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Javier Ernesto Sanchez

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**VALOR WROUGHT ASUNDER: THE MEXICAN GENERAL
OFFICER CORPS IN THE U.S.-MEXICAN WAR, 1846 -1847**

by

JAVIER E. SANCHEZ

**B.B.A., BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, UNIVERSITY OF
NEW MEXICO 2009**

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

December 2011

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a reappraisal of the performance of the Mexican general officer corps during the U.S.-Mexican War, 1846-1847. Often negatively libeled, Mexico's defeat is often attributed in no small part to the moral shortcomings of the generals who led her armies. By a detailed analysis of their background, motivations, and military careers, a more accurate perspective regarding the Mexican general officer corps' performance during the war can be obtained by the reader.

It is the argument of this thesis that the operational tactics and organizational weakness of the Army's High Command sufficiently account for the failures of the generals without examination of its moral shortcomings. Both the Bourbon Spanish military heritage and political/social heterogeneity of the officer corps impeded its success as a corporate entity. By a detailed analysis of senior Mexican military leadership during the war's two major land campaigns, it becomes apparent that the army's failure is attributable in no small part to both of these factors whose detailed analysis has been overlooked in past scholarship.

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Introduction

The U.S.-Mexican War is a subject that is well covered in American historiography. The two principal works from which almost every other English-language work has been derived are Nathan Covington Brooks' *A Complete History of the Mexican War, 1846-1848* (published in 1849) and Justin H. Smith's *The War with Mexico* (published in 1919).¹ Although the many aspects of American military leadership during the war are well-covered, a complementary coverage of the wartime Mexican military leadership is lacking. Furthermore, many of the works that have succeeded those of Brooks and Smith do not seem to shed more light on the subject and merely vary the narrative with the positive focus on the American side and derision on the Mexican side. In Brooks and Smith, Mexican generals are variously described as "half-savage," "conspirator," "drunkard," "dolt," "lackey," "sot," "ruffian," "ignorant," and "pompous," while their behavior on the battlefield is described in phrases such as "took flight," "cowered behind," "gave up," "keep himself out of danger," and one officer is even described as a man with "one excellent quality: the instinct of self-preservation."²

Having injected such negative characterizations of the Mexican generals in their own works and given that most subsequent writings on the subject has been modeled on theirs, it is no surprise that the characterizations of Brooks and Smith remain unchallenged. This is particularly noteworthy because so little evidence is presented by Brooks and Smith to support these characterizations; indeed they appear to be mere speculation. In contrast to scholarship which so often dismissed the Mexican soldiers in the same language used to

¹ For complete references please consult the bibliography. Footnotes will present sources by author and abbreviated title. Tutorow, *The Mexican-American War: An Annotated Bibliography*, pp. 238 & 241.

² Smith, *The War With Mexico*, passim.

deride their commanders, many contemporary American historiographers have conceded that the average Mexican soldier was just as hardy and brave as his American counterpart.³ Despite this recognition, there persists a belief that the Mexican soldiers were somehow “stabbed in the back” by their own generals who remain the disdainful characters that Brooks and Smith first described decades ago. To the average American student of the war, the Mexican military leadership remains for the most part a negatively characterized and faceless mass of unpronounceable names derisively overlooked as incompetent, corrupt, deceitful, and ruthless characters whose perfidy and shortcomings were central to their nation’s defeat and to the wasted valor of their troops. Perhaps this view is a reflection of general American perceptions of Mexicans at that time. Perhaps it reflects a need for American historiographers to overlook the accomplishments of the enemy in wartime and discredit their leaders’ performance and motives to justify American actions and present them as acts of “liberating” Mexican territory from a leadership cadre that was utterly unable to govern or defend it adequately. Even much contemporary Mexican historiography strives to justify the destruction of Mexican conservatism during the post-war period by rendering members of that political class as corrupt demons who sought only to chuck their nation into the depths of the abyss. It was tragic for the Mexican generals of 1846 that both their foreign and domestic enemies saw the need to negatively characterize them after the war, although albeit for different reasons. It is important to reflect upon the motives of postwar scholarship in characterizing the Mexican generals of 1846 because the varying viewpoints allow us to put the recriminations made against the generals into perspective.

³ Eisenhower, *So Far From God*, p. 371.

Literature Review

English-language literature devoted specifically to the Mexican generals who served during the War of 1847 is practically non-existent. Their lives and careers have remained for the most part un-examined other than in the context of the war itself. Whereas the lives of the American generals of 1847, however obscure, are easily uncovered within memoirs, unit histories, and biographies, very few Mexican generals left memoirs and the political tumult that continued in Mexico following the war overshadowed their contributions and relegated them to obscurity. Obtaining vital statistics on the generals and piecing their lives into a coherent narrative is a challenge because the information is dispersed. Individual works containing passages mentioning specific generals must be cross-examined and collated with that of other passages from other works in order to piece together various pieces of the puzzle.

The first American scholar to cover the Mexican officer corps in any detail was historian Justin Harvey Smith (1857-1930), who spent nearly forty years of his career studying the war and authored *The War with Mexico* (1919), which remains one of the seminal works on the war. By his own account, Smith claimed to have consulted 100,000 manuscripts, 1,200 books, and 200 periodicals during the course of his writing the manuscript for *The War in Mexico*. Although he blames the Mexicans for starting the war and remains unsympathetic to their cause throughout, it is significant that Smith traveled extensively in Mexico and conducted interviews and used sources that had never before been consulted and have not been cited since. When trying to locate some of the items pertinent to my subject from his extensive bibliography, I frequently ran into blind alleys

and was unable to locate any reference to the material he cited in the academic databases available to me. Nevertheless, his work was the first English-language work to describe the Mexican generals in any detail. As previously mentioned, his characterizations were for the most part negative and biased. The reasoning for this biased attitude is rooted in Smith's belief that impetuous Mexican aggression provoked the war and then Mexican moral failings and incompetence lost it. Smith seeks no further explanation for Mexican reverses than their moral failings as a "race" and his unsympathetic conclusion that Mexico's defeat was richly deserved.

Although American works on the war have been published since the mid-twentieth century, it was not until the 1980s and 1990s that scholarship emerged that treated the Mexican officer corps more objectively. William DePalo's *The Mexican National Army* (1997) was perhaps the first English-language work to deal specifically with the Mexican Army and officer corps of 1846-1847. Although the work features the excellent use of primary and secondary sources, the generals' lives are not examined in depth. The work is outstanding in light of its objective portrait of the officer corps and its presentation of much new information that although common in Spanish-language scholarship dealing with the war, had not been available in English. DePalo's focus is an examination of the origins and development of the divisive politics that existed within the army. The generals are examined within the parameters of that context and the reader comes away with a better understanding of the political fractures that affected Mexico's prosecution of the war, but with little analysis of what motivated the generals' actions on the battlefield.

Pedro Santoni's *Mexicans at Arms: Puro Federalists and the Politics of War* (1996) is another rather recent work that does an excellent job of outlining the political conditions

within Mexico during the War. Santoni's work focuses on the role of the *puro* federalists in prosecuting the war and although it emphasizes Mexico's internal politics rather than its military aspects, the roles of many previously un-mentioned generals in the political upheaval are described in detail. It seems to me that the works of Santoni and DePalo go hand in hand. DePalo's work discusses the effect of endemic political conflict on the army, while Santoni analyzes the consequences of political conflict on the prosecution of the war.

John S.D. Eisenhower's highly readable *So Far From God: The U.S. War with Mexico, 1846-1848*, (2000) is a general history of the war that presents a fairly balanced view of the war. Eisenhower is considerate of the Mexican cause and presents a sympathetic portrait of the average Mexican soldier. Nevertheless, Eisenhower's focus upon the American side of the conflict is evident in the fact that the only Spanish-language source he lists in his bibliography is the standard *Apuntes para la historia* by Ramón Alcaraz. Eisenhower's work makes great reading and is partial to the Mexican view, but his focus is broad, and apart from Santa Anna, Arista, Ampudia, and Valencia, the Mexican general officer corps goes relatively unexamined.

Mexican scholarship specifically regarding the Mexican generals of 1847 is difficult to locate. The seminal Mexican works are Alberto María Carreño's *Jefes del Ejército Mexicano en 1847* (1914) and Ramón Alcaraz's *Apuntes para la historia de la guerra entre México y los Estados Unidos* (1848). Carreño's work presents biographical sketches on all of the generals, colonels, and lieutenant colonels who served during the war. Unfortunately, the sketches read more like abbreviated service records and personal data is not presented at all. The sketches are helpful in forming a general view of the officers'

service records, but because anecdotal information is missing, a researcher must go far beyond Carreño to piece together a clear understanding of any officer in question.

Alcaraz's work is the Spanish-language source most cited by modern English-language works and is the Mexican standard general history of the war. However the narrative avoids any discussion of the polemics that are crucial to understanding why the Mexican military was defeated. The theme of Alcaraz's work is that Mexico was unjustly attacked by the United States and that her generals and politicians were too politically divided to present the united front that could have defeated the Americans. This thesis takes this argument, which is so well substantiated, and extends it by adding other considerations such as the Spanish Bourbon military influence and the heterogeneous nature of the general officer corps.

Vital statistics and brief sketches can be gleaned from biographical registers of various kinds such as encyclopedias and dictionaries containing indexed biographies of state officials and regional personalities. The primary works are the multi-volume *Diccionario Porrúa de historia, biografía, y geografía de México* (1995) and Manuel Mestre Ghigliazza's *Efemérides biográficas* (1945).

During the 1980s and 1990s, two government publications regarding the battles of La Angostura and the Mexico City Campaign were published that present new primary information gleaned from the diaries and memoirs of several noteworthy Mexicans of the time, including Guillermo Prieto and several writers who collaborated with Ramón Alcaraz in the compilation of his *Apuntes*. The works contain anecdotal information on many generals as well as firsthand descriptions that are helpful. However, the descriptions are few and far in-between these multi-volume works which lack an index.

My Argument

Unquestionably, the Mexican Army of 1846-1848 was beset by many fundamental challenges. My argument is that the operational tactics and organizational weakness of the Army as a corporate entity sufficiently account for the failures of Mexican general officer corps without examination of its moral shortcomings. However great the contribution of other factors, it was Mexico's military culture that largely determined the technological imagination, force structure, and operational-tactical expertise of the armed forces with which the national government sought to protect its national territory; therefore it is necessary to examine the propagators of this military culture in detail in order to gain a proper perspective on the Mexican side of the U.S.-Mexican War.

Mexican arms failed to inflict even a single reverse on the American forces during the course of the entire war despite exercising the advantages of fighting within its customary logistical base on home territory and superiority in numbers. Those advantages were insufficient to compensate for the Mexican armed forces' inferior firepower, operational tactics, financial backing, and command structure. This arose in large part from a lack of political or social homogeneity among its generals and from the continuation of a decayed military tradition inherited from Bourbon Spain. This, amidst the backdrop of civil war and political infighting, further prevented the professional development of the army's leadership cadre. The political and social heterogeneity, when coupled with the lack of professional development produced a command structure that employed officers not suited to command collectively in the same army and were susceptible to the constantly varied political conflicts of the day. It is interesting to note that some of the

generals who were appointed to high command during the war had been in ascendancy since the days of Guerrero and Iturbide.⁴ As noted, the influence of the long-decayed Bourbon military tradition was also strong. It must be remembered that it was Iturbide who won the war of Mexican Independence and that the majority of the generals who remained in ascendancy thereafter were veterans of his army, which was a royalist army firmly rooted in the Spanish Bourbon rather than the contemporary Napoleonic French military tradition. It must also be remembered that the forces of Bourbon Spain had already been laid low by Napoleon in 1808 and that the maintenance of that obsolete military system was to have severe implications in Mexico, where it was the veterans of the realist forces that espoused this tradition who ultimately became responsible for national defense in 1846-1848.

In this thesis, I present a detailed analysis of senior Mexican military leadership in the field during the two major land campaigns of the war. I argue that the inability of the Army and State to produce a homogenous officer corps contributed as much to the army's failure to conduct a successful defense of the national territory as the continued reliance on Spanish Bourbon military traditions. By analyzing the development of the senior officer corps during the course of the war, it will become apparent that the context of loyalties was more complicated than merely choosing between the federalist and centralist camps. The charged atmosphere that permeated the Mexican High Command following the return of Santa Anna proved that *santanismo* in and of itself could generate both violent rejection and unquestioning fealty amongst both federalists and centralists. Thus, the senior military leadership came to reflect the political and social convulsions of wartime Mexico, many of which were actually propagated by the general officers

⁴ Rodríguez de San Miguel, *La República Mexicana en 1846*, pp. 133-136.

themselves. For example, at La Angostura, the centralist Santa Anna relegated command of the 2nd Observational Division to the *puro* federalist Brigadier-General José Cosme Urrea and at the battle of Molino del Rey, Santa Anna entrusted command of the cavalry to Major-General Juan Álvarez, who had been a ringleader of the federalist conspiracy that had ousted him from power in January 1845.

In this thesis I unravel the complex issues that affected the Mexican military leadership and sort out the interrelated causes that account for the army's defeat. To this end, I will strive to put a human face on the men in question by highlighting their origins, careers, and personalities, with the goal of understanding their motivations and potential effectiveness (see appendix for biographical sketches of the leadership). I also examine the safeguards in the Mexican governing system that held military officers accountable to civilian authority because this issue's relevance looms large in understanding the generals' notions of social responsibility. An examination of the generals' political and social background also helps demonstrate the lack of unity of vision regarding the nation-state that permeated the officer corps. By shedding light on the lives of these men, we can both better understand the course of a war that has shaped the destinies of so many and begin to perceive the actual contours of Mexico's national fabric as expressed by that unique set of men into whose hands her destiny as a nation was thrust in May 1846.

The core of this work will focus on presenting a chronological cross-analysis of the corporate entity that constituted the Mexican military leadership. By this I mean that I will examine in detail the decision-making processes of the generals during the two major land campaigns and demonstrate the complexity of the issues that affected the outcome of each individual battle and ultimately contributed to defeat. I also will address the many

questions and controversies that have arisen, such as Arista's reputed blundering at Palo Alto and Resaca del Guerrero, Ampudia's role at Monterrey, Santa Anna's return and reorganization of the army prior to the battle of La Angostura, Miñón's role at La Angostura, Álvarez's role at Molino del Rey, Valencia's role at Padierna, and Terrés's role in the final battle for Mexico City. Singly, these errors might have been remedied. In the historical circumstances in which they occurred they added up to defeat. It is obvious that such errors were symptoms of a deep-seated malady, roots that went back to the embrace of Acatempán, when the arch-enemies Guerrero and Iturbide united to free Mexico from Spain and in so doing condemned much of her future to be spent sorting out the terms of that negotiation through bloodshed and violence. The ultimate goal of this analysis will be to demonstrate that organizational weaknesses such as a lack of unity of vision and the use of obsolete organizational strategy and tactics are sufficient to account for the defeat of the Mexican Army. In addition to the narrative, I include an appendix containing brief biographical sketches of as many of the generals as my sources permit. All were key players in their own right.

Chapter 1: The Origins of Mexico's Military Disaster

It is a commonplace belief that the outnumbered American armies of 1846-1847 vanquished the masses of Mexican troops arrayed against them time and time again in the supposed fashion of the Spanish conquest of Mexico during the sixteenth century when a brave, but small band of conquerors toppled the Aztec Empire in the face of great odds.⁵ The reality was different. The American and Mexican armies that faced each other in the spring of 1846 were grossly mismatched, with the Mexicans at a severe disadvantage. Surely, from a command and control perspective, a paucity of standardized training, outmoded manuals, and the persistence of regionalism amidst a climate of near-constant civil war hampered progress in the development of professionalism in the Mexican Army. When coupled with a scarcity in equipment and ammunition, immense class differences between officers and common soldiers, and rampant desertion, the deficiencies in the command structure of the Mexican Army rendered it unable to mount an effective resistance against the invader. Thus, a description of the command structure of the Mexican Army at the eve of war is sufficient to understand its performance during the conflict.

The reality of Mexican institutions during the post-independence contest for power was chaotic. Military figures such as Santa Anna or Bustamante held governmental power by the force of their armies but could not claim legitimacy to rule. In the Mexico of the 1820s to the late 1840s, the traditional sources of political legitimacy had collapsed with the colonial structure and had not been replaced by a government based on popular will reflecting ideals of public welfare or patriotic principles. For their part, the civilian

⁵ Eisenhower, *So Far from God*, p. 267 & Henderson, *A Glorious Defeat*, pp. 165-169.

politicians who had emerged with the republic such as Lucas Alamán and Valentín Gómez Farías, may have held a vision of a new political order, but they had no military power with which to realize them.⁶ Thus, they continuously sought to harness their star to that of the generals in command of armies who effected regime change. This grouping of politicians and generals in constant struggle was but a symptom of the illness that was borne of the “Embrace of Acatempán,” of the unworkable marriage of conservative (centralist) and liberal (federalist) ideals that would condemn Mexico to a century of political upheaval.⁷

It is important to elaborate on the meanings behind the labels various groups took on during the political infighting that characterized Mexico’s post-independence period. The primary groupings associated with this period are the centralists and the federalists. The federalists could be further categorized into sub-groupings of *puro* federalists and *moderado* federalists. The political groups were further complicated by the emergence of personality-based groupings such as the *santanistas* who were followers of Antonio López de Santa Anna.⁸

The centralists favored a strong central government, a paid national army, stringent regulation of interstate commerce, a preservation of the extractive colonial social structure, and Roman Catholicism as the state religion. The centralists were reactionary in the sense that they believed that the key to social and political order was an emulation of the viceregal governmental and social structure which had given Mexico relative stability throughout the colonial period. It is not surprising that many of Mexico’s general officers

⁶ Zoraida Vázquez, *México al tiempo de su guerra con Estados Unidos*, pp. 46-47.

⁷ Díaz Díaz, *Caudillos y caciques*. pp. 37-47.

⁸ DePalo, *The Mexican National Army*, pp. 66-89

embraced centralism since the majority actually hailed from Iturbide's royalist army which defended the viceregal regime against the insurgents up until 1821.⁹

The federalists, on the other hand, favoured limited central government, local militia, and nearly autonomous states. The *puros* constituted the radical wing of the federalist camp that espoused ideas such as the abolishment of state religion, the complete disbandment of the national army, the uplifting of social barriers such as debt peonage, and the deregulation of interstate commerce. The *moderados*, on the other hand were middle-of-the-road in the sense that although they adhered to federalist ideas regarding religion, social progress, and the loosening of restrictions on interstate commerce, they believed in a strong central government with respect to the army. It is not surprising that many of the generals who became the front-runners of the military wing of the *puro* federalist camp during the post-independence period began their careers as insurgents in the peasant armies of Hidalgo and Guerrero. Thus, the "Embrace of Acatempan" loomed large on the Mexican Army of the post-independence period in the sense that the successors of both Iturbide and Guerrero were to serve in the same army thereafter.¹⁰

It is significant to note that with respect to the early 19th century European conflict regarding liberalism and conservatism, all of the Mexican groupings would be considered liberal in the sense that a monarchy was thoroughly unpopular. However, when considered within the context of the economically extractive colonial structure fostered by Spain, regionalism became the root of the political fracture between federalists and centralists with its emphasis on differing perceptions of benefit among economically or politically divergent geographical areas. Thus, many border regions far from the

⁹ DePalo, *The Mexican National Army*, pp. 3-23.

