as sixteen. Carter, 6:116, indicates that Connor was nineteen when he arrived in New York. In the absence of facts, the Tullidge statement, although imprecise, is preferred.

3 Fox, 1.

4 Rogers, 2.
was promoted to captain on February 12, 1847, and thereafter commanded his company. During the war Johnston's regiment was engaged in the Battles of Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, and Buena Vista. On the basis of such evidence, some writers such as Tullidge\(^5\) indicate Connor's participation in all of these battles. However, Rogers points out that the official records only show Connor's participation in the Battle of Buena Vista. In this engagement Connor was wounded in the left hand\(^6\) and was given "honorable mention in dispatches"\(^7\)--a form of recognition for military achievement. Connor suffered from rheumatism and left the service on May 24, 1847.\(^8\)

Connor moved to California, arriving there on January 22, 1850.\(^9\) By 1853 he had settled in Stockton. He engaged in a variety of economic pursuits such as lumbering, and construction contracting, and was the postmaster at Stockton. In ten years he had "accumulated a fortune."\(^10\) His military and paramilitary interests were not neglected during the "California period." He

\(^5\)Tullidge, 274.

\(^6\)Fox, 4; Rogers, 2, 4.

\(^7\)Bancroft, 625.

\(^8\)Rogers, 4; Heitman, 1:322. Both Tullidge, 274, and Carter, 115, seem to suggest that Connor's departure from the service was related to his wound in combat.

\(^9\)Rogers, 4.

\(^10\)Bancroft, 625.
was a member of the California Rangers, a group that ended the outlaw career of Joaquin Murieta in May 1852, and was captain of the Stockton Blues. 11

Connor married Miss Johanna Connor at San Francisco on August 14, 1854. 12 Miss Connor was, at the time of her marriage, a resident of Redwood City; she originated, however, from County Kerry in Ireland, as had Connor himself. From this marriage at least seven children were born. Sons born in 1856 and 1859 in Stockton died early. A third son, Maurice Joseph, born in Stockton on March 19, 1861, accompanied the Connors on the troop march to Utah. 13 Katherine Frances was born at Camp Douglas in 1863 and Patrick Edward, Jr., was born in Salt Lake City in June 1866. 14 Two other sons, Eugene Titus and Hillory Grant, were born in 1869 and 1873, respectively, in California. Mrs. Connor died in Redwood City in 1889. 15 The four sons and and the daughter survived Connor. Maurice Joseph, Patrick Edward, Jr., and Patrick Jr.'s wife, Mary Scott Connor, are all buried in the Connor plot at the Post Cemetery, Fort Douglas.

11 Rogers, 12.
12 Rogers, 11. Salt Lake Tribune, December 18, 1891, erroneously indicates the place of marriage as Redwood City. Hance and Warr, 23, erroneously indicate the year of marriage as 1853.
13 Rogers, 12 and 48; Hance and Warr, 23, erroneously indicate the name of this surviving son as Thomas Jefferson Connor. Also, see Fox, 6.
14 Rogers, 123.
15 Rogers, 252.
Connor, almost immediately following the governor's call for volunteers, offered his services and on September 4, 1861, was mustered in as colonel, Third Infantry California Volunteers. He was promoted to Brigadier General of Volunteers on March 30, 1863. On March 13, 1865, he was appointed Brevet Major General of Volunteers "for gallantry and meritorious service." After declining a commission as colonel in the Regular Army following the Civil War, he was honorably mustered out on April 30, 1866.

This did not entirely end his military involvement in Utah. In 1870 he was appointed by the Governor of Utah to command the Utah territorial militia -- an assignment that must have been particularly galling to the Mormons.

Connor's military experience was extensive. In October, 1864, Connor wrote that "I have since my manhood been nine years in the military service of the United States ...." -- and from that date he would serve an additional year and one-half.

Connor remained in Utah following his release from military service to engage primarily in his various mining interests. The Connors lived in Stockton, a town founded by Connor. During the period of Utah residence,

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16 Heitman, 1:322.
17 Ibid.; Hance and War, 34.
18 Dwyer, 70.
Connor became very active in the Liberal Party, as a means of giving expression to minority views contrasting to the Mormon majority. He was residing at the Walker House in Salt Lake City at the time of his death on the evening of December 17, 1891. After a large civil-military funeral on the 20th, he was buried at the Post Cemetery at Fort Douglas among his troops lost at the Battle of Bear River.

**Physical Appearance and Personal Characteristics**

At the time of his enlistment at age nineteen, Connor was described as having blue eyes, brown hair, a fair complexion, and as being five feet, six and one-half inches tall. He is later--and probably inaccurately--described as "fiery whiskered" and "red-headed." From photographs Connor appears to have been slightly built and small in stature.

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20 Rogers, 260. Fox, 2, apparently in error, indicates his height as five feet, one-half inch.

21 Stone, 215; Lamar, 358.
VITA

Max Reynolds McCarthy

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science


Major Field: History

Biographical Information:

Personal Data: Born at Boise, Idaho, November 22, 1919, son of John R. and Gladys Percifield McCarthy; married Oretta M. Hanson January 28, 1943; two children--Kent and Patricia.

Education: Attended elementary school in Boise and Turner, Idaho; graduated from Grace (Idaho) High School in 1937; received the Bachelor of Science degree from Utah State University, with a major in military science, in 1952; received the Master of Arts degree from The George Washington University, with a major in international affairs, in 1963; did graduate work in history at the University of Hawaii, University of Utah, and University of Colorado (Colorado Springs); completed requirements for the Master of Science degree, specializing in American history, at Utah State University in 1975.

Professional Experience: 1973 to 1975, Senior Military Operations Analyst, BDM Corporation; 1942-72 air defense artillery officer, United States Army; retired with rank of colonel; while on active duty graduated from the British School of Anti-aircraft Artillery (1949), the U.S. Army Artillery School (1951), the Command and General Staff College (1954), and the Army War College (1963); commanded air defense artillery battery (twice), battalion, and group; Assistant Professor of Military Science and Tactics (1943-44) and Professor of Military Science (1968-1970), Utah State University; served overseas in Europe (twice), Iceland, and Hawaii; 1940-41, surveyor and draftsman, Department of Agriculture.