¹⁰ Henderson, *A Glorious Defeat*, pp. 42-28.

administrative hub of Mexico City that had history as places of economic exchange, such as the northern frontier territories of California and Texas, as well as the *costa chica* region of present-day Guerrero state became hotbeds of federalism where free market ideals were embraced by a populace eager for economic betterment. Such was the desire for the adoption of federalist policies that significant numbers of the tejano elite actually joined in the Texian Revolution of 1836. In like terms, a subsequent federalist revolution in Nuevo León and Tamaulipas, which included Brigadier-General Antonio Canales who would later command the irregular cavalry at the battle of Palo Alto, resulted in a declaration of independence by the short-lived Republic of the Rio Grande. Different regional perspectives not only fostered but mirrored the centralist/federalist split.¹¹

By contrast, in the agricultural and mining centers of the Valley of Mexico, centralism emerged as the dominant political force in areas where colonial economic and social structures persisted and even thrived. In fact, apart from their military careers, many of the centralist generals, including Santa Anna himself, owned large haciendas in the Valley of Mexico and generated considerable profit from the regulated sale of agricultural products such as wheat, beef, and barely to other parts of the republic. It was in the interest of landed men such as Santa Anna that the centralists persevere for the same reasons that it was in the interest of *mestizo* freedom fighters such as Álvarez that the social and economic structure that benefited the centralists be torn down. The integration of these dissident factions into Iturbide's Army of the Three Guarantees in 1821 resulted in a brief unification of conflicting parties that was not to last.¹²

¹¹ Henderson, *A Glorious Defeat*, pp. 25-35.

¹² DePalo, *The Mexican National Army*, pp. 24-46.

The Mexican Army of 1846 was an offspring of this unworkable marriage between conservative and liberal ideals and the ranks of its leaders reflected all of the conflicts that could be expected from such a dysfunctional union. The progenitor of the Mexican Army of 1846 was the Spanish Bourbon Army of 1808. Prior to Independence, Iturbide's Army of the Three Guarantees had been a branch of the Royal Spanish Army that counted amongst its forces the armies that opposed both Napoleon and the South American insurgents.¹³

The Bourbon military tradition which was at the forefront of Spanish military thinking in 1808 emphasized a Frederickian reliance on infantry volleys and the shock value of cavalry to win battles.¹⁴ In accordance with Frederickian theory, Mexican officers would advance their infantry to within a few paces of the enemy and then fire into the opponent's ranks by volley. After the enemy's ranks were thinned sufficiently, the commanding officer, often mounted with his staff upon a distant vantage point, would signal a bayonet charge, with massed cavalry attacks on the flanks of the enemy meant to shock him into retreat. Little attention was given to the development of the artillery arm. Instead, a reliance on the cold steel of fixed bayonets and the iron discipline of wooden batons across the backs of wayward soldiers was widespread. Frederickian methods were obsolete by the time revolutionary France introduced and Napoleon developed a new system that relied on a national pool of patriotic soldiery and a combined-arms approach to war that is the antecedent of the modern concept of "total war." The reliance by

¹³ Luqui-Lagleyze, *Historia del ejército realista, 1810-1820*, pp. 35-37.

¹⁴ Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*. pp. 133-191.

Bourbon Spain on mid-eighteenth century doctrine is understandable given that until 1808, Spain had not engaged in any significant warfare for over fifty years.¹⁵

Following the French invasion, events moved too quickly for New Spain to adopt substantial reforms. The regular armies of Spain disintegrated with such alarming rapidity before the French invasion that the struggle quickly degenerated into a barbaric war of attrition maintained by a combination of the remnants of the Spanish forces and an impassioned citizenry formed into partisan bands. The continuance of the struggle by the British and their Portuguese allies enabled a Spanish revival and by 1814, regular Spanish forces laid siege to Toulon beside the British, who remained as justifiably scornful and mistrusting of their allies as ever.¹⁶ Following the successful conclusion of the war against Napoleonic France, the dismantling of empire occurred so rapidly and amidst such rampant domestic political turmoil, that the Spanish military establishment again had no time to implement reforms of any kind. Thus, following Iturbide's takeover in Mexico, it was men who continued to adhere to the military traditions of Bourbon Spain who embedded those same traditions into the corporate culture of the nascent Mexican Army.

A further parallel between the Spanish armies of the Napoleonic Wars and the Mexican Army of 1846 that supports a Bourbon correlation with the Mexican defeat of 1847 is the descriptions of the Spanish Bourbon officer corps made by contemporaries. In an 1809 letter to Viscount Castlereagh, the Duke of Wellington gave a caustic assessment of the leadership of the Spanish Army:

Nothing can be worse than the officers of the Spanish Army; and it is extraordinary that when a nation has devoted itself to war, as this nation has, by the measures it has

¹⁵ Nafziger, *The Spanish Army, 1808-1814*, p. 3.

¹⁶ Esdaile, *The Spanish Army in the Peninsular War*, pp. 122-123.

adopted in the last two years, so little progress has been made in any one branch of the military profession by any individual, and that the business of an army should be so little understood. They are really children in the art of war, and I cannot say that they do anything as it ought to be done, with the exception of running away and assembling again in a state of nature.¹⁷

Contemporaries of the Mexican Army might have similarly assessed the capabilities of the Mexican generals that faced Scott and Taylor in 1846. Sure enough, on the eve of war in April of 1846, one British diplomat commented on the Mexican officer corps as being “the worst to be found in any part of the world ... ignorant, incapable, and insubordinate ... and their personal courage, I fear, is of a very negative character.”¹⁸ It is perhaps fitting that one aged general who served Santa Anna during the battle of Chapultepec had been captured by the French while serving as a nineteen-year old subaltern during the Spanish disaster at Somosierra in 1808.¹⁹

Although the defects of the Spanish Bourbon military system were laid bare by Napoleon in 1808, the Mexican offshoot of this tradition reveled in victory prior to 1836. From 1810-1821, *realista* armies repeatedly defeated insurgent forces and it was from a position of strength that Iturbide negotiated with Guerrero at Acatempán.²⁰ Against poorly armed and organized militias of insurgents led by amateur soldiers, the *realista* officers could manage victory by employing massed infantry volleys as units of firepower and launching heavy cavalry in headlong charges against enemy infantry. The Mexican army could not succeed facing a modern military machine capable of using artillery as primary rather than supplemental units of firepower and using cavalry to harass the

¹⁷ Nafziger, *The Spanish Army, 1808-1814*, p. 45.

¹⁸ Nafziger, *The Spanish Army, 1808-1814*, p. 45.

¹⁹ García Chávez, *Memorias del Gral. de División D. Andrés Terrés y Masaguer (1784-1850)*, p. 68.

²⁰ Henderson, *A Glorious Defeat*, pp. 21-22.

enemy and reconnoiter the ground rather than actually launch frontal charges against enemy lines.

The Mexican misfortune that occurred during the Texas Campaign of 1836 was perceived by army officers as attributable to the personal shortcomings of Santa Anna rather than as evidence of the obsolescence that plagued their military establishment. Thus, although commanders and units were re-shuffled, the Mexican military structure remained unchanged.²¹ By 1846, Mexican generals well-schooled in the military tradition begotten by their *realista* background were eager to get at the Americans and only a few prognosticated disaster. Little did they know, that as they drew up their forces in Matamoros, across the Río Grande they were about to encounter an enemy whose own military experiences had prepared it sufficiently to re-enact the French victories in Spain of 1808.

A further symptom of the illness contracted at Acatempán was the incorporation into the royalist army of insurgent officers whose political views were obviously different from the mainstream conservative officers of Iturbide's army. A major element of a functioning military establishment is one in which the leadership cadre exhibits a certain level of social/political homogeneity and coherence. Simply put, this ensures that everyone will pull in the same direction during a crisis. The problem for Mexico was that even after the monarchist scheme failed and Iturbide toppled, the conservative elements that took power were unable to expel from their midst officers of a more liberal persuasion already embedded in the Army. The balance of power between liberals and conservatives was left unresolved and perennial civil war continued as liberal and conservative politicians enlisted officers of similar political persuasions and vied for

²¹ Valadés, *México, Santa Anna, y la guerra de Texas*, pp. 215-216.

power even in the face of American invasion. The situation was further complicated as officers defected from one side to the other and acclimatized themselves politically in order to best exploit any given situation for their personal gain.²²

The incorporation of the federalist officers into the regular army following the adoption of Iturbide's *Plan de Iguala* in 1821 also promoted the fostering of regionalism. As previously mentioned, certain Mexican states became noteworthy as hotbeds of specific political activities and the advent of warlordism or *caciquismo* quickly manifested itself as leaders emerged in any given region. This is not to say that regionalism was a new development. In Spain, the bedrock of the military establishment was the existence of a dual-force system composed of the regular army and the provincial militias. As would subsequently be the case in Mexico, the Spanish militias were subject to their provincial governments and would muster to the national colors only at the beckoning of the local governor in response to a royal decree. Following the political fracture of Spain in the wake of the French invasion, many provincial militias failed to muster in defense of the junta that replaced the vacant Spanish crown. This was the antecedent of what occurred in Mexico in 1847, when divisive regional politics would circumvent a national response to the American invasion.²³ From a military perspective, all of the obstacles to an effective national defense that emerged from Mexican regionalism correlated well with the Spanish Bourbon military system and had in fact already been felt in Spain, 1808-1814.

As had been the case in Spain, by 1846, regionalism was so prevalent that certain Mexican states refused to deliver their militia quotas (known as *activo* troops) to the

²² Díaz Díaz, *Caudillo y caciques*, p. 94.

²³ Herrera Serna, *México en guerra (1846-1848)*, p. 15-32.

national cause because doing so signified abetting a domestic political enemy. As the struggle wore on, some generals managed to rally the governments of their respective states to the opposing faction's side in the name of patriotism, but many of the more powerful states such as Durango and Zacatecas, failed to field even one soldier against the Americans for fear of depleting their power. Having determined the war to be a hopeless endeavor, many generals and state governors sought to preserve their forces for the fratricidal struggle that would continue once the Americans left. In this atmosphere of chaos, it is no wonder that neither a national polity nor the legitimacy of popular will based on ideals of public welfare and patriotic principles surfaced. Even the generals themselves seem to have lost sight of any collective vision for what Mexico might have been and seemingly thrust about trying to maintain their own positions of power within the tumultuous gambit that was the Mexican political atmosphere.²⁴

Thus, the call to arms of spring 1846 fostered a response as heterogeneous as could be expected from as politically diverse a group as the Mexican general officer corps. On the one hand, many generals, either because they were supportive of the Paredes regime or were patriotic and genuinely supported the Mexican nation-state, were enthusiastic about the opportunity to finally teach the hated *gringos* a lesson. On the other hand, many in the federalist camp recently deposed by the centralists were apprehensive or even lethargic about the coming struggle. Some elected to ride north of their own accord at the head of whatever troops they could rally to their side, while others sought to avoid direct involvement and lingered in the capital awaiting their chance to seize power.²⁵

²⁴ DePalo, *The Mexican National Army, 1821-1851*, pp. 66-91.

²⁵ DePalo, *The Mexican National Army*, p. 90.

Chapter 2: May-September 1846: From the Battle of Palo Alto to the Capitulation of Monterrey

Beginning in 1845, the Mexican War Ministry effected a reorganization of the twenty-two existing commandancies-general that had military jurisdiction throughout the country. It was the first sweeping reorganization in more than twenty years. Ultimately, as viewed in Table 1, there would be five territorial divisions and four commandancies-general to cover all of Mexico's states and territories. The territorial divisions were formed for the dual purpose of affecting a more mutually supportive force-structure and monitoring the recruitment process of state-sanctioned levies. The territorial divisions were designed to work in congruence with local governments and ensure their cooperation in times of crisis. The commandancies-general were martial-law based structures formed in areas where the population was virtually at war with the central government. In fact, in the spring of 1846, Mexican troops were trying to reassert government control in an all but independent Yucatán.²⁶

Table 1. The Military Reorganization of 1845

The Territorial Divisions:

- 1st Division: México, Michoacán, and Querétaro
- 2nd Division: Oaxaca, Puebla, Tabasco, and Veracruz
- 3rd Division: Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Jalisco, San Luis Potosí, and Zacatecas
- 4th Division: Coahuila y Texas, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas
- 5th Division: Chihuahua, Durango, and New Mexico

The Commandancies-General:

- 1. Sinaloa and Sonora
- 2. Yucatán
- 3. Alta y Baja California
- 3. Chiapas

Source: Adams, *The War in Mexico*, p. 129

²⁶ Reed, *The Caste War of the Yucatán*, pp. 6-11.

The Mexican force given the task of quelling American aggression at the outbreak of war was the much laurelled Army of the North with its headquarters in Matamoros. Having quelled the separatist rebellion of the Republic of the Río Grande in 1840, the army had recently recently launched a successful foray into Texas in 1842 that was withdrawn due to logistical considerations. Although the army had as its overall goal the eventual retaking of Texas, the tenuous nature of the army's supply line over inhospitable territory devastated by Indian raids and the need for troops elsewhere in the republic obliged the central government to deploy the army defensively.²⁷

Upon the arch-conservative centralist Paredes' ascension to power, command of this army was assigned to Major-General Mariano Arista, a stocky red-haired veteran of forty-four years, who had begun his military career at the age of fifteen as a cadet in the royalist militia regiment of his native state, San Luis Potosí. A *moderado* federalist who hailed from the aristocratic classes of Northern Mexico, Arista had demonstrated continued opposition to both the centralist and *puro* federalist causes during his 25-year career and had ample combat experience, including command of the Army of the North during the campaign against the Republic of the Río Grande in 1840.²⁸ His appointment was welcomed by many *moderado* northerners whose political backing was required by Paredes in order for him to consolidate his power in that key sector of the republic. Nevertheless, the arrival of Arista ruffled the command structure of the army in that the incumbent commander, Major-General Pedro de Ampudia felt slighted, and although he was retained as deputy army-commander, he did not forgive the relegation and

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²⁸ Rivera Cambas, Manuel, *Los gobernantes de México*, p. 378-406.

maintained a deep antipathy for his chief that did absolutely nothing to abet the Mexican war effort.²⁹ The composition of the Army of the North can be found in Table 2.

Command of the army at this time was a curious mix of centralist appointees and federalist leftovers from Herrera's presidency of 1844-1845. The highly reputed artillery commander, Brigadier-General Tomás Requena, was a staunch federalist of impeccable record who had recently been promoted to general rank during the presidency of Herrera and assigned to the Army of the North as the threat of war with the United States loomed. Following Paredes' ascension, Requena was wisely retained in command, although he lost patience with constant changes of government after the battle of Monterrey in September 1846.³⁰

Table 2. Command Structure of the Army of the North, May 1846

Commander-in-Chief: *General de División* Mariano Arista
Deputy Commander: *General de Brigada* Pedro de Ampudia
Artillery Commander: *General de Brigada* Tomás Requena

1st Brigade: *General de Brigada* Pedro de Ampudia (also deputy commander)

2nd Brigade: *General Graduado* Manuel García

3rd Brigade: *General de Brigada* Francisco Mejía

4th Brigade: *General Graduado* Romulo Díaz de La Vega

Cavalry Brigade: *General de Brigada* Anastasio Torrejón

Irregular Cavalry Brigade: *General de Brigada* Antonio Canales

Totals: 3,758 men

Source: Adams, *The War in Mexico*, p. 24

The only other federalist general in the army was the headstrong Antonio Canales, a northern warlord of dubious martial value whose support was tenuous in light of his tendency to switch sides if he saw his grasp on local power undermined. A colorful and

²⁹ Alcaraz, *Apuntes para la historia de la guerra entre Méxco y los Estados Unidos*, p. 47.

³⁰ Bustamante, *El Nuevo Bernal Diaz del Castillo*, Volume 1, p. 89.

eccentric character who believed in divination and often conducted his affairs based upon horoscope readings, Canales had co-led the failed separatist rebellion of the fabled “Republic of the Rio Grande” in 1840 in conjunction with ardent secessionist Antonio Zapata. Following Zapata’s execution and his army’s destruction at the hands of Arista’s Army of the North, Canales barely survived by switching sides at the last moment and delivering his Texian auxiliaries to Arista as prisoners of war, an act for which he was awarded promotion to the rank of general by Santa Anna, but for which he would remain thereafter a hunted man amongst the Texans. At best, his support would mean the rallying of his constituents, the northern *rancheros* to the Mexican cause while at worst his enmity might mean active collaboration with the enemy. The War Ministry chose the former and courted Canales’ favor with an appointment to command the irregular cavalry assigned to the army. A crafty and cunning man, dubbed the “Chaparral Fox” by the Texans, whose military experience was limited to Indian fighting, Canales was a political general who had never held an officially recognized commission prior to his appointment by Santa Anna.³¹

Brigadier-General Francisco Mejía was perhaps the most apolitical of Arista’s subordinates. A small, pockmarked man, distinguished both by his spectacles and his habit of constantly smoking a pipe, Mejía was a career soldier whose record was marked by utmost dedication to his assignments. Although not regarded by the government as suitable for high-level command, perhaps because he lacked political motivation, he could be relied upon to perform solidly as a faithful subordinate. At fifty-five years of age and of brittle health, Mejía was the oldest of Arista’s commanders. Due to a protracted

³¹ Zorrilla, and González Salas, *Diccionario biográfico de Tamaulipas*, pp. 76-77.

illness, Mejía would remain in command of the Matamoros garrison and miss the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca del Guerrero.³²

The redoubtable cavalry commander, Anastasio Torrejón, was a centralist political appointee who owed his position to his support for Paredes' ouster of Herrera's *moderado* regime. Considered a dependable and solid combat commander, Torrejón's performance in the border battles would leave much to be desired, although his reputation would remain intact due to the scapegoating of Arista. A dashing cavalryman of forty-four years, he fancied himself the Murat of the Mexican Army, and his combat performance would reflect much of that commander's conflicting qualities of reckless bravery and woeful incompetence. So eager was he to see action in the conflict that, prior to his appointment as cavalry commander, he had led his cavalry brigade north from its *cuartel* in Mexico City to Matamoros, where he incorporated his command into the army on his own authority.³³

Perhaps the best educated of Arista's subordinates, Brigadier-General Rómulo Díaz de La Vega hailed from the elite *Cuerpo de Ingenieros* and was considered an able and professional commander of centralist political leanings who was recalled to command the 4th Infantry Brigade in the Army of the North after several years as commandant of the Military College in Mexico City.³⁴

Although highly considered by the War Ministry, the forty-one year old Cuban-born centralist Pedro de Ampudia brought a penchant for cruelty to his office that did not sit well with the civilian leadership of Matamoros and did much to undermine popular support for his elevation to army command. As a result, he was replaced by Arista, and

³² Smith, *War with Mexico*, p. 226 and Carreño, *Jefes del Ejército Mexicano en 1847*, pp. 118-119.

³³ Carreño, *Jefes*, pp. 198-199.

³⁴ Sánchez Lamego, *Generales de ingenieros del Ejército Mexicano*, pp. 34-42.

upon the Mexican Army's move northward in search of a confrontation with the Americans, he was tasked with reducing Fort Brown, whereby he did not play an active role in the subsequent disasters for which the unfortunate Arista bore responsibility. The scion of a Spanish military family that moved to Mexico City when he was an infant, Ampudia had won laurels as an undefeated commander while serving in brigade command during Major-General Adrián Woll's 1842 campaign against Texas.³⁵

The battles of Palo Alto and Resaca del Guerrero did much to destroy the reputation of the Mexican field command and dealt the Mexican military leadership a mortal blow from which it never recovered during the course of the war. Although the Mexican defeat is often attributed to Arista's overconfidence and underestimation of the Americans' capabilities, it was his unfamiliarity with the tactics his enemy employed that precipitated the disaster. As a successful thirty-year veteran of numerous campaigns against domestic enemies, it is reasonable that Arista would have great confidence in his abilities. It was his ignorance of modern methods of war that cost him the battle. Although warned by Requena regarding both the latter's accurate impressions of the American artillery and his own artillery's lack of ammunition and trained gun teams, Arista's skepticism regarding American artillery capability and his belief in the lance and bayonet resulted in his rash handling of the battle. Conforming to *realista* military doctrine, Arista and his generals continued their adherence to Frederickian methods that emphasized usage of the bayonet and lance in slugfests that did not take into account the firepower capability of the enemy. In that vein, Arista deployed his troops poorly within range of the American guns and exposed them to unnecessary punishment by enemy firepower. Despite passionate entreaties from Díaz de La Vega to allow his troops to break ranks and frontally assault

³⁵ Carreño, *Jefes*, pp. 141-158.

the American positions in true Frederickian fashion, Arista's indecision rooted in his panicked unfamiliarity with the tactics demonstrated by his adversary wasted the valor of his troops and limited the punishment inflicted upon the enemy since it is questionable whether his infantry could have persevered in the face of such attrition.³⁶

The mishandling of the cavalry by Torrejón and Canales also contributed much to the Mexican disaster. Of course, nothing was to be expected of Canales who was instructed to play second fiddle to Torrejón, but the latter's handling of his men's advance on the American flanks can only be attributed to command/control failure. Apparently, Torrejón did not concur with Arista's battle plan from the outset and the measure of his resolve was severely shaken by a disagreeable episode with his chief, who failed to consider any ideas that were not his own. Nevertheless assigned by Arista with the key task of overseeing the envelopment of the American flanks, the piqued Torrejón's diminished confidence was tragically reflected in his hesitant and piece-meal conduct of cavalry operations that condemned the infantry to stand in the midst of American shelling.³⁷

The outcome of the battle of Resaca del Guerrero on the next day was a foregone conclusion due to Arista's continued underestimation of his opponent and adherence to the same basic tactical premise notwithstanding failure at Palo Alto and the recognition by his army that they faced an entirely new mode of warfare. Apparently, the previous day's events had stunned the Mexican soldiery of all ranks, from private to general. Having withstood a barrage unlike any most of them had ever seen during the Mexican factional conflicts of the previous 25 years, the Mexican officers emerged with a sense of amateurish inferiority that shook them to their core. Canales, for one, lost his candor

³⁶ López Uruga, *Sumaria mandada formar a pedimento del Sr. Coronel del 4o reg. de inf.*, pp. 1-34.

³⁷ Mejía, *Sumaria mandada formar a pedimento*, pp. 1-40.

upon the first cannon shots that announced the opening of battle of Resaca del Guerrero and fled for the rear with his *rancheros*. Likewise, the rest of the Mexican troops had no inclination to stand for another butchering like the one they had endured previously. Having lost all confidence in his chief, Torrejón also quit the field almost immediately and made his way across the Rio Grande in the company of a few dragoons. Brevet Brigadier-General Manuel García, described by one source as “a fine man and brave officer,” was killed in action while in temporary command of Mejía’s brigade.³⁸ The gallant Díaz de La Vega likewise refused to give ground and was captured during Captain May’s storming of the Mexican batteries. Having failed to rally his panicked soldiery, Arista himself fled the field and made his way across the river in haste, abandoning his private baggage and correspondence to the enemy.³⁹

After subsequently lifting the siege of Fort Brown and consolidating Ampudia’s brigade with his own remnants, Arista successfully reunited the Army of the North in Matamoros and then oversaw its withdrawal to the more defensible city of Linares seventy miles to the north, where he was notified of his removal and forced to relinquish command of the army to General Mejía. During the withdrawal, Generals Requena, Torrejón, and Canales remained with the army, while Ampudia was summoned to Mexico City to provide the War Ministry with a formal account of events.⁴⁰

Although they were certainly a brave lot and full of bravado at the onset of the campaign (of the eight generals who served in the campaign, one had been killed and one captured), the Mexican leadership seems to have lost its nerve in the aftermath of the thrashing at Palo Alto, where their confidence in the traditional methods with which they

³⁸ Alcaraz *Apuntes*, p. 51.

³⁹ Eisenhower, *So Far from God*, p. 84.

⁴⁰ Alcaraz, *Apuntes*, p. 52.

were accustomed was fully questioned and the army's deficiencies in command and equipment were laid bare. Perhaps many believed that if the Americans could so easily thrash a highly regarded commander such as Arista, which among them would stand a chance?

The change in government resulting from Paredes' ouster by the federalist Major-General José Mariano Salas with the backing of the *puros* led by the rabid Valentín Gómez Farías resulted in the reappointment of Ampudia to command the Army of the North. Since Arista's removal, the army had been conducted first to Saltillo and then to Monterrey by General Mejía, where it awaited the orders of its new commander, who remained as unpopular as ever amongst the civilian leadership of Nuevo León. Apparently, Mejía took ill following the withdrawal to Linares and it was actually Requena who oversaw the army's removal to Monterrey. In addition to replacing its commander, the War Ministry, still presided over by Major-General José María Tornel y Mendivil, opted to bolster the strength of the army by sending with him three brigades to be integrated into its ranks. The ministry's reasons for not naming Mejía or the gifted Requena army chief remain unclear, although it probably had something to do with Ampudia's reputation as an undefeated commander with much of experience both in serving the Army of the North and fighting the Americans. Upon Ampudia's resumption of command, the primary units of the army and its commanders were reorganized as is outlined in Table 3.

Contrary to what one might expect, Ampudia's appointment to command did not generate a wholesale restructuring of strategy or tactics. A veteran of the Río Grande Campaign, Ampudia seemed to be as dismayed by the superiority of the American

military machine as any of his generals. A vocal detractor of Arista's performance at Palo Alto and Resaca del Guerrero, upon his ascension to command, Ampudia was disposed to seize the initiative and engage the Americans somewhere north of Monterrey.

Table 3. The Army of the North, Fall 1846

Commander-in-Chief: *General de División* Pedro de Ampudia
Chief of Staff & Deputy Commander: *General Graduado* José María García Conde
Artillery Commander: *General de Brigada* Tomás Requena
Cavalry Commander: *General de Brigada* Anastasio Torrejón

1st Brigade: *General Graduado* Simeón Ramírez
2nd Brigade: *General de Brigada* Francisco Mejía
3rd Brigade: Colonel José López Uruga
4th Brigade: Colonel Nicolás Mendoza
1st Cavalry Brigade: *General de Brigada* Anastasio Torrejón
2nd Cavalry Brigade: *General Graduado* Manuel Romero

Totals: 7,303 men
Source: Adams, *The War in Mexico*, p. 30

With that intention, Ampudia and his generals, accompanied by Torrejón's cavalry, ventured out of Monterrey and conducted a reconnaissance of the ground as far as Marín, where Ampudia convened a military council to decide the army's course of action. The results were predictable. Acutely aware of the army's deficiency in firepower and knowledge of how to use it, Ampudia's commanders had no stomach for facing the Americans on open ground and advised him to remain in Monterrey, where the enemy might be slowed by the attrition of urban warfare. Apparently, the generals' lack of confidence drained Ampudia's enthusiasm for coming to grips with the Americans and he opted for their recommendation to make a stand in the city itself. Shortly thereafter, a presidential recommendation to abandon Monterrey and retire the army to San Luis

Potosí arrived, but Ampudia chose to ignore it and continued his preparations for the city's defense. It would appear that having libeled Arista, the prideful Ampudia did not wish to relinquish command of the army without having a "go" at the Americans in his own right, but was also afraid of losing a pitched battle. Therefore, despite considerable inferiority in firepower and gun-crew quality, he opted with his commanders' recommendation to play it as safe as possible by obliging the Americans to attack his entrenched forces in a difficult urban environment.⁴¹ As expected, the mammoth task of fortifying the city went to the redoubtable General Requena, who was responsible for erecting the fortifications at Cerro Del Obispado which were to cost the Americans dearly upon their investment of the city. As before, the lack of firepower was so apparent in the Mexican fortifications that it practically made the coming contest a foregone conclusion. The morale of the soldiery improved upon the arrival of fresh units from Mexico City, but this was tempered by the rapidly deteriorating logistical situation, as the central government failed to raise the money with which to purchase the supplies it had originally intended to accompany the reinforcements. For the time being, the Mexican Army would be living off the land.⁴²

Of Ampudia's generals, Ramírez, García Conde, and Romero were the new arrivals and Nicolás Mendoza the newly promoted commander of Díaz de La Vega's brigade. Manuel Romero, a forty-six year old veteran of the centralist cause who had supported Paredes' takeover of the government from Herrera, had been sent north at the head of a cavalry brigade to bolster that badly depleted arm of the shattered Army of the North. Apparently, Romero had been sent north in part to remove him as a nuisance in the

⁴¹ Roa Bárcena, *Recuerdos de la invasion norteamericana 1846-1848*, pp. 89-92.

⁴² Balbontín, Manuel, *La invasión norteamericana, 1846-1848.*, pp. 94.

capital. He was known to be a prone centralist plotter and his presence in the Mexico City garrison probably made the *puros* nervous.⁴³

The appointment of General Simeón Ramírez was a similar story. An ardent centralist who had supported Paredes' bid for power the previous year, the forty-three year old native of Texcoco was a veteran of Santa Anna's campaign against Zacatecas in 1835 and a supporter of the Santa Anna/Paredes pronouncement against Bustamante's regime in 1841. A capable staff officer with a talent for engineering, Ramírez was practically untried in direct command of larger formations, and like Romero, his fellow brigade commander, he had no experience fighting the Americans.⁴⁴

The deputy commander and chief of staff, José María García Conde, was highly regarded as an energetic and self-motivated officer, with a long career in staff and administrative posts. The forty-five year old native of Mexico City was apolitical and had unusual technical expertise. A talented artilleryman in his own right, García Conde was delegated the oversight of the fortification of Tenería Hill and Purísima Bridge.⁴⁵

Brevet Brigadier-General Nicolás Mendoza was a forty-eight year old native of Guadalajara and a veteran of the 1836 campaign against Texas who had spent his career in the Army of the North and had worked his way up to regimental command at the outset of the war with the United States. After service at Palo Alto and Resaca del Guerrero, Mendoza had been promoted to the rank of *general graduado* and was given command of Díaz de La Vega's brigade.⁴⁶

⁴³ Carreño, *Jefes*, pp. 126-127.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 152-153.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 167.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

Like that of their troops, the performance of the Mexican commanders at the battle of Monterrey was generally good, but the uncharacteristic timorousness of the commander-in-chief enabled the Americans to capture the city without undergoing the campaign of attrition originally envisioned. After having successfully defended the majority of the city's fortifications and repelled an American gesture against the southern reaches of the city, Ampudia ordered evacuations of key positions that preceded American gains which gradually made the Mexican troops' hold on the city untenable. Thus after three days of fighting, Ampudia called a truce with the recommendation of a council of his subordinates who cautioned that having relinquished key positions, it would be better to secure favorable terms from the Americans while there was still time to salvage the army rather than continue the struggle and risk a crushing defeat. Along with the civilian governor of Nuevo León, Requena and García Conde served on the peace commission that indeed secured generous terms from Taylor which allowed the Mexican Army to relinquish the city without relinquishing their arms, thus providing the Mexican forces the ability to fight another day.⁴⁷

During the course of the fighting, the majority of the commanders rendered solid service, with García Conde and Requena starring in the defense. García Conde was particularly distinguished in repulsing a sudden American gesture from the relatively unprotected southern reaches of the city. Mejía was particularly distinguished in the defense of the Purísima Bridge with a mere 300 soldiers and his own family who lived nearby was obliged to take refuge in the home of a neighbor due to the incessant enemy bombardment.

⁴⁷ Roa Bárcena, *Recuerdos*, pp. 98-102.

Mediocre performance was personified in the behavior of the lack-luster Torrejón, who had been feverishly ill only a few days before, and his customary mismanagement of the cavalry. Having been assigned the task of imposing attrition upon the American advance, his troopers spent more time plundering the neighboring countryside for desperately needed supplies and nearly lost the contest for the southern reaches of the city had it not been for the saving grace of García Conde. If the army had been supplied by the central government, it stands to reason that Torrejón's cavalry would have lent itself to better use.⁴⁸

The northern campaign up until September 1846 thoroughly proved the obsolescence of the tactical premise employed by the Mexican generals and following the battle of Palo Alto, they remained unsure about how to confront the unfamiliar methods employed by the Americans. Most unfortunate was the Mexican High Command's reshuffling of defeated commanders in the wake of the battle of Resaca del Guerrero, whereby the implementation of lessons learned was hampered by the transfer of "experienced" officers and their replacement by others who were unfamiliar with the tactics the enemy brought to bear. It would seem that the proverbial cannonade of Palo Alto would continue to ring in the ears of Mexican generals for many battles to come.

⁴⁸ Alcaraz, *Apuntes*, pp. 61-62.

*Chapter 3: Climax of the Northern Campaign: The Return of Santa Anna and the Battle
of La Angostura*

The return of Santa Anna had drastic implications for the command organization of the army. Before his arrival, the Mexican war effort had lacked uniformity and the army remained volatile in terms of its involvement in the conflict between centralist and federalist leaders who could not reach a consensus on how to prosecute the war. Santa Anna's arrival changed this. Once he arrived in partnership with Valentín Gómez Farías, the Mexican war effort was consolidated as a *puro* federalist enterprise. The irony actually lay in the fact that although Gómez Farías recognized Santa Anna's potential to unify the country and effectively organize its defense, he may have ill-considered the effect his return would have on many who could not forget and would not forgive his atrocious performance in Texas nor the rampant corruption of his latest term in office as president. Thus, Santa Anna's return split officers and the ranks of the army not along the factions of centralism and federalism, but along the lines of controversy raging over the man himself.⁴⁹

Upon learning that Santa Anna had been assigned personal command of the army in its upcoming campaign against the Americans, convulsions of discontent rocked the ranks of the Army of the North's command cadre in San Luis Potosí. Previously, in the time lag between Santa Anna's return and his official appointment to army command, San Luis Potosí had been flooded by generals who had marched there of their own accord with any troops at their immediate disposal hoping for a coveted appointment in the army that was due to be reorganized by Santa Anna's administration. When it became apparent

⁴⁹ Coahuila, *Batalla de La Angostura*, p. 76.

that Santa Anna would take personal command, he and his savvy war minister, Tornel, moved both to effectively prepare the army for an immediate campaign and to isolate opposing elements in the army's command cadre. Naturally, Santa Anna did not deem all of the generals and units convened at San Luis Potosí fit for the army he envisioned. Santa Anna did not wish to have to watch his back lest a jealous commander rob him of victory in the field or, worse, conspire to usurp command of the army and, in the event of a reverse, return him to Mexico City in an iron cage. From Santa Anna's point of view, it was in the best interest of all involved that the men he would appoint to command his army be both wholly subservient and unequivocally dedicated to the cause of national defense.⁵⁰

Upon Santa Anna's arrival, several key commanders, including the gifted Requena, effectively resigned from the army in protest over the appointment of a man they considered to be completely incapable of exercising command. They opted to remain in San Luis Potosí and formed a club they named the Red Comet Society, which would exist thereafter in the periphery of the Mexican Army until the last days of the war, drawing into its ranks disaffected officers who came to lament service under Santa Anna. For his part, Santa Anna remained wary of the organization, but chose to ignore it, remaining true to the task at hand.⁵¹

In an effort presumably meant to both increase efficiency and consolidate his leadership of the army, Santa Anna removed almost all of the commanders who had served in the previous campaigns against the Americans. Furthermore, Santa Anna picked and chose at will from the assortment of generals gathered at San Luis Potosí in an

⁵⁰ Smith, *War with Mexico*, pp. 398-391.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 398.

effort to isolate potential dissidents and hand them military appointments as far away from the action as possible. It was a foregone conclusion that many generals who did not like their appointments would join the Red Comets and conspire against Santa Anna from without. Perhaps the foremost in this category was Major-General Gabriel Valencia, the former commandant of the Mexico City garrison who had led a contingent to San Luis Potosí in the hopes of gaining for himself one of the key commands it not command of the entire army. He was gravely disappointed upon learning that he had been relegated to observing American supply lines in garrison command of the isolated northern *presidio* of Tula. This affront to Valencia's aspirations would prove to be particularly costly to Santa Anna.⁵²

In addition to using the troops assembled at San Luis Potosí, Santa Anna levied pre-agreed state militia contingents (*activos*) and summoned regular forces from all over Mexico to join him for the coming campaign. In addition, the army was paid for by forced loans from the church, government funds, and Santa Anna's own personal fortune. Basically, Santa Anna's strategy consisted of building the most formidable army possible with which to await Taylor's seemingly inevitable march south. He favored building an army that would be ultimately favored not only by an overwhelming disparity in numbers, but in artillery & cavalry as well. Thus, Santa Anna requisitioned artillery pieces even from the most remote outposts of the republic. Although, the gun-crews remained poorly trained due to a fatal shortage of specialists in that arm, Santa Anna believed the disparity in other areas would more than make up for those deficiencies. Furthermore, in spite of rumors that the Americans were intent upon opening a second front in the Valley of Mexico, Santa Anna confidently depleted the ranks of the Armies

⁵² DePalo, *The Mexican National Army*, pp. 127-131.

of the South and East in favor of a successful northern campaign that would deter American intentions on Mexico City.⁵³

After a confirmation that Scott had taken Veracruz on March 27, 1847 and the Americans had gained a foothold in the Valley of Mexico, Santa Anna came to the disappointing realization that Taylor would not be moving south of Saltillo. In response, Santa Anna resolved to march the army three hundred miles north in order to confront the enemy and obtain an expected victory that would relieve the pressure on Mexico City by exposing Texas to the prospect of invasion and obliging Scott to support Taylor's forces. In short, Santa Anna was willing to gamble everything on this one grand stroke that he hoped would dramatically shift the strategic balance of the war and erase all the American successes of the previous several months. Unfortunately, because the rugged three hundred mile journey between Saltillo and San Luis Potosí was one that Santa Anna expected Taylor to make, he had destroyed any provisional stations existing along that route and the Mexican Army would thus be obliged to pass through a gauntlet originally laid out for the enemy.⁵⁴

Another glaring deficiency in Santa Anna's plan was the unwillingness of many states to support the national cause he now personified. Mostly federalist state governors who held sway over powerful militia elements in Zacatecas and Durango, to name only two, were unwilling to forgive Santa Anna's transgressions and refused to participate in the defense of the country as long as he remained at the head. It is interesting to ponder the probability that had those two states alone chosen to send their required quota of troops to San Luis Potosí, the disparity in numbers and resources between the American and

⁵³ Coahuila, *La Batalla de La Angostura*, Volume 1, p. 118.

⁵⁴ Paz, *Reseña histórica del Estado Mayor Mexicano, 1821-1860*, pp. 291-310.

Mexican armies would have been so great that the battle La Angostura might well have ended differently. It should be noted that while the *activo* units maintained their unit identity, they were brigaded together with regular units under the command of regular general officers. The command organization of the army that resulted from Santa Anna's restructuring is described in Table 4.

Table 4. The Army of the North, February 1847

Commander-in-Chief: *General de División* Antonio López de Santa Anna

Chief of Staff: *General de Brigada* Manuel Micheltorena

Commander of Artillery: *General Graduado* Antonio Corona

Commander of Engineers: *General de División* Ignacio Mora y Villamil

1st Infantry Division: *General de Brigada* Francisco Pacheco (4,618 men)

1st Brigade: *General de Brigada* Francisco Mejía

2nd Brigade: *General Graduado* José López Uruga

2nd Infantry Division: *General de Brigada* Manuel María Lombardini (4,029 men)

3rd Brigade: *General Graduado* José María García Conde

4th Brigade: *General de Brigada* Francisco Pérez

3rd Infantry Division: *General de Brigada* José María Ortega (2,970 men)

5th Brigade: *General de Brigada* Ángel Guzmán

6th Brigade: *General de Brigada* Andrés Terrés

7th Brigade: *General de Brigada* Anastasio Parrodi

1st Cavalry Brigade: *General de Brigada* José Vicente Miñón (1302 men)

2nd Cavalry Brigade: *General de Brigada* Julián Juvera (974 men)

3rd Cavalry Brigade: *General de Brigada* Anastasio Torrejón (706 men)

4th Cavalry Brigade: *General de Brigada* Manuel Andrade (335 men)

Unattached Units:

Light Infantry Brigade: *General de Brigada* Pedro de Ampudia (unknown)

Zapadores Brigade: *General Graduado* Santiago Blanco (311 men)

1st Observational Division (Cavalry): *General de Brigada* José Urrea (2,121 men)

2nd Observational Division (Infantry): *General de Brigada* Ciriaco Vázquez (1,655 men)

Totals: 18,183 men or Infantry (13,432), Cavalry (4,338), and Artillery (413).

Sources: Adams, *The War in Mexico*, p. 41 & Alcaraz, *Apuntes*, p. 70-71

The generals who led the army at this stage were a varied set of men chosen by Santa Anna for a combination of military ability and personal loyalty. In reference to his subordinates, Santa Anna seemingly sought a comfortable middle ground that would both maximize military efficiency *and* give him political peace of mind. It must be noted that in this instance, Santa Anna seems to have implemented a lesson learned from his experiences in Texas ten years before. In this case, he did not grossly underestimate the martial ability of his opponents by appointing unqualified political lackeys to important field commands. Interestingly enough, Vicente Filisola, Martín Perfecto de Cós, and Antonio Gaona were all still very much alive and well at this time, but had been relegated by Santa Anna's War Ministry to obscure posts on the fringes of the republic. By contrast, the only distinguished Mexican general of the Texas Campaign, Brigadier-General José Urrea, had been awarded command of the 1st Observational Division in the reorganized army.⁵⁵

Of the twenty-two generals holding field command in the army, it must be noted that only four were veterans of the previous campaigns against the Americans. Although Santa Anna maintained a large number of generals at his disposal as members of his personal entourage, including most of the veterans of the previous campaigns, he clearly took martial quality to account in the consideration of officers for key command positions. In reference to the general staff of the army, Santa Anna appointed the skillful Brigadier-General Manuel Micheltoarena to act as chief of staff. An artilleryist by trade, the former governor of California had built his career upon years of administrative experience that qualified him for service as chief of staff to Santa Anna with whom he had maintained an amiable relationship over the course of many years. Not much can be

⁵⁵ Hardin, *Texian Illiad*, p. 235.

said of the youthful 38-year old Brevet Brigadier-General Antonio Corona other than he was the next best thing to Requena and an ardent *santanista* who had cultivated a favorable relationship with his patron while serving as artillery chief in the army with which Santa Anna toppled the Bustamante regime in 1841. Although the second oldest general in the army at fifty-five, the venerable goateed Brigadier-General Ignacio Mora y Villamil was a strictly professional officer of minimal political intensity who had spent most of his distinguished career in the engineers either in command of the War College at Chapultepec or overseeing the construction of marine fortifications.⁵⁶

An important development in the formation of the general staff was the elimination of the post of cavalry commander and the placement of the army's four cavalry brigades at the direct disposal of the commander-in-chief. This development may very well have been the effect of lessons learned from previous campaigns against the Americans where the efforts of the cavalry had been wasted due to a lack of integration in the command structure as expressed by the existence of an unnecessary command layer and its inability to act in concert with the strategic vision of the commander-in-chief. The disunity of command as personified by Torrejón's mismanagement of the cavalry during the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca del Guerrero was not desired by Santa Anna to be re-enacted and Torrejón was relegated to brigade command where his actions could be watched and Santa Anna's control over the army remain uncompromised.⁵⁷

The 1st Infantry Division was led by the ardent centralist, Major-General Francisco Pacheco, who at 51 years of age had amassed a breadth of experience serving the centralist cause in the Yucatán and in various internal squabbles for presidential power.

⁵⁶ Sánchez Lamego, *Generales de ingenieros*, p. 60-69.

⁵⁷ Alcaraz, *Apuntes*, pp. 29-51

After supporting Paredes' coup against Herrera, Pacheco had arrived in San Luis Potosí as commander of the *activo* troops of his native Guanajuato in the Bajío contingent led by General Valencia. Perceived by Santa Anna to be a more potentially reliable subordinate than his superior, Pacheco had been elevated to command the division that was formed from the nucleus of Valencia's troops, much to Valencia's chagrin. The two brigadiers assigned to this division were the dependable Mejía and the newly promoted José López Uruga, a thirty-six year old former colonel of the 3rd Light Infantry who had been thoroughly tested throughout the Rio Grande Campaign and had distinguished himself in brigade command at the battle of Monterrey.⁵⁸

The 2nd Infantry Division was led by the forty-five year old Major-General Manuel María Lombardini, a man of rather limited military capability, but with a solid reputation as a subordinate field commander having served under Santa Anna in Texas. An unquestionably brave, but rather impetuous officer of as many ideological persuasions as Santa Anna, Lombardini was particularly skillful in navigating the turbulent political waters of that era. Justin Smith rather scathingly referred to Lombardini as a "strutting lackey who strove to conceal behind his swarthy face, a heavy mustache and goatee, and a ceaseless volubility, the poverty of his intellect."⁵⁹

The two brigadiers assigned to Lombardini as brigade commanders were the gifted García Conde of Monterrey fame and the newly appointed thirty-eight year old native of Tulancingo, Brigadier-General Francisco Pérez, who had built his career fighting separatists in the Yucatán. Having been sent to bolster the garrison of the Veracruz prior to the American landing, Pérez had been instrumental in garnering support for Santa

⁵⁸ Rodríguez Frausto, *Guía de gobernantes de Guanajuato*, p. 32.

⁵⁹ Smith, *War with Mexico*, p. 88.

Anna's landing at Veracruz. Thereafter, Pérez had served Santa Anna diligently in organizing the troops at San Luis Potosí and was rewarded for his effort with brigade command. He could be best described as an ardent *santanista*.⁶⁰

The 3rd Infantry Division was led by fifty-four year old Brigadier-General José María Ortega, who had spent nearly thirty-five years in the artillery and amassed a dense service record which included the campaign that resulted in the execution of Vicente Guerrero in 1831, service in Texas in 1836, and service in the *santanista* army which overthrew Bustamante in 1841. Upon the outbreak of war, he had been serving as commandant-general of San Luis Potosí and had been assigned by Santa Anna with maintaining army cohesion in the aftermath of the battle of Monterrey. A diligent and laborious subordinate, Ortega had greatly distinguished himself in abetting Santa Anna's effort at restructuring the army and had even housed Santa Anna and his entourage at his personal residence during his stay in San Luis Potosí.⁶¹

Although originally slated for command by fifty-one year old Brigadier-General Ángel Guzmán, command of the 3rd Division soon passed for unknown reasons into the hands of Ortega, whom Santa Anna must have perceived to be a better fit. In any event, the forty-seven year old Guzmán was assigned command of one of Ortega's three brigades. An arch-centralist in the vein of former President Paredes, Guzmán had spent most of his thirty-four year career in the present-day state of Guerrero opposing the federalist overtures of the powerful southern *cacique*, Major-General Juan Álvarez. Upon Santa Anna's return to power, Guzmán had pronounced in his favor and marched north to

⁶⁰ Salas Cuesta, *Molino del Rey: historia de un monumento.*, pp. 134-135.

⁶¹ Carreño, *Jefes*, pp. 168-169.

San Luis Potosí with a contingent of troops from Tixtla where he awaited his chief's arrival and was subsequently awarded for his fealty with brigade command.⁶²

The other two brigadier-generals in Ortega's division were Andrés Terrés y Masaguér and Anastasio Parrodi. Terrés was a seventy year old veteran of both the Spanish Bourbon Army and Iturbide's *Ejército Trigarante*. A native of Barcelona, Spain, Terrés had demonstrated either *santanista* or centralist political inclinations throughout his career and had cultivated an amiable relationship with Santa Anna, having supported his ouster of Bustamante in 1841. As a colonel in 1846, Terrés had served at Matamoros, but had been recalled to Mexico City prior to the opening of hostilities. Upon learning of Santa Anna's return, Terrés had organized a contingent of 1,500 troops and marched to San Luis Potosí, where he was rewarded for his contribution with a promotion to brigade command. Parrodi, a forty-one year old native of Havana, Cuba, had been serving as commandant-general of Tamaulipas when he was recalled by Santa Anna to bring the forces of that state to San Luis Potosí, an order with which he hesitatingly complied despite protests from the civilian authorities in the face of an imminent American landing at Tampico. An ardent *santanista* who had supported both his chief's bid for power in 1841 and his recent return, Parrodi was well regarded as a solid subordinate, although his performance at Tampico left an impression of indecisiveness.⁶³

The independent units unattached to any of the divisions were the Light Infantry Brigade, the *Zapadores* Brigade, and the two *Divisiones de Observación*. The Light Infantry Brigade was assigned to the recently disgraced Ampudia, who was rehabilitated after suffering a severe admonishment at the hands of Santa Anna for having disregarded

⁶² Muñoz y Pérez, *El General D. Juan Álvarez.*, p. 184.

⁶³ Alcaraz, *Apuntes*, pp. 78-90.

his orders to evacuate Monterrey and converge upon San Luis Potosí. The elite *Zapadores* Brigade was led by the newly promoted Santiago Blanco, who at thirty-two years of age was the youngest general in the Mexican Army. A rather gifted engineer who had lent his support to Gómez Farías' pronouncement against Paredes' regime, Blanco was serving as commandant of the Mexican Corps of Engineers upon the outbreak of war and was summoned to San Luis Potosí in order to reorganize the engineer arm of the Army of the North, upon the successful completion of which he was rewarded by Santa Anna with command of the *zapadores*.⁶⁴

The two observational divisions, which were to operate against the American supply lines in the periphery of the main effort, were entrusted to Brigadier-Generals José Urrea and Ciriaco Vázquez. The fifty-year old Urrea held a solid reputation due to his service in Texas and although eager to meet the Americans in combat, he was relegated to command the observational division due to his political volubility. An ardent federalist, renowned in the past for his powers of conspiracy, Urrea was quite possibly perceived by the supreme commander as undependable at the head of a higher formation. That was unfortunate because Urrea's talents made him a much better fit for divisional command than the likes of Lombardini, Ortega, or Pacheco. Vázquez will be discussed in the chapter regarding Cerro Gordo, where he played a more critical role.⁶⁵

Much like the infantry, the army's four cavalry brigades were awarded to men who were both militarily qualified and politically acceptable. The 1st Cavalry Brigade was entrusted to forty-four year old Brigadier-General José Vicente Miñón, a native of Cadiz, Spain, who had demonstrated ardent centralist inclinations and had been promoted to the

⁶⁴ Sánchez Lamego, *Generales de ingenieros*, pp. 13-19.

⁶⁵ Herring, *General José Cósme Urrea; His Life and Times, 1797-1849*, pp. 137-150.

rank of general due to distinguished service in Texas, where he served in deputy command of an assault column at the Alamo. Having joined the *puros* and conspired with Gómez Farías to overthrow the government of Herrera in 1845 as well as endorsed their pronouncement against Paredes, Miñón was incorporated into the army with the recommendation of his new found, if unlikely, *puro* patrons.⁶⁶

The 2nd Cavalry Brigade was entrusted to another decorated *santanista* veteran of the Texas Campaign of 1836, sixty-three year old Brigadier-General Julián Juvera. A former governor of the state of Querétaro, Juvera had remained unemployed upon the outbreak of war, but had been awarded brigade command upon leading a contingent of troops to San Luis Potosí. Leadership of the 4th and 5th Cavalry Brigades was awarded respectively to Brigadier-Generals Anastasio Torrejón and Manuel Andrade. Torrejón's appointment is not surprising due to that commander's gift for scapegoating others. Only a few months before, Torrejón had secured his position in the army by supporting the Gómez Farías coalition against the Paredes government and then endorsing Santa Anna's return to power. The forty-seven year old Andrade was an ardent *santanista* with firm centralist convictions who had marched to the sound of the guns and integrated himself into the army at San Luis Potosí, being rewarded for his efforts with appointment to brigade command.⁶⁷

The battle performance of the command cadre assembled and appointed by Santa Anna was generally good. It appeared that the army had never been in better shape. Santa Anna's efforts had seemingly paid off in that his army was better-led and better-armed and thus, of better quality. Despite the morale shattering hazardous march north, Santa

⁶⁶ Santoni, *Mexicans at Arms: Puro Federalists and the Politics of War*, pp. 76-77.

⁶⁷ Carreño, *Jefes*, pp. 203-204.

Anna's troops arrived with the resolve to deal the enemy a mortal blow. In the end, it was logistical considerations that drove Santa Anna to surrender the battlefield after a hard fought draw.⁶⁸ One cannot help but consider that Santa Anna's very march north had condemned the army to defeat so far from its logistical base. It would appear as though his cause would have been better served had he chosen to confront Scott and not Taylor with the formidable force he had created.

Regarding the command cadre's performance at La Angostura there were many instances of unquestionable skill and bravery as well as a few of ineptitude that might have enabled Santa Anna to achieve victory. The divisional commanders' performance was satisfactory, but was hampered both by the commanders' unfamiliarity with handling large units in the field and the troops' hasty haphazard training. Due to the bloated size of the army and the harsh timetable required by the rapidly unfolding turn of events, training had to be relegated as a secondary objective for Santa Anna, and thus the troops' combat readiness proved inadequate, especially amongst the *activo* troops, many of whom had not even fired a shot prior to the battle due to logistical concerns regarding the safeguard of ammunition for the battle itself. Likewise, the generals slated to command them at the divisional and brigade-level did not have the training required to lead such large units.⁶⁹ Seemingly, the army that fought at La Angostura was the only instance during the war in which a Mexican Army was actually organized according to the contemporary French standard maintained by most professional armies, including the United States. The generals' unfamiliarity with handling combined arms units of that size only underlines the low level of command/control experience garnered by most of them during Mexico's

⁶⁸ Eisenhower, *So Far from God*, p. 81.

⁶⁹ DePalo, *The Mexican National Army*, pp. 109-116.

independence wars which were characterized by guerilla actions or conventional war of the type exercised by the Spanish *realista* armies, of which most of Santa Anna's generals were the product.

Although playing a personally conspicuous role in the battle, bravely directing his troops in the line of fire, General Francisco Pacheco was unable to maintain control of his troops in the initial attack or to deter a headlong retreat that disordered the layout of Santa Anna's strike plan. Ortega performed well and was one of the few to merit Santa Anna's limited praise following the battle. Lombardini was unhorsed with a severe leg wound too early in the battle to be able to determine a serious critique of his ability, but his successor, General Francisco Pérez handled the division so skillfully thereafter that he merited a battlefield promotion to the rank of brigadier general. Seemingly, the individual brigade commanders performed on par with their direct superiors while Micheltorena and Corona of the general staff handled the artillery with a skill that belied the inexperience and poor training of their gun crews. Ampudia's command of the Light Infantry Brigade was satisfactory and his support of Pacheco's attack around the American left flank after the disintegration of Bowles' 2nd Indiana Infantry Regiment was opportune despite the attack's failure due to the Mexican artillery's inability to silence the American batteries. Blanco performed well in engaging the American right flank and his troops succeeded in keeping a portion of the U.S. forces occupied there while Lombardini, Pacheco, and Ortega struck the American left. During Pacheco's second drive on the American center, Blanco joined his *zapadores* in the attack and managed to capture three artillery pieces

before being forced to withdraw by the superiority of the American guns. For his role, Blanco earned a battlefield promotion from Santa Anna to the rank of brigadier-general.⁷⁰

Although the inexperienced infantry performed well beyond what was expected, the cavalry arm lost the battle. At the start, Santa Anna decreed that the four cavalry brigades play the following roles: (1) Miñón was assigned to move around the American position, harass their supply lines, and remain watchful for the decisive moment when the infantry would roll up the American left so that he could converge on their rear and cut off their line of retreat. Meanwhile, Juvera (2), Torrejón (3), and Andrade (4) were ordered to support the infantry's assault and exploit any advantage with a concentric attack meant to roll up the American rear positions just as the infantry were crushing the main battle line.

In practice, the cavalry operations lacked coordination and thus fell short of Santa Anna's expectations. At the critical moment when the Mexican infantry succeeded in caving in the American left flank, Juvera immediately seized the initiative and rallied the cavalry for a headlong assault on the hinge of the American position at the Hacienda de Buena Vista. While Torrejón moved in direct support of Juvera, Andrade failed to join the attack in time and committed his brigade piece-meal, whereby his attacking troopers arrived on scene only in time to be intermingled with the fleeing mass of Juvera's cavalymen, who were repulsed by the American guns. Although it is certain that the cavalry suffered from the same privations as the infantry in terms of training, sources suggest that Andrade's actions were no accident and that he was actually motivated by disgust with Santa Anna at having been relegated to brigade command.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Sánchez Lamego, *Generales de ingenieros*, p. 17.

⁷¹ Coahuila, *La Batalla de La Angostura*, Volume 2, p. 126.

Luckily for Andrade, his poor performance was overshadowed by the ineptitude of Miñón, who failed to support Juvera's attack on Buena Vista with a concentric attack of his own on the rear of that position. While Juvera had launched his headlong assault, Miñón hovered a few miles to the northwest, having chosen to withdraw from the battle after his diversionary attack on Saltillo was repulsed with loss. Had Miñón and Andrade been better organized, the Americans might have been forced to cave their frontal defense in favor of saving their supply lines, in which event the Mexicans might have actually succeeded in rolling up the entire American position. Upon his return to San Luis Potosí, Santa Anna had Miñón arrested while a court of inquiry was assigned to look into his performance in the battle. Andrade, by contrast, remained untouched despite accusations leveled against him by his fellow brigade commanders, Juvera and Torrejón. On the periphery of the main battle, Urrea performed admirably in command of the observational division at Tula, but would have probably been a much better utilized asset in divisional command on the field at La Angostura. Overall, the battle of La Angostura demonstrates a high point in the development of Mexican military operations and is revealing of what could be accomplished when a politically homogenous officer corps was formed and combined-arms tactics utilized on the field of battle.

Chapter 4: Lessons Unlearned: The Polkos Revolt and the Battle of Cerro Gordo

Following the battle of La Angostura, Santa Anna withdrew his decimated army to San Luis Potosí, but hastened to abandon its remnants and headed for Mexico City with a few choice battalions of veteran troops to address the Polkos Revolt. Having lost more than half of the 18,000 men with which he started the campaign, Santa Anna was obliged to leave the bulk of those remaining forces keeping an eye on Taylor at San Luis Potosí and to scrounge up the resources with which to form another army to confront Scott's invasion from Veracruz. The Polkos Revolt is noteworthy not just because it presented a major distraction in the middle of the war, but also because the army itself played no small role in fomenting it.

The Polkos Revolt was the violent expression of widespread malcontent with the anticlerical policies enacted by interim-president Valentín Gómez Farías while Santa Anna was in the north. It might be noted that the coalition that Gómez Farías formed which swept the Santa Anna and the *puros* into power was an uneasy grouping of leaders from all three major political factions: centralists, *puro* federalists, and *moderado* federalists. Basically, the coalition was formed with the intention of consolidating the dissident factions in support of a coherent and consistent policy to successfully prosecute the war with the United States. The common thread shared by each of the individual elements that supported the coalition was a passionate belligerence towards the United States and the belief that Mexico could win the war. Amongst the key conspirators in this coalition was Brigadier-General Joaquín Rangel, commander of Mexico City's powerful garrison. Once the coalition had seized power and unseated Paredes, Gómez Farías

allowed Major-General José Mariano Salas, a *moderado* federalist, to hold the reigns of government as interim president with the understanding that he would relinquish power upon Santa Anna's return. However, when the moment came to hand over the reigns of government, Salas initially refused and only complied when Brigadier-General Joaquín Rangel, the commander of the Mexico City garrison, played the veritable swingman and refused to support him. Thus, Santa Anna was able to once more attain power, although he almost immediately handed the reins of government to Gómez Farías in order to take command of the army in the field.⁷²

During his interim presidency, Gómez Farías began to enact liberal policies that alienated many *moderados* and centralists who had initially supported him. Having determined the perfect opportunity to topple the *puros*, the dissident elements that would soon become known as the polkos, coalesced to conspire to usurp Gómez Frías. Amongst the general officers that allied themselves with this movement were the grudging Salas and Brevet Brigadier-General Matías de la Peña y Barragán, an arch-conservative member of Mexico City's aristocracy and commander of its National Guard Brigade who took command of the movement's military arm. After being ordered by the wary Gómez Farías to march to the aid of Veracruz and being assured the cooperation of the Mexico City garrison by Rangel, Peña y Barragán sensed his moment had come and launched his attack in the streets of the capital on the forces that remained loyal to Gómez Farías. When apprised of the dangerous situation unfolding in the capital, Santa Anna rushed to the scene in a way not unlike Napoleon's abandonment of his army in Russia in order to thwart a rebellion in Paris. Encouraged by messages received from Santa Anna that confirmed his support of the *puros*, *santanista* Generals Valentín Canalizo and Joaquín

⁷² Santoni, *Mexicans at War*, p. 137.

Rangel chose to support Gómez Farías for the time being and turned their forces against the insurgents by whom they had actually been bribed to oppose the *puros*! Thus, the polkos revolt began to go wrong for the insurgents, but in an abrupt reversal, upon reaching the capital, Santa Anna withdrew his support for the *puros* and actually assisted the *moderado* takeover that ensued.⁷³

Having been successfully wooed by the *moderados* to support their cause against the *puros*, Santa Anna immediately took advantage of the benefits of their support and put the Church loans and government funding secured to good use in outfitting another army with which to face the Americans. Although the end of the Polkos Revolt signaled a lucrative reconciliation with the Church and the return of some form of stability to the government with the *moderados* firmly entrenched in power, Santa Anna had timely consolidated his political position as he was faced with Scott's invasion, Veracruz having capitulated after a brief siege by U.S. forces. Thus, after publicly displaying the trophies that consisted of the captured standards and artillery pieces of his proclaimed victory at La Angostura with which he won over the crowds of the capital, Santa Anna left *moderado* federalist and *santanista* Brigadier-General Pedro María Anaya in the interim presidency and returned to the field to face the Americans.⁷⁴

It is interesting to consider the astonishing heights to which Santa Anna's confidence and ego rose as he was deemed a hero both for supposedly obtaining victory at La Angostura and staving off the violence of the Polkos Revolt. Supremely confident in his abilities, Santa Anna gathered all forces to him with the rousing words, "*Mexicanos*,

⁷³ Santoni, *Mexicans at War*, pp. 187-189.

⁷⁴ Eisenhower, *So Far from God*, p. 271.

Veracruz calls for vengeance. Follow me and wash out the stain of her dishonor!”⁷⁵ Despite his soaring confidence, it was unfortunate for his country that Santa Anna would be reminded on the field of battle that he was far from invincible.

At the core of the rapidly assembled forces with which Santa Anna intended to confront Scott’s invasion were the dilapidated ranks of the Army of the East, whose units had been considerably thinned only months before to strengthen the northern campaign. After learning of the fall of Veracruz, Santa Anna had assigned Major-General Valentín Canalizo, the man he left in command of the Army of the East, to gather all forces at his disposal and await his arrival before initiating operations against the invaders. After receiving the remnants of the paroled Veracruz garrison, Canalizo did his best to strip the countryside of every garrison he could find before traveling to Mexico City in order to seek personal advantage in the anticipated outcome of the Polkos Revolt.⁷⁶

In addition to the troops Canalizo managed to scrape together, Santa Anna ordered Brigadier-General Ciriaco Vázquez to march to Canalizo’s aid from Tula with his 1,700 man-brigade that had been designated one of the observational divisions during the northern campaign. A poor excuse of an artillery train was organized from about a dozen eight pound guns stripped from the ramparts of the fortress of San Carlos de Perote. Finally, Santa Anna himself brought three brigades hastily assembled from select units of the Mexico City regular garrison and national guards.⁷⁷

Hoping to keep the Americans bottled up in the unhealthy lowlands, Santa Anna decided to block the American advance along the National Highway at a pass where the byway was dominated on either side of the hills and where his right flank was protected

⁷⁵ Time-Life, *The Mexican War*, p. 150.

⁷⁶ Crawford, *Encyclopedia of the Mexican-American War*, p. 64.

⁷⁷ Alcaraz, *Apuntes*, pp. 71-75.

by a stream called the Río del Plan. Having placed his main force of 1,900 men and almost thirty guns on three steep bluffs overlooking the highway, Santa Anna assigned a token force of 100 men and two artillery pieces to guard his left flank on a steep hill called El Telégrafo. He followed up the main position with a nearby reserve of about 1,500 cavalry and 2,000 infantry. Despite the protests of his engineer chief, Lieutenant-Colonel Manuel Robles Pezuela, Santa Anna considered his left fully protected by a dense seemingly impassible ravine that he “sneeringly” characterized as a place where “not even a rabbit could pass through.”⁷⁸ The Army of the East deployed to confront the American invasion at Cerro Gordo consisted of the primary units and commanders listed on Table 5.

Table 5. The Army of the East, April 1847

Commander-in-Chief: *General de División* Antonio López de Santa Anna
 Chief of Staff: *General de Brigada* Lino José Alcorta
 Commander of Engineers: Lieutenant-Colonel Manuel Robles Pezuela

1st Brigade: *General de Brigada* Luis Pinzón
 2nd Brigade: *General de Brigada* José María Jarero
 3rd Brigade: *General de Brigada* Romulo Díaz de La Vega
 4th Brigade: *General de Brigada* Ciriaco Vázquez
 5th Brigade: *General de Brigada* Pedro de Ampudia
 *6th Brigade: *General Graduado* Manuel Arteaga
 Reserve Cavalry: *General de División* Valentín Canalizo

*made up of *activo* units from Puebla, this brigade arrived late on the battlefield the day of the action.

Totals: 10,500 infantry and 1,500 cavalry
 Source: Adams, *The War in Mexico*, p. 87.

The army arrayed against Scott in April 1846 was a collection of ad hoc units gathered together in desperation as the only serious opposition to the American advance. Some of

⁷⁸ Alcaraz, *Apuntes*, pp. 172-173.

the units were regulars or national guardsmen from Mexico City, others were veterans of the recent northern campaign, but actually the majority were local units salvaged from the Veracruz capitulation or *activo* battalions mustered on behalf of the state of Veracruz. It is important to note that other units were still en route at the time of the battle.⁷⁹

Much like the army itself, the generals slated to command were an ad hoc collection of officers hastily gathered by Santa Anna in Mexico City or already stationed locally at the outset of the campaign. Most importantly, it is vital to comprehend that Santa Anna did not have the time to bide his preparations as at San Luis Potosí and was in search of a hasty victory in order to cement his hold on the presidential chair.⁸⁰ Furthermore, the rapid advance of the Americans demanded from Santa Anna a timely response, lest he relinquish more territory before giving battle.

Upon deployment to their respective positions, the various brigades comprising the army were split into several columns and organized according to the descriptive titles of extreme right, center right, right, and left flank, reserve, and cavalry reserve. The main position on the right flank was situated on three bluffs overlooking the highway with artillery entrenched at the summit. A frontal assault on the main Mexican position would be costly. Nevertheless, there were severe strategic errors committed by the Mexicans in their preparation for this battle which harkened to their Spanish Bourbon past. In fact there was retrogression in the tactical premise used in preparation for the battle of Cerro Gordo, given the more careful preparations made prior to the battle of La Angostura.

The use of titles such as “right,” “center,” and “left” were common to the organizational structure of the Bourbon armies and it is not surprising that the Mexican

⁷⁹ Bravo Ugarte, *Historia de México.*, Volume 2, p. 221.

⁸⁰ Eisenhower, *So Far from God*, p. 271.

High Command would employ a directionally-based organizational structure into its defensive planning. What is surprising is that the tactical expertise gained at La Angostura was ignored at Cerro Gordo. Perhaps there is a correlation between the dismissal of the lessons learned at La Angostura and the fact that none of the generals entrusted to command at Cerro Gordo were veterans of that battle, save for the commander-in-chief. It is also significant that the various brigades comprising the Army of the East were not grouped into combined arms divisions as at La Angostura. The brigades defending the positions at Cerro Gordo were entrenched in a linear fashion without the capability of mutual support due to the ruggedness of the ground separating the Mexican strongholds from each other. The deployment of strengthened interior lines which act as the strategic reserve of a defensive position from which reinforcements can be sent to points of distress along the line of battle were also absent with respect to the Mexican far left on El Telégrafo. Moreover, the cavalry reserve was practically immobilized given the terrain, which impeded the movement of horses due to the thick brush and steep inclines. It is noteworthy that the defensive position proposed by Santa Anna's chief of engineers, Lieutenant-Colonel Manuel Robles Pezuela at Corral Falso, a little farther southeast along the National Highway, would have facilitated better use of the cavalry and the incorporation of solid interior lines. The command of the cavalry reserve was also once again entrusted to a commander in chief of cavalry, thus re-creating that unnecessary command layer that had impeded Mexican operations at the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca del Guerrero.⁸¹

The main Mexican position on the right flank was entrusted to the command of generals Luis Pinzón and José María Jarero. In contrast to the origins of many of his

⁸¹ Alcaraz, *Apuntes*, p. 29-51

colleagues, Pinzón was a fifty-six year old veteran of the insurgent cause and was noted both for his ardent republicanism and fervent federalist outlook. Reputedly the mulatto son of a wealthy Spaniard who had settled in Mazatlán, Pinzón had been an intimate friend and comrade of the deceased General Vicente Guerrero. Having spent much of his career resisting centralist incursions in the tropical environs of Nayarit and present-day Guerrero, Pinzón was renowned as a daring guerilla commander, but had little experience with conventional warfare.⁸²

The career of forty-six year old José María Jarero mirrored that of his chief. Having started as a general with a defeat at the hands of federalist insurgents at the battle of Chilpancingo in 1833, Jarero had rehabilitated himself by rendering exemplary service under Santa Anna at Tampico in 1839. A fervent *santanista*, Jarero had backed Gómez Fariás' bid for power against Paredes while acting as commandant-general of the Department of México. Perceiving him to be a sincere supporter, Santa Anna had summoned Jarero to accompany him in the defense of their native state despite his poor record of independent command.⁸³

The immediate reserve allocated to support the positions of Pinzón and Jarero was entrusted to Brigadier-General Rómulo Díaz de La Vega, who had been recently exchanged following his capture at Resaca del Guerrero and had been en route to put himself at the disposal of the government in Mexico City when notified of his appointment by Santa Anna's staff. The main reserve, which was collected behind the hill of Cerro Gordo on the south side of the Highway, was assigned to General Pedro de Ampudia, who had accompanied his chief from La Angostura.

⁸² Carreño, *Jefes*, p. 168.

⁸³ *Ibid*, p. 179.

The cavalry reserve, assigned to the command of Major-General Valentín Canalizo, was ordered to cover the Mexican left flank despite the incompatibility of the terrain which would render coordinated cavalry maneuvers difficult if not impossible. A fifty-three year old native of Monterrey, Nuevo León, Canalizo was an ardent *santanista* whose ascendancy mirrored every zig-zag in Santa Anna's career. Having attained the rank of major-general by virtue of his armed support of Santa Anna's overthrow of Bustamante in 1841, the arch-conservative Canalizo had served Santa Anna twice as interim president, and was viewed as such a menace by subsequent *moderado* and centralist regimes, that in 1845 he had been exiled to Cadiz, Spain. Recalled by Santa Anna to serve as minister of war in the cabinet of interim-president Gómez Farías, Canalizo had prevented the army from going over to the insurgents during the Polkos Revolt and was rewarded with the appointment of second-in-command of the Army of the East.⁸⁴

The vital left flank, so neglected by Santa Anna, was entrusted to an old friend and fellow *veracruzano*, fifty-three year old Brigadier-General Ciriaco Vázquez. Apparently Vázquez and Santa Anna were lifelong friends who had met as teen-aged cadets in the royalist Veracruz militia regiment. An ardent *santanista* in the vein of Canalizo, Vázquez was a veteran of both the 1822 war against Spain and the 1839 Pastry War against the French. Deemed to be too close to Santa Anna for comfort, Vázquez had remained unemployed by the federalist and centralist regimes of Herrera and Paredes, but had pronounced from Veracruz in favor of Santa Anna's return in August 1846, being rewarded for his customary fealty with the command of one of the observational divisions assigned to operate in the periphery of the Army of the North. Having been

⁸⁴ Rivera Cambas, *Los gobernantes de México*, pp. 259-263.

summoned to bolster the ranks of the Army of the East, Vázquez complied with his chief's orders and successfully brought his troops the three hundred miles from Tula to the defense of his native state. An excellent battlefield commander, Vázquez was one of Santa Anna's most loyal subordinates entrusted with holding the left flank "at any price," a task that Santa Anna probably did not consider beyond his friend's considerable abilities despite the meager resources allotted him.⁸⁵

The performance of the Mexican Army at Cerro Gordo was lackluster. The rapidly assembled recruits were ill-trained and ill-equipped to meet the American onslaught, but Santa Anna's calculations regarding the right flank rang true. On the evening before the main battle, Pinzón and Jarero held on to their positions and rained fire down on the attacking Americans, who were ultimately repulsed. The American envelopment of the left flank was what completely unhinged the entire Mexican position and precipitated the collapse of the army.⁸⁶

Despite American gestures against the left on the evening before the main battle, Santa Anna's interior lines failed to adequately reinforce Vázquez's troops and thus, on the following morning, when the Americans launched their unexpected mass attack on the left, they simply overwhelmed Vázquez and proceeded to roll up the rest of the Mexican positions from west to east. The gallant Vázquez was killed in action by a bullet in the head as the Americans stormed the summit of Telégrafo and was last seen waving his sword in a vain attempt to rally his panicked soldiery. Following the battle, Vázquez's

⁸⁵ Carreño, *Jefes*, p. 90-93.

⁸⁶ Eisenhower, *So Far from God*, pp. 266-283.

corpse was seen with his uniform stripped of its insignia and without boots, lying amidst the bodies of his fellow countrymen.⁸⁷

Having vehemently argued against Santa Anna's disposition of both the left flank and the cavalry, Canalizo was unable to coordinate his support of the left because of the terrain and his lancers were simply brushed aside by the weight of the American attack. Having witnessed the total disintegration of his command, the distraught Canalizo wheeled his horse towards Jalapa and fled the battlefield. As the Americans converged upon the base camp and cut the Mexican line of retreat, Ampudia tried to rally his men, but was ultimately carried along by the fleeing soldiery. Recognizing the hopelessness of their position due to the appearance of American forces at their rear, Pinzón and Jarero relented and surrendered their commands before they were overrun. While attempting to rally the Mexican artillery to meet the American attack, Díaz de La Vega was captured for the second time in the war, while the newly arrived *activo* brigade of Brevet Brigadier-General Manuel Arteaga was utterly dispersed upon contact with the American tidal wave. After having spent great effort in attempting to rally his troops, Santa Anna himself was obliged to abandon the field and flee towards Xalapa by rough paths that cut through the dense underbrush on the south side of the National Highway.⁸⁸

I argue that no amount of tactical competency on the part of Santa Anna's subordinates could have changed the outcome. The defeat at Cerro Gordo can only be attributed to the faulty disposition of the left flank as selected by Santa Anna. This seemingly glaring omission is another example of a doctrinal error made by a Mexican general that correlates that group's Spanish Bourbon military heritage with its battlefield

⁸⁷ Alcaraz, *Apuntes*, p. 179.

⁸⁸ Díaz Díaz, *Caudillos y caciques*, pp. 203-204.

performance. The nature of Frederickian combat theory with its emphasis on frontal assaults and firepower by infantry volley was clearly ingrained in Santa Anna's tactical plan for the battle, which was successfully played out on the first day. In that vein, it is not surprising that he would have been disingenuous with the opinions of his relatively inexperienced engineer-in-chief who was twenty years his junior. That the American engineers would be capable of cutting a path through the dense vegetation around his left was disregarded with some justification. Nothing like this had ever happened to Santa Anna, neither in Texas nor during his northern campaign. Throughout its past, the Mexican Army had utilized the engineer arm in the construction of works and fortifications, but never had Mexican engineers been tasked with cutting a path around an enemy's flank in order to unhinge his position, especially when the generals they worked for insisted upon a reliance on the cold steel of the lance and bayonet to unseat the enemy.⁸⁹

Furthermore, Santa Anna's disbelief in the possibility of an American overturning of his left flank and its subsequent occurrence is reminiscent of what happened to the Spanish Army at Somosierra in 1808, when Napoleon succeeded in unhinging a strong defensive position situated along the crest of a highway by launching a flanking attack over rough terrain that resulted in a rout of the Spanish army not unlike what was inflicted on the Mexicans at Cerro Gordo. Strikingly reminiscent of what happened to Santa Anna after the battle, when he sought refuge in a nearby village parrish and the priest refused to grant him lodging or a fresh mount, the Spanish commander at Somosierra escaped the battlefield by rough paths and in apparent solitude. The only

⁸⁹ Sánchez Lamego, *Generales de ingenieros*, pp. 10-18.

difference is that when he was caught by some of his men, also fugitives from the battle, he was lynched from a tree.⁹⁰

The individual performance of the Mexican generals involved in the battle was good when viewed in the context of the hopelessness of their situation as determined by the commander-in-chief who had decreed his army's disposition without the counsel of his subordinates or an appropriate estimation of his opponents' abilities. The ferocity of the combat and the valor with which the Mexican generals conducted themselves is well represented by the fact that of the nine generals assigned to combat command during the battle, five were captured and one was killed in action.⁹¹ Taken as a whole, the events of February-April 1847 demonstrate the extent to which a lack of political homogeneity and the use of outmoded tactics could result in reversals for the Mexican general officer corps. Whereas the Polkos Revolt reveals the extent to which political infighting hampered the Mexican war effort, the battle of Cerro Gordo demonstrates that the use of Frederickian tactics led to the unraveling of the Mexican position.

⁹⁰ Chandler, *Dictionary of the Napoleonic Wars*, p. 399.

⁹¹ Alcaraz, *Apuntes*, p. 184.

Chapter 5: Mexico City Interlude: The Reluctant Rebuilding of an Army

The destruction of the Army of the East at Cerro Gordo is probably the most devastating defeat ever suffered by Mexican arms with the possible exception of the battle of San Jacinto. So many hopes and aspirations had been devastated in one fell swoop that Santa Anna was sunk into the deepest despair in the aftermath of the battle. Having promised to win a great victory, the reversal placed him in a precarious position. Strangely, his return to Mexico City did not stir any intrigue as both the political and military leadership came to realize that the *gringos* would indeed soon come to trample the ancient Aztec capital and that the battle for the heart of their nation would soon unfold.⁹²

The sobering effect of the battle of Cerro Gordo determined that either the Mexican army would have to lay aside its internal political differences or suffer inevitable defeat. There were no longer enough troops or generals left who could be counted upon to be completely politically and tactically acceptable to Santa Anna. From here on, Santa Anna would have to work with the potential rivals that he had avoided incorporating into his army at San Luis Potosí and Cerro Gordo. Now, in the depths of desperation, Santa Anna and his war minister, General Tornel, realized that if they intended to defend the capital effectively, they would have to join all forces available and muster the cooperation of previously perceived undesirables such as major-generals Gabriel Valencia and Juan Álvarez. Thus, Santa Anna reluctantly sent emissaries to San Luis Potosí and Acapulco inviting Valencia and Álvarez to join him for the coming struggle against the Americans. It is interesting to note that perhaps the only reason rival *caudillos* such as Valencia and

⁹² Alcaraz, *Apuntes*, p. 205-212.

Álvarez did not march on the capital to usurp power at that moment was because they both may have feared the public backlash such an action would incur in the face of foreign invasion and the danger of being visibly responsible for the defeat that would follow. It might serve well to explain the politics that had thus far effected the non-participation of Valencia and Álvarez, men who led substantial forces that might have abetted the Mexican war effort long before Cerro Gordo.⁹³

In August 1847, the forty-eight year old Major-General Gabriel Valencia found himself in command of the much reduced 4,000-man Army of the North. Described by contemporaries as a heavysset, bull-necked man of average height and build, with small side whiskers and a heavy black mustache, Justin Smith characterized him as “destitute of every principle of honor and honesty” with a “hard cruel look about his cold blue eyes.”⁹⁴ Ambitious and headstrong, Valencia exhibited a certain charismatic panache and enjoyed an extremely popular following amongst the common soldiers. Having risen to the rank of general by the age of 32 in 1831, Valencia had played a major role in Mexico’s factional wars and was known to be every bit as much a political chameleon as Santa Anna. What made him absolutely unacceptable to Santa Anna was the memory of his opposition in 1844, when he and other generals including Álvarez, had launched a coup against his centralist regime that unseated him in favor of the *moderados*. In the wake of Santa Anna’s return, War Minister Tornel had worked his best to keep Valencia away from both the front lines, where he posed a threat to Santa Anna’s person; and Mexico City, where he posed a threat to Santa Anna’s regime. The trick for Tornel and Santa Anna was to definitely keep Valencia occupied, but in a lesser position where he could

⁹³ Díaz Díaz, *Caudillos y caciques*, pp. 180-218.

⁹⁴ Smith, *War with Mexico*, p. 88.

pose no threat to the regime. Thus, with the thought of relegating him to a secondary theater where he could neither steal the victory from his grasp nor the presidential chair out from under him, Santa Anna placed Valencia in command of the garrison at Tula, three hundred miles to the northwest of the estimated location of the main action. Assigned to harass the precarious enemy supply lines across Nuevo León, Valencia smoldered in Tula until the war minister's discovery of his complicity in a dissident conspiracy hatched by the Red Comet Society which prompted the sudden removal of Valencia in favor of placing him in command of the dilapidated Army of the North at San Luis Potosí. Both Santa Anna's and Tornel's reasoning at this time reflected their belief that Valencia could not turn the Army of the North against the government because of the continued presence of several *santanista* generals within the ranks. Also, Santa Anna estimated that the victory he was sure to obtain would seal his hold on power and nullify Valencia's dissident overtures. Therefore, upon the army's return to San Luis Potosí, Valencia was detailed from Tula to take command and instructed to remain there as a counterweight against any potential moves against that city by Taylor's forces.

In the weeks following the utter disaster at Cerro Gordo, Santa Anna and Tornel soon realized that opposing Scott's invasion in strength would require summoning the Army of the North to the Valley of México. Furthermore, in an army where generals respected no hierarchy and were akin to warlords temporarily allied in the pursuit of some common goal, Valencia could no longer be removed from command without Santa Anna having to bear the brunt of accusations of nepotism that might very well engender the animosity of that chief who might very well march against him. In Santa Anna's estimation it was

better to summon Valencia to the capital to fight alongside him than to suffer the consequences of trying to remove him from command.⁹⁵

In the summer of 1847, the 3,000-man strong Army of the South was led by the venerable southern *caudillo*, Major-General Juan Álvarez. At fifty-five, Álvarez was the scion of a wealthy Spaniard and his indigenous concubine. He was lucky enough to obtain an inheritance during his childhood by way of his father's death which enabled him to pursue a haphazard education. Scathingly described by Justin Smith as an "ignorant mulatto from the wilds, who understood only half-savage partisan fighting," Álvarez rallied to the banner of insurrection against the Spaniards at age eighteen and thereafter supported the liberal Guerrero, whose cause he continued to champion long after Guerrero's execution in 1831.⁹⁶ A staunch federalist who enjoyed the utmost confidence of the Indian masses of his home region, Álvarez was not highly regarded as a professional soldier, having gained the lion's share of his experience conducting guerrilla campaigns against the centralists. Having played an uncharacteristically minimal role in the initial political turmoil that led to Santa Anna's return, Álvarez lent his support to Santa Anna upon the latter's election to the presidency and issued various proclamations advocating the unison of all Mexicans before the face of foreign invasion regardless of political persuasion. In that vein, following the battle of Cerro Gordo, Álvarez led the forces at his disposal to the capital where he placed himself at the disposal of his former rival. Completely mistrusted by Santa Anna, who could not forgive him for the role he had played in his ouster in 1844, Álvarez was assigned the secondary role of harassing Scott's advance on Puebla with 2,000 cavalrymen. Again, Santa Anna found it hard to

⁹⁵ Smith, *War with Mexico*, pp. 134-136.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 88 and Muñoz y Pérez, *El Gral. D. Juan Álvarez*, p. 131.

accommodate Álvarez's desire for a place in the army and sought solace in distancing the general to a secondary role where he might busy himself without stirring up trouble. In an ironic turn of events brought on by his own obstinacy, Santa Anna found himself seconded by the same two men who had engineered his downfall only three years before.⁹⁷

The army that was reformed by Santa Anna to face the final American assault on the capital was a mere skeleton, both morally and physically, of what the Army of the North had been merely six months before. Although artillery and ammunition was somewhat more plentiful due to its availability from the Mexico City ramparts, the gun crews needed to operate them were practically non-existent. Likewise, training suffered amongst all service branches as Santa Anna rushed to prepare his troops to make an abrupt about-face against the invader. The morale of the infantry was weak due to the continuous losses incurred by the Mexican army which lent credence to the view that the *gringos* were invincible. The only troops that retained their confidence on the eve of battle were the Mexico City National Guard units who marched to their positions on the outskirts of the city at the pinnacle of the Mexican defenses on a steep hill called El Peñón amidst the grandeur of a military parade complete with martial music and fluttering banners.⁹⁸

Santa Anna's strategy reflected the fact that his army lacked the morale and physical strength with which to mount an aggressive campaign against Scott. Initially, Santa Anna spread his forces across the defensive landscape of the city's *garitas* and causeways,

⁹⁷ Díaz Díaz, *Caudillos y caciques*, pp. 209-216.

⁹⁸ Alcaraz, *Apuntes*, p. 214.

ignoring Napoleon's maxim that "he who defends all defends nothing."⁹⁹ Forced to alter his defensive posture upon Scott's undertaking to attack the city from its vulnerable southern flank, Santa Anna evacuated the units stationed at El Peñón and spread them opposite Scott's advance on the southern front.¹⁰⁰ The composition of the Mexican Army in August 1847 is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. The Mexican Army, Early August 1847

Commander-in-Chief: *General de División* Antonio López de Santa Anna

Chief of Staff & Minister of War: *General de Brigada* Lino José Alcorta

Aides-de-Camp: *Gen. de Brigada* José Ignacio Basadre & *Gen. Grad.* Benito Zenea

Artillery/Engineers: *General de División* Ignacio Mora y Villamil

I. Army of the East (Reconstituted): *General de División* Manuel María Lombardini

Deputy Commander: *General de División* Manuel Rincón

- 1st Brigade: *General de Brigada* Andrés Terrés y Maságuer
- 2nd Brigade: *General de Brigada* Mariano Martínez de Lejarza
- 3rd Brigade: *General de Brigada* Joaquín Rangel
- 4th Brigade: *General de Brigada* Simeón Ramírez
- 5th Brigade: *General de Brigada* Francisco Pérez
- 6th Brigade: *General de Brigada* Antonio León
- Cavalry Brigade: *General de Brigada* Benito Quijano

II. Mexico City National Guard Forces (El Peñón): *Gral. De División* José Joaquín de Herrera

- 1st Brigade: *General de Brigada* Pedro María Anaya
- 2nd Brigade: Colonel Anastasio Zerecero
- 3rd Brigade: *General Graduado* Matías de la Peña y Barragán
- 4th Brigade: *General de Brigada* Ignacio Martínez Pinillos

III. Army of the North: *General de División* Gabriel Valencia

Artillery: *General Graduado* Antonio Corona

1st Division: *General de Brigada* Francisco Mejía

- 1st Brigade: *General Graduado* Nicolás Mendoza
- Cavalry Brigade: *General de Brigada* Manuel Romero

⁹⁹ Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, p. 257.

¹⁰⁰ Alcaraz, *Apuntes*, pp. 215-218.

Table 6. (cont.)

2nd Division: *General de Brigada* Anastasio Parrodi

- 1st Brigade: *General Graduado* José María González de Mendoza
- 2nd Brigade: *General de Brigada* José María García

3rd Division: *General de Brigada* José Mariano Salas

- 1st Brigade: *General de Brigada* Santiago Blanco
- Cavalry Brigade: *General de Brigada* Anastasio Torrejón

IV. Army of the South (Cavalry Reserve): *General de División* Juan Álvarez
Chief of Staff: *General de Brigada* Tomás Moreno

- 1st Cavalry Brigade: *General de Brigada* Manuel Andrade
- 2nd Cavalry Brigade: *General de Brigada* Julián Juvera
- 3rd Cavalry Brigade: *General de Brigada* Ángel Guzmán
- 4th Cavalry Brigade: *General de Brigada* Ángel Pérez Palacios
- 5th Cavalry Brigade: *General de Brigada* Antonio José Jáuregui

V. Miscellaneous Forces

Forces at Chapultepec Castle: *General de División* Nicolás Bravo
Second-in-Command: *General de Brigada* José Mariano Monterde

Totals: Exact numbers unknown, estimated at 15-20,000 men of all arms.
Source: Adams, *The War in Mexico*, p. 94

The generals appointed to command the haphazard forces assembled by Santa Anna were a reflection of what little there was on hand. In early August 1847, Santa Anna took personal command of the Army of the East and allocated the best equipment available to these troops with which he intended to primarily defend the capital. As at San Luis Potosí, Santa Anna picked his most trusted subordinates both politically and tactically speaking to command the brigades that made up this army. Amongst them were the newly promoted Generals Terrés and Pérez, who had distinguished themselves at La Angostura and accompanied Santa Anna to the capital in the wake of the Polkos Revolt. Another veteran assigned to brigade command was Brigadier-General Simeón Ramírez

who had remained ever loyal to Santa Anna and rendered service as a staff officer both at La Angostura and Cerro Gordo. The other four brigade commanders in the army were by-products of the delicate political atmosphere in the capital who had remained steadfastly loyal to Santa Anna above all else during the Polkos Revolt.

The forty-four year old Brigadier-General Joaquín Rangel was a veritable *santanista* who had maintained the *ciudadela's* loyalty to Santa Anna during the troubles with the polkos and served in deputy command of the reserve at Cerro Gordo. Described by one source as “tall and light complected, with a prominent forehead, long nose, gray eyes, and blonde moustache,” Rangel was highly respected as a professional within the army and actually promulgated a defensive measure for the vulnerable southern approaches to the capital culminating at Churubusco Bridge which was duly adopted by his chief.¹⁰¹

Personally summoned to the Valley of Mexico by Santa Anna from repose in Chihuahua, the thirty-nine year old Brigadier-General Mariano Martínez de Lejarza was a staunch *santanista* who had served brief terms as interim governor of both Chihuahua and New Mexico during the 1830s. The cavalry brigade commander, Brigadier-General Benito Quijano, was a long-time member of Santa Anna's staff who had demonstrated sufficient dedication to Santa Anna over the span of his thirty-five year career as to merit a field command.¹⁰²

Perhaps the most surprising addition to Santa Anna's array of field commanders in the Army of the East was the fifty-one year old Oaxaca native, Brigadier-General Antonio León. An ardent federalist who had supported Gómez Farías' presidency, León was a moving force behind his native state's dissident pronouncement following the removal of

¹⁰¹ Gayon Córdova, *La ocupación yanqui*, p. 176.

¹⁰² Almada, *Gobernadores del Estado de Chihuahua.*, pp. 98-103.

the *puros* from power. Interestingly enough, despite Oaxaca's protest at the displacement of the *puros*, León pledged his state's dedication to the Mexican national cause and promptly organized his state's *activo* forces and marched to Santa Anna's aid at Cerro Gordo at the head of a brigade. Although he arrived too late to prevent disaster, Santa Anna nevertheless integrated his forces into the reformed Army of the East and retained León in brigade command. A former two-time governor of his native state and ardent supporter of Santa Anna's prewar pro-federalist pronouncements, León was probably the best example of an impartial patriot general who served admirably despite being at odds with the government he served. Widely recognized as a model officer, León was highly regarded even by Santa Anna himself who referred to him as "the courageous León" in his official correspondence.¹⁰³

The generals assigned to command the National Guard brigades dispersed throughout the Mexican defenses following the evacuation of El Peñón were for the most part *moderado* federalists who had secured command following the elevation of their political party to power following the Polkos Revolt. A notable member of this group was the fifty-three year old Brigadier-General Pedro María Anaya, an ardent *santanista* who had served recently as interim president. The forty-seven year old Brevet Brigadier-General Matías de la Peña y Barragán was a former leader of the Polkos Revolt who was maintained in the reserve because of his clearly perceived political volubility. The commander of the 4th Brigade, Brigadier-General Ignacio Martínez Pinillos was a fifty-three year old native of Oaxaca who was residing in repose in Mexico City when recalled to active duty.

¹⁰³ Crawford, *The Eagle*, p. 104 and *Los gobernantes de Oaxaca*, pp. 96-98.

Previously regarded by the war ministry as an entity within which to dump politically unacceptable elements, the Army of the North was led by General Gabriel Valencia to the Valley of Mexico upon Santa Anna's summons. For the most part, the army's primary unit commanders were veterans of the Buena Vista Campaign who had remained with the colors at San Luis Potosí following Santa Anna's departure in late February. One notable exception was the commander of the 3rd Division, Major-General José Mariano Salas. The seasoned fifty-year old *moderado* veteran of Mexico's factional conflicts had been banished to San Luis Potosí as punishment for his active support of the Polkos Revolt against Gómez Farías and by extension, Santa Anna. Previously regarded as a staunch *santanista*, Salas' previous refusal to accede the presidency to the *puros* following Santa Anna's return confirmed his political volubility in Santa Anna's eyes and he was condemned to banishment at San Luis Potosí, where he smoldered until thrust into the arms of the like-minded Valencia, also recently arrived from Tula. Eager to see action against the Americans, Salas was a moving force behind Valencia's self-serving search for victory and played a prominent role in supporting Valencia's selection of a position independent of Santa Anna's at Rancho de Padierna. The two newly promoted brigadiers in General Anastasio Parrodi's 3rd Infantry Division, Brevet Brigadier-Generals José María González de Mendoza and José María García were both rather youthful officers of *santanista* political persuasion whose recent conduct in the field during the Buena Vista Campaign merited their elevation to higher command.¹⁰⁴

The generals assigned to command in the Army of the South were an interesting mix of officers who were either Álvarez's original appointees or *santanistas* recently assigned to command by the war ministry as their units were integrated into this army made up of

¹⁰⁴ *Los gobernantes de Oaxaca*, pp. 80-81.

cavalry units. Andrade, Juvera, Jáuregui, and Guzmán were all *santanista* veterans of the Santa Anna's northern campaign who were assigned to serve under Álvarez with the intention of watching his movements and acting as a political counterweight with which to maintain the army's loyalty. Only Brigadier-Generals Ángel Pérez Palacios and Tomás Moreno, the army chief of staff, were Álvarez appointees who had accompanied him from Acapulco to assist Santa Anna's defense of the capital. It is interesting to observe Álvarez's movements during the campaign, as it seems that although he was initially full of bravado, his spirits seemed to wane and his performance at Molino del Rey gave the impression of a lethargic amateur that he most certainly was not. Perhaps the command structure imposed on his army by Santa Anna and its relegation to act as a strategic reserve shook his resolve as he came to the realization that Santa Anna no longer had any confidence in him.¹⁰⁵

The commanders of the reserve units assigned to command the respective garrisons at El Peñón and Chapultepec Castle were Major Generals José Joaquín de Herrera and Nicolás Bravo. Both former presidents of Mexico, Herrera and Bravo shared a strong *moderado* political persuasion and had been recalled to command by Santa Anna on the eve of battle in the hopes of occupying their ambitious minds with employment. While Herrera was destined to play a lackluster role in command of the forces remaining at El Peñón, the sixty-one year old Bravo would gain everlasting fame in command of the fortress of Chapultepec. Bravo's deputy was the commandant of the War College, Brigadier-General José Mariano Monterde a scholarly old engineer officer of a rather apolitical nature who had spent much of his thirty-five career in academia.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Flores Maldonado, *Gobernadores del Estado de Guerrero*, pp. 23-26.

¹⁰⁶ Sánchez Lamego, *Generales de ingenieros*, pp. 146-153.

The commander of the fortified area at the vital Churubusco crossing was entrusted to the distinguished, white-haired, Major-General Manuel Rincón, a sixty-three year old *moderado* federalist who had begun his career as an insurgent fighter in his native Veracruz. A veteran of Santa Anna's campaigns against the French at Tampico and the Spanish at Veracruz, Rincón had retired from active service in 1840, but had been recalled from retirement by Santa Anna to command the vital Churubusco bridgehead, a post which the passionate old patriot accepted with considerable zeal.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ *Churubusco en la acción military del 20 de agosto de 1847*, pp. 9-12.

Chapter 6: Of Ambition and Ammunition: The Battles for Mexico City

The performance of the Mexican generals in the Mexico City Campaign laid bare the considerable deficiencies of the army's ineffective command structure. The lack of centralized command condemned Santa Anna to rely on subordinates who did not necessarily recognize his dominance nor always concur with his orders. Despite a disparity in numbers that seemingly worked to his advantage, the fact that Santa Anna could only be sure that troops under his immediate command would accede to his orders nullified the problem for the Americans and practically ensured that they would be able to confront the Mexican forces arrayed against them in a piece-meal fashion that would level the odds. Thus, a combination of disunity of command and faulty tactical disposition stacked the cards against Santa Anna even before the campaign commenced.¹⁰⁸

The destruction of the Mexican Army of the North at the battle of Padierna is customarily attributed to the rivalries characteristic of the Mexican high command. When Valencia disobeyed Santa Anna's orders to join him at Churubusco and placed himself out on a limb, he believed he could oblige his chief to join him in a favorable battle against the Americans that he could claim credit for winning. However, rather than exploit the opportunity afforded him to destroy a large part of the American forces who were trying to find a way around Valencia's well entrenched position at Rancho de Padierna, Santa Anna merely allowed Valencia to be destroyed piece-meal, an action that can only be attributed to either Santa Anna's customary slow reflexes on the battlefield or a desire to promulgate the elimination of a rival who had disobeyed his orders and must

¹⁰⁸ DePalo, *The Mexican National Army*, pp. 125-129.

pay the price. During the day before the battle, the Mexican troops under Valencia had performed well and the artillery directed by Blanco had even gained an advantage over the American batteries. However, the following morning, once it became known that the Americans had turned the position and that reinforcements were not coming from Santa Anna, the Mexican forces collapsed before the American onslaught.

Although the deep-seated conflict between Valencia and Santa Anna certainly eased the task for the Americans, I argue that the failure of the Mexican Army of the North at the battle of Contreras is sufficiently explained by the Mexican reliance on linear tactics inherited from their Spanish Bourbon heritage. Throughout the action, the American forces exerted a fluidity that allowed them to maintain the initiative by making concentric probing attacks on the static Mexican positions. The use of the engineer arm to hack a path around the flank of Valencia's troops in order to strike him from the rear at dawn on September 8th recreated the scenario that had occurred at Cerro Gordo, whereby Valencia was caught by surprise. Apparently, Valencia had hoped that the Americans would hurl themselves in a frontal assault against his impregnable position at Rancho de Padierna. Such a gesture had been made by an impetuous American general on the evening of September 7th. That attack had failed miserably and caused the Americans great loss. For the first time during the war, American batteries were silenced by Mexican gun crews. It seemed as though Valencia's operational plan had succeeded. However, as Mexican sentries were wakened by the work of American axes during the night, it became apparent to Valencia that the Americans had cut a path around his left flank and were disposed to strike him from the rear. Thereafter, the battle was a re-enactment of Cerro Gordo. It stands to reason that if Valencia would have exhibited the same freedom of

movement and reinforcement, he could have avoided a rout and mounted a more effective if not successful resistance. Interestingly enough, none of Valencia's subordinates were veterans of the Cerro Gordo fiasco and one of his divisional generals had not even been engaged against the Americans.¹⁰⁹

For their part, Valencia's generals concerned themselves with rallying their panic-stricken troops, but were ultimately carried away by the American onslaught that overtook their position from both front and rear. Blanco, Mejía, Mendoza, and Salas were all wounded and captured while defending the guns at Rancho de Padierna, meanwhile the 3rd Infantry Division's command cadre was decimated on the battle's rear axis, where the division commander Parrodi and both of his brigadiers, González de Mendoza and García, fell into the hands of the enemy. Only Valencia and his redoubtable cavalry generals Romero and Torrejón managed to escape, the latter individually by rough paths that led him to the safety of the village of San Gerónimo, where he laid low for awhile to avoid Santa Anna's wrath. Torrejón later secured command of a cavalry brigade in Álvarez's Army of the South.¹¹⁰

Following his uncanny escape from the battlefield, Valencia managed to avoid detection by a vengeful Santa Anna and made it as far as Toluca where he managed to involve himself in yet another anti-*santanista* conspiracy in conjunction with generals Pedro de Ampudia, Valentín Canalizo, and Juan Nepomuceno Almonte, who had all lost confidence in Santa Anna following the disaster at Cerro Gordo and elected to remove themselves from his service. After publishing a manifesto exonerating him of all blame

¹⁰⁹ DePalo, *The Mexican National Army*, pp. 129-131.

¹¹⁰ Alcaraz, *Apuntes*, p. 241.

for the disaster at Contreras, Valencia fell into the hands of the enemy and subsequently died in the capital of an apoplectic attack just after the American takeover of the city.¹¹¹

The Mexican generals' performance at the subsequent twin battles of Churubusco and Chapultepec was gallant and courageous, but an ordnance officer's supposed misunderstanding of Santa Anna's orders for the deployment of an ammunition dump near the San Mateo Convent resulted in an early exhaustion of ammunition. Forced to gradually relinquish their position in light of the Intendance Service's failure to deploy reinforcements and additional ammunition to the threatened sector, Generals Rincón and Anaya distinguished themselves to a great extent and it was upon his capture by American troops that Anaya uttered the famous phrase in response to General Twiggs inquiry regarding the location of the artillery park, "General, if there was any ammunition, you would not be here."¹¹² In addition, Generals Rangel and Pérez performed admirably while covering the Mexican retreat and even Santa Anna exposed himself repeatedly while exhorting his troops to hold their positions. As at Cerro Gordo, it was a lack of solid interior lines that forced the Mexicans to give way. In light of a very effective military deception campaign enacted by the Americans, Santa Anna was forced to deploy his troops in spread-out non-mutually supportive positions that disallowed him from shifting his forces to the locations of American attacks. It was tragic for the Mexicans that while Rincón's troops at Churubusco were running out of ammunition and withdrawing under daunting pressure, thousands of their fellows maintained their positions to the north and south without receiving timely orders to assist. Santa Anna

¹¹¹ Carreño, *Jefes*, pp. 33-35.

¹¹² Rivera Marín, *Si hubiera parque*, p. 13.

himself appeared on scene too late and in feverish annoyance at the American attack in an unexpected location.¹¹³

The subsequent battle of Molino del Rey on September 9th was a striking example of both the great quality of the Mexican forces when well led from superbly fortified defensive positions and the great deficiency in the Mexican use of cavalry. Having divined the American intention of attacking the mill, on the eve of battle, Santa Anna convened the generals assigned to the defense of this sector and outlined for them the following operational plan: After the infantry brigades of León, Rangel, Pérez, and Ramírez repulsed the initial American attack on the fortified strongholds at the Molino del Rey and the Casa Mata, which were linked by a stone wall, Álvarez's 4,000 strong cavalry reserve would swoop down on the enemy and roll up their forces from the right flank.¹¹⁴

The following day, the plan had an extremely favorable start as the Mexican infantry succeeded in repulsing the initial American onslaught as planned. In this instance, the Americans played into the Mexicans' hands and launched a frontal assault that enabled the Mexican generals to carry out Santa Anna's plan for a linear frontal defense of their position. The result was complete success. The American assault force composed of 500 men lost 11 of its 14 officers in a matter of minutes and was repulsed. Supporting assaults on the Casa Mata were also held in check by the Mexicans until a lack of ammunition and the effectiveness of American artillery forced them to retire. It is significant that the Mexican generals maintained discipline within the ranks and withdrew their forces in good order as they continuously decimated the Americans' ranks. It is also significant

¹¹³ Alcaraz, *Apuntes*, p. 293

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 292.

that the Americans did not use their artillery from the outset and only opened fire after the first assault wave had been repulsed and the value of the Mexican defensive position accurately appreciated.¹¹⁵

For his part, Álvarez failed to coordinate his attack in time and his cavalry brigades were launched towards the American position early, and from the wrong direction, and in a piece-meal fashion that allowed the Americans to react quickly and deploy their artillery. Thus, after the cavalry was routed and their flanks secured, the Americans kept up the artillery pressure on the fortified lines held by the infantry until they were forced to relinquish their positions due to exhaustion of ammunition.¹¹⁶

Enraged at the negative turnout of the battle, Santa Anna sent an aide to Álvarez and demanded to know why his attack had failed. Álvarez responded by presenting himself before Santa Anna and explaining that the attack had been sabotaged by General Andrade who as commander of the lead brigade assigned to open the attack had refused to acknowledge Álvarez's seniority at the critical moment and blatantly refused to charge over the stipulated ground. Although Juvera and Guzmán confirmed Álvarez's account and Andrade was placed under arrest, the commander-in-chief did not fully accept this explanation and harbored resentment against Álvarez for having lost the battle.¹¹⁷

In contrast to Álvarez, Generals León, Rangel and Pérez all played distinguished roles in the defense and were constantly in the thick of the fight, encouraging their men and directing their fire. In the end it was left up to Rangel to oversee the troops' withdrawal, as León was killed in action by a bullet to the chest and Pérez was carried from the field with a severe leg wound. The only check to the infantry generals' performance was the

¹¹⁵ Alcaraz, *Apuntes*, pp. 168-188

¹¹⁶ Salas Cuesta, *Molino del Rey: Historia de un monumento*, pp. 132-137.

¹¹⁷ Díaz Díaz, *Caudillos y caciques*, p. 151.

inexplicable disappearance of Ramírez from the field of battle. Later it was discovered that the general had apparently lost his nerve due to the perceived shortage of ammunition and abandoned his troops prior to the commencement of hostilities.¹¹⁸

The fact that the Mexican defense was not seriously hampered by the panic of one of its general officers lends credence to my argument that a faulty command structure and the use of outmoded tactics are sufficient for explaining the defeat of the Mexican forces rather than the morality of its generals. At Molino del Rey, the Mexican forces came as close as they ever would to checking the American investment of the capital and it was because their generals had finally devised an operational plan that took advantage of American errors. All of the generals who served in the fortified positions at Molino del Rey and the Casa Mata were veterans of earlier campaigns against the Americans and two had distinguished themselves at La Angostura. In the final count, as the opening success of Mexican arms demonstrates, it was not the cravenness of Ramírez that cost them the battle, but American firepower and a lack of ammunition. By the same token, the willingness of the Americans to launch a frontal assault against prepared defenses and the Mexican disposition of solid interior lines that enabled mutual support between Pérez, Rangel and León initially evened the odds for the Mexicans and nearly won them the day.¹¹⁹

The subsequent battle for Chapultepec and the *garitas* was a foregone conclusion after the fall of the Molino del Rey. Following the American investment of the Molino del Rey, Santa Anna was confused by Scott's deceptive gestures on other sectors of the front and failed to bring his numerical superiority to bear at the decisive moment, thereby

¹¹⁸ Smith, *War with Mexico*, p. 145.

¹¹⁹ Salas Cuesta, *Molino del Rey*, pp. 128-129.

violating Napoleon's maxim regarding "getting to the field of battle with the most men in the least time."¹²⁰ Perceiving the American gesture on Chapultepec to be a diversionary strike, Santa Anna failed to bolster the castle's defenses and General Bravo was forced to do what he could with the mere couple hundred men assigned to his command.¹²¹

Although Santa Anna was finally forced to acknowledge his mistake once the American attack got under way, he was unable to send ample reinforcements in time to affect the battle's outcome. For his part, General Bravo conducted himself like the gallant old soldier he was and was injured by falling masonry when an American cannonball struck a rampart he was standing on while directing his troops' fire. Regaining his composure, Bravo rejoined the front-line and continued to wave his bejeweled sword over his head while encouraging his men until he was wounded and captured along with his deputy, General Monterde.¹²² One general assigned to assist in the fortress' defense at the last minute, the forty-seven year old Brigadier-General Juan Nepomuceno Pérez, was killed in action during the hand-to-hand combat that ensued once the Americans gained the works and overwhelmed the defenders. It is worthy of note that Bravo had rightly recognized the nature of the American threat on his front and had tried to impress his concerns to Santa Anna, but to no avail.¹²³

Following the loss of Chapultepec, as the Americans launched themselves headlong against the gates of Mexico City, Santa Anna rushed to send reinforcements to repel the invaders' advance along the causeways that culminated in the *garitas* of Belén and San Cosme. Having originally believed the main attack would be made against the *Garita de*

¹²⁰ Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, pp. 161-177.

¹²¹ Departamento del Distrito Federal, *El Asalto al Chapultepec y los Niños Heroes*, pp. 47-79.

¹²² *El Asalto al Castillo de Chapultepec*, p. 26.

¹²³ Trueba, *Nicolás Bravo, el mexicano que perdonó*, p. 86.

San Antonio, where General Ignacio Martínez Pinillos had been afforded considerable resources, it took considerable skill and energy for Santa Anna to redeploy his forces to the threatened areas in the mass confusion that reigned within the Mexican lines. Previously having left General Terrés in command of a makeshift force of 200 troops and three artillery pieces guarding the *Garita de Belén* with instructions to hold the gate at all costs should the Americans attempt to access the capital from that direction, the timorous Terrés inexplicably abandoned his position in the face of the American onslaught and ordered his troops to seek refuge in the heavily fortified *Ciudadela* about 100 yards to the north. In the meantime, upon hearing the guns thundering at the Belén Gate, Santa Anna rushed from the *Garita de San Antonio* to halt the American onslaught with a handful of troops and came upon a sight that he was loath to believe: the Americans had already breached the entrance and were flooding past. Demanding to know why he had not been notified of the American attack, Santa Anna was met by several junior officers of Terrés' command who had marched to the sound of the guns from nearby positions claiming that they had been initially ordered to withdraw by Terrés himself. Infuriated, Santa Anna sought out Terrés and came upon the disconcerted general in the *Ciudadela*, taking refuge in a doorway behind the line of fire. At this sight, Santa Anna became white with rage and leapt upon the hapless general, tearing the epaulets from his uniform and striking him across the face with his riding crop.¹²⁴ Stripped of his rank and placed under arrest, Terrés was in the process of being removed from the field when he fell into the hands of the Americans. Regardless, Santa Anna had brought too little too late to the battle. Despite acquitting himself with the utmost bravery while trying to rally the *garita's*

¹²⁴ Crawford, *The Eagle*, pp. 107-108.

defenders, he was obliged to order a withdrawal which forced him to ultimately relinquish the city.¹²⁵

Despite the loss of the Belén Gate, Santa Anna's troops fared much better in holding the *Garita de San Cosme*, where Generals Rangel and Peñy y Barragán were entrusted with its defense. Having been badly mauled while defending Chapultepec, the remnants of Rangel's brigade had been deployed to San Cósme where they soon found themselves heavily engaged by American forces intent upon breaking through to the capital. Here, Rangel distinguished himself once more, "fighting like a lion" against the American advance down the Belén causeway.¹²⁶ Forced to relinquish his initial position, Rangel rallied his command at Santo Tomás and with the aid of disparate forces under the command of General Torrejón, launched a determined counterattack that succeeded in momentarily halting the American assault. Forced to withdraw to the ramparts of the main gate, Rangel succeeded in rallying a few elements of his fleeing command and organized a desperate defense in conjunction with General Peña y Barragán. Courageously exposing himself to enemy fire, Rangel was finally struck down and carried from the field bleeding profusely from a severe leg wound. Thereafter, when a dwindling ammunition supply finally forced his troops to withdraw, the incapacitated Rangel was carried along and he subsequently accompanied the army's late-night evacuation of the capital. With the loss of the capital, the war's major actions passed into history and Santa Anna was forced from command by a new government headed by men intent upon attaining peace at any cost.¹²⁷ Overall, the battles for Mexico City represented both a high and a low point in Mexican military development during the war. Whereas

¹²⁵ Alcaraz, *Apuntes*, pp. 323-324.

¹²⁶ Gayon Córdova, *La ocupación yanqui*, p. 211.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 210-215.

the annihilation of the Army of the North at the battle of Contreras demonstrates the combined effects of political heterogeneity and the use of outmoded tactics, the tactical success at Molino del Rey demonstrates the potential of Mexican generals to react effectively when confronted with a tactical premise with which they were familiar.

Conclusion

The reasons for the failure of the Mexican generals to halt the American invasion of their country are many and deeply rooted in the army's maintenance of an obsolete military tradition that led to the implementation of a faulty organizational structure and obsolete tactics. Seemingly, the Mexican general officer corps underwent various periods of morale fluctuations having to do with the shock they experienced when confronted and suddenly vanquished by a new and vastly superior military system. Beginning with an utter loss of confidence following Arista's disastrous Río Grande Campaign, morale was lifted by the moderate success of La Angostura and then dashed once more by the reversal at Cerro Gordo. By the time the army faced the Americans once more at the gates of Mexico City, the generals in command were for the most part either seasoned veterans of La Angostura or newly arrived elements whose confidence had not been tainted by previous defeat. However, by the war's close when the Mexican general officer corps came to be dominated by a few capable men like Rangel and Pérez who no longer heard the cannons of Palo Alto ringing in their ears, the quality of the forces they commanded had correspondingly diminished in terms of training and experience. Furthermore, the political divisiveness of the nation in general was reflected in the continued ideological divisions among the generals. As the war progressed, political divisiveness increased as the polemics surrounding Santa Anna himself were manifested on the battlefield.

Despite the shortcomings of Santa Anna's subordinates, most accounts of this war lay the primary responsibility for Mexico's defeat at the feet of the mercurial commander-in-

chief who was ironically the only man amongst his peers willing to gamble his career by leading the war against the invader. For a man who liked to be regarded as the “Napoleon of the West,” it is striking that Santa Anna did not grasp that great captain’s military maxims and instead emulated the mistakes made by Napoleon’s adversaries of 1805 and 1806.

Although Santa Anna is assigned primary responsibility for his country’s defeat, the ambivalent and passive aggressive attitude of many of his subordinates nevertheless implicates them as well. For every instance where one may consider the consequences of a different course of action by Santa Anna, such as his decision to retire from the hard fought draw at La Angostura, his dismissal of Robles Pezuela’s advice at Cerro Gordo, his failure to support Valencia at Padierna, and his disregard of Bravo’s entreaties at Chapultepec, one can point to instances where Santa Anna’s subordinates let him down, such as Miñón’s failure to coordinate his troops’ attack at La Angostura, Canalizo’s handling of the reserve at Cerro Gordo, Valencia’s disobedience at Padierna, Álvarez’s lack of control over the cavalry at Molino del Rey, and Terrés’s timorousness at the *Garita de Belén*.

However, I have argued that the inept actions of Santa Anna and his subordinates reflect a deeper fundamental institutional malady within the Mexican command: the manifestation of deficiencies inherited from the Spanish Bourbon military system. A careful observation of the deficiencies in organizational structure and tactics employed by the Mexican High Command suffices to explain defeat. Past analyses that have focused on the ineptitude and moral shortcomings of the generals to explain defeat may have been attractive to American authors or Mexican detractors of Santa Anna, but the more

fundamental considerations presented in this thesis are required to form a more accurate perception of the war.

Although the Mexican generals fancied themselves heirs of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic military system, they were actually scions of a severely outdated military system that had been brought low by Napoleon forty years before. There is certainly a correlation between the poor showing of the Spanish generals who led Spain's war of independence against France 1808-1815, and the poor performance of the Mexican generals during the Mexican War, 1846-1848, for they were heirs to the same military tradition.

One Mexican historian has suggested that the Mexican generals of 1847 were men who did not grasp the nature of the conflict. Their collective mindset was simply not attuned to the realistic conditions that would be incurred in a war against the United States. Having been brought up in the archaic colonial military system of Bourbon Spain, they harbored a medieval sense of warfare perpetuated by eighteenth-century models that had been laid to rest by the innovations of Napoleonic warfare introduced by French Grande Armée at Austerlitz, Jena, and Tudela. The Mexican generals had never confronted a modern army like that of the United States. Moreover, the implementation of the lessons learned on the battlefield was prevented by a combination of political infighting, resource scarcity, the rapid pace of the war, and a hesitation by the generals to adopt weapons and methods they did not fully understand. Furthermore, often regarding their men as cannon fodder, the Mexican generals could not hope to gain much in way of the confidence of their troops who all too often resented their commanders' imperiousness and the harsh discipline of the military establishment in general.

Notwithstanding their shortcomings, on the whole, the Mexican generals were a brave lot, many of whom laid down their lives in the defense of their country. Of the 72 generals engaged against the American forces on all fronts, including those not covered in this work, 40% became battlefield casualties: 17 were captured, three wounded, four wounded and captured, and five killed in action. The fate of men like Vázquez, León, Frontera, Pérez, and García can attest to the fact that the Mexican generals led from the front and often paid the ultimate price. Although often overlooked on both sides of the border, the Mexican generals of 1846-1847 remain an interesting set of men whose actions in wartime reflected the political and social convulsions of their nation in peacetime. It may be remarked of Mexico's armies of 1847, that they were armies made to be defeated and that the valor of her generals was but valor made to be wrought asunder.

APPENDIX A: BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

ANAYA, Pedro María, *General de Brigada*, was born in Huichapán, Hidalgo on May 20, 1794, the son of Pedro José Anaya and María Antonia de Álvarez. At the age of seventeen years, he embarked upon a military career as a cadet in the royalist “Tres Villas” Infantry Regiment. After extensive campaigning against the insurgents, Anaya was promoted to the rank of lieutenant and transferred to the *Compañía Alta Fuera de Huichapan* in July 1815.

After promotion to the rank of captain in the “Sierra Gorda” Dragoon Regiment and further campaigning against the insurgents in the *realista* forces of General Domingo Luaces, he endorsed independence and pronounced in favor of Iturbide’s *Plan de Iguala*, serving as a major of infantry in the campaigns of Toluca, Lerma, and Cuernavaca. Following the investment of Mexico City, Anaya was amongst the first to enter the capital at the head of the 8th Cavalry Regiment of the Line under the command of General Vicente Filisola on September 27, 1821. After endorsing Santa Anna’s *Plan de Casa Mata* in 1823, Anaya again served under Filisola in a successful campaign that momentarily deterred Guatemala’s separation from Mexico.

Promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel in 1828, Anaya served under Santa Anna against the Spanish the following year at the siege of Tampico, where he commanded the army’s cavalry corps. Rewarded by Santa Anna with promotion to the rank of colonel in early 1831, Anaya served as a delegate to the National Congress, before being dismissed from the service during the centralist presidency of General Anastasio Bustamante, who regarded Anaya as potentially unreliable because of the latter’s close association with Santa Anna. In September 1832, Anaya pronounced against Bustamante in support of Santa Anna’s coup and was rewarded for his loyalty with promotion to the rank of

brigadier general in October 1833. Appointed postmaster-general by Santa Anna, Anaya was subsequently dismissed during the interim presidency of *puro* federalist Valentín Gómez-Farías. Restored to rank once again by Santa Anna in May 1834, Anaya served in the Texas Campaign of 1836 as quartermaster-general of the column commanded by General Filisola. Dismissed once again following Santa Anna's downfall in the wake of the disaster at San Jacinto, Anaya was eventually granted a pension in 1841 and made an honorary member of the *Batallón de Inválidos*.

Recalled to the service during General José Joaquín de Herrera's *moderado* regime, Anaya served as minister of war from August-December 1845, before being dismissed yet again upon General Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga's seizure of power in April 1846. Elected to serve as a deputy in the National Congress shortly after the outbreak of war with the United States, Anaya signed his name to the anti-clerical appropriation bill of Gómez-Farías in February 1847, but subsequently reneged on the decision and threw his weight behind the reactionary Polkos Revolt in March.

Upon Santa Anna's abolition of the office of vice-president (which resulted in the dismissal of Gómez-Farías), the general-in-chief elevated his trusted friend, Anaya, to the interim presidency on April 1, 1847 and departed to confront the Americans bearing down upon the Valley of Mexico via Veracruz. Upon Santa Anna's return to the capital on May 30th, Anaya relinquished his post as chief executive and took command of Mexico City's perimeter defenses. In early August, Anaya was placed in command of Mexico City's National Guard Brigade, composed of the "Independencia," "Bravos," "Tlalpa," and "Guadalupe Victoria" National Guard Battalions, in General Manuel María Lombardini's Army of the East, deployed to defend the fortified position at El Peñón. In

anticipation of an American assault against the southern approaches to the city, Anaya was transferred with his brigade to occupy a key position on the Churubusco defensive line at the San Mateo Convent on August 19th and just prior to the battle, his command was supplemented with the elite “San Patricio” Battalion and its crack artillery section.

During the battle of August 20th, Anaya conducted himself admirably as second-in-command to General Manuel Rincón and was to be seen at the head of his national guardsmen, conducting their fire and offering encouragement at every instant. According to one source, at some point in the battle, Anaya mounted a rampart on horseback and personally directed the fire of the San Patricios’ artillery before a tremendous explosion, caused by a direct hit on a nearby gun, unhorsed him, killing five gunners and causing the brave general temporary blindness when dust from the explosion entered his eyes. Regaining his composure, Anaya remained at the head of his men, sword drawn, until a lack of ammunition forced his troops’ withdrawal. Even as the enemy gained the position, Anaya refused to budge and was taken prisoner by the Americans. Brought before General Twiggs, Anaya was admonished by the former to surrender the supposed stockpile of ammunition he was suspected of harboring in the convent. In reply, Anaya uttered the famous phrase, “*General, si hubiera parque, usted no estaría aquí.* (General, if I had any ammunition, you would not be here.)”

Paroled upon the termination of hostilities, Anaya presented himself before the reconvened national government at Querétaro and again served as interim president, from November 11-28, 1847, when he relinquished power in favor of the pro-peace party headed by *Lic.* Manuel de La Peña y Peña. Appointed minister of war by La Peña on June

2, 1848, he defended the latter's presidency against a failed pro-war rebellion just prior to the ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

Thereafter, Anaya briefly served as commandant-general of México (1849), before being appointed postmaster-general during the *moderado* regime of General José Joaquín de Herrera, 1850-1852. During the subsequent presidency of General Mariano Arista, Anaya was again appointed minister of war and served in that capacity from September 22, 1852-January 5, 1853, when he was again dismissed from the service during the liberal presidency of Ceballos. Upon Santa Anna's return to power in 1853, Anaya was yet again restored to rank and assigned postmaster-general, position in which he served until his death from the effects of chronic pneumonia, at the age of 59, near the capital, in the village of Atzacapotzalco, on March 21, 1854.

ANDRADE, Manuel, *General de Brigada*, was born in Tacubaya, México in 1800. He initiated his military career by enlisting as a cadet in the Royal Tulancingo Cavalry Squadron on February 20, 1814. After extensive campaigning against the insurgents, Andrade pronounced in favor of independence and was incorporated into Iturbide's *Ejército del Trigarante*, but subsequently supported Santa Anna's anti-monarchical *Plan de Casa Mata* in April 1823. Later, during Santa Anna's rebellion against Bustamante in 1832, Andrade actively supported the *santanistas* in Puebla and upon their victory, was rewarded with promotion to the rank of brigadier general on November 28, 1832.

After Santa Anna's return from exile, Andrade was incorporated into the reformed Army of the North at San Luis Potosí in October 1847 and was given command of the 3rd Cavalry Brigade, composed of the *Activo* Cavalry Regiment of Michoacán and the

“Lanceros Presidiales” Cavalry Regiment. In this capacity, he rendered decidedly undistinguished service at La Angostura, where he was accused of failing to cooperate with his superiors and botching an assault against the American center of operations at the Hacienda de Buena Vista during a critical moment in the battle. Brought before Santa Anna following the battle, Andrade fiercely refuted the allegations of his colleagues and pinned the blame for the cavalry’s failure on General Vicente Miñón’s actions at Saltillo, thereby avoiding censure for the time being.

After the army’s subsequent withdrawal to San Luis Potosí, Andrade was transferred and given command of a cavalry brigade in General Juan Álvarez's Army of the South, which was assigned to cover operations in the Valley of Mexico and harass Scott’s advance from Puebla. After failing to inflict any degree of attrition on the American advance towards the capital, Andrade's brigade was posted with the rest of Álvarez's four thousand-strong cavalry division east of the entrenched position at El Molino del Rey. Concurrent with Santa Anna's plan, Álvarez was ordered to launch his attack in support of the defenders when given the signal that the American attack was waning. His task was to roll up the American withdrawal with his cavalry and convert the repulse into a rout. In anticipation of the coming action, Álvarez deployed his four brigades in battle formation and assigned Andrade's formation to lead the assault. However, when the time came to counterattack the American troops during the battle of September 8th, Andrade refused to charge over the stipulated ground on the basis that it was too moist to support the weight of a massed cavalry attack. Upon realizing that his lead formation was not committed to the attack, Álvarez dispatched his chief of staff, General Tomás Moreno, to find out what was happening. When Moreno came upon Andrade and demanded to know

why he was not commencing, the latter refused to commit his troops on the basis of bad ground, but also on the basis of his perceived superiority over the *mestizo* Álvarez whom he felt should have been subordinated to his command. Another factor which may have deterred Andrade was his feeling that "Santa Anna had overlooked his achievements at Angostura and therefore, concluded to keep himself and his men out of danger." When Andrade finally concurred, he merely launched a haphazard assault over another stretch of ground contrary to that stipulated, but of his own choosing, whereupon his troopers were easily repulsed by American artillery which commenced to roll up the division, sending Álvarez's entire formation whirling for the rear in utter disorder. Furious with his subordinate, Álvarez promptly reported the entire incident to Santa Anna, who leveled charges of treason against Andrade and had him removed from command and arrested, despite suspecting the federalist Álvarez to be the primary culprit and harboring resentment against him.

After the war, with the downfall of Santa Anna, Andrade was formally acquitted of all charges and was (ironically, perhaps) appointed in 1851 by President Mariano Arista to head a multi-body senior commission intended to make recommendations for the improvement of the officer corps and investigate the feasibility of a pre-war reform plan put forth by General Pedro García Conde in 1845. Upon Santa Anna's return to power, Andrade was promoted to the rank of major general on September 10, 1854 and following the Revolution of Ayutla, served as *prefecto* and *subprefecto* of Zacatlán, Puebla, 1856-1858. Not taking part in the War of The Reform or the French Intervention, Andrade died in Mexico City, at the age of 69 years, on April 2, 1869, and is buried in the *Panteón de San Fernando*.

BLANCO, Santiago, *General Graduado*, was born in Campeche on February 9, 1815, the son of *Lic.* Cipriano Blanco and the former Salvadora Duque de Estrada. Upon admission as a cadet to the Military College in Mexico City, Blanco initiated his military career at the tender age of twelve years, on May 17, 1827. A member of the first graduating class, Blanco taught mathematics at the college until 1832, when as a lieutenant of artillery, he received his baptism by fire in defense of Bustamante's centralist regime against a coup staged by Generals Antonio López de Santa Anna and Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga.

Promoted thereafter to the rank of captain of engineers, Blanco was tasked with the fortification of his native Campeche and remained in the Yucatán for two years, 1835-1836. In 1839, Blanco served as chief of staff of a punitive expedition led by General Joaquín Rivas y Zayas against the Yucatecan separatist rebels led by Captain Santiago Imán. In this capacity, Blanco rendered distinguished service in the defense of Campeche, which was eventually forced to surrender by the rebels after being subjected to a near yearlong siege on May 16, 1840.

Upon his return from the Yucatán, Blanco was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel on December 18, 1840 and was sent to serve on the General Staff of the Army of the North, where he remained as aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief of the army, General Pedro de Ampudia, during the Mier Expedition against Texas in December 1842. Rewarded for his service with promotion to the rank of colonel of engineers on January 20, 1843, Blanco was briefly assigned to serve as secretary of the commandancy-general of Tamaulipas, before being summoned to supervise the fortification of Tampico in 1845.

Upon the outbreak of war with the United States, Blanco found himself elevated to the

post of interim commander-in-chief of the Mexico's Corps of Engineers, where he remained until May 14, 1846. Summoned in September to reorganize the engineer battalion assigned to the Army of the North at San Luis Potosí in the wake of the fall of Monterrey, Blanco was promoted by Santa Anna to the rank of *general graduado* on November 17, 1846. At the battle of La Angostura, Santa Anna entrusted the youthful Blanco to command a special detachment, designated a veritable 4th Division, composed of the Regular Engineer Battalion, the *Fijo de México* Battalion, the *Guardacosta de Tampico* Battalion, and the *Compañía Fija de Tampico*, which was assigned to attack the American right and feint movement in that direction in order alleviate pressure from the main assault against the American left. In that capacity, Blanco performed admirably during the battle of February 23rd, where his determined attack against the narrows of La Angostura forced the withdrawal and redeployment of a battery. Thereafter, Blanco joined Lombardini's division in a headlong assault against the American center, which forced a momentary American withdrawal towards their main position at the Hacienda de Buena Vista and enabled Blanco's elite *zapadores* to capture three artillery pieces. Following the army's withdrawal to San Luis Potosí, Blanco was promoted by Santa Anna to the rank of brigadier general, on March 31, 1847, in recognition of his outstanding service at La Angostura and awarded command of the 4th Infantry Brigade, composed of the *Activo* Battalion of Aguascalientes, the *Mixto de Santa Anna* Battalion, and the *Zapadores* Battalion.

In this capacity, Blanco and his command followed the rest of the Army of the North to Santa Anna's aid in the Valley of Mexico in July, taking up position at El Rancho de Padierna at the behest of the army commander, General Gabriel Valencia. During the

disaster of August 20th, Blanco skillfully directed the artillery fire which slowed the American frontal advance across the lava field known as *El Pedregal* and was to be seen desperately trying to animate the panicked soldiery with waves of his sword. Despite his efforts, however, the Mexican position collapsed entirely and Blanco fell wounded and was captured by the Americans.

Following his parole upon the advent of peace in January 1848, Blanco was elevated once more to the post of interim commander-in-chief of the Corps of Engineers until September when he was appointed to serve on a special commission of military statisticians. From 1850-1851, Blanco served as a deputy in the national congress from his native Yucatán and from January 9-February 3, 1853, he served as minister of war in the cabinet of President Ceballos. During Santa Anna's final presidential term, Blanco served as *segundo cabo* in the commandancy-general of México and director of the *Colegio Militar*. Appointed to Santa Anna's cabinet as secretary of war on January 10, 1854, Blanco was promoted by Santa Anna to the rank of major general on August 10th.

Upon the outbreak of the Revolution of Ayutla, Blanco was appointed minister of war and was sent to pacify the state of Guerrero at the head of a division. One month later, in April 1855, Blanco carried over the campaign against General Ignacio Comonfort's rebel forces in Michoacán and remained undefeated in the field even as Santa Anna's days in office were numbered. Upon Santa Anna's abdication, Blanco returned his forces to the capital intact and transferred command to General Leonardo Márquez, placing himself at the disposal of the war ministry. Thereafter, the triumphant liberals expelled Blanco from the army and stripped him of his rank, actions for which Blanco never forgave Juárez. Upon the resurgence of reactionary opposition in the War of the Reform, Blanco was

restored to rank during the presidency of General Miguel Miramón on February 18, 1858, but was once again dismissed upon the liberal triumph in 1860.

Following the fall of Puebla to the French in May 1863, Blanco placed himself at the disposal of Maximilian's imperial war ministry and was restored to rank and privilege on July 19th. Although he did not actively serve in the conflict, the liberals remained intent on exacting revenge on the old soldier for collaborating with the French and upon the investment of the capital by General Porfirio Díaz's forces, the republicans arrested Blanco and he was subsequently convicted and sentenced to two years' imprisonment, although this was eventually commuted to house arrest in Tacubaya, where Blanco requested he be incarcerated in order to be close to his ailing mother. After his release, Blanco returned to his native Campeche and served for many years as delegate to the national congress from the Yucatan even unto his death in Mexico City, at the age of 67 years, on January 19, 1883.

CANALES, Antonio, *General de Brigada*, was born in Monterrey, Nuevo León in 1802, the son of José Antonio Canales Treviño and Josefa Rosillo. In 1829, at the age of 27 years, Canales earned a law degree from the prestigious *Seminario de Monterrey* and subsequently served a term in the Tamaulipas Chamber of Deputies in 1834. Having joined the state's militia at a young age, Canales gained military experience participating in various punitive expeditions against Comanche and Lipan Apache raiders.

In 1834, Canales joined in liberal opposition to Santa Anna's centralist move against the Constitution of 1824 and as commander of federalist forces in Tamaulipas, he sent envoys to appraise Texian, Tejano, and Indian sentiments. When he discovered that the

Texians' intentions were to secede from Mexico, he practiced neutrality in the face of Santa Anna's approach while fostering the idea of an independent border republic. Observing the Texian bid for independence pay off, Canales sensed his moment approaching and in 1839, he visited the Texian towns of San Antonio, Austin, and Lipantitlán with the intention of enlisting men to his cause. Offering substantial bounties to any Texian who joined him, Canales endorsed the formation of a Texian Auxiliary Corps, composed of 270 officers and men who allied with him in preparation for a campaign against the central government.

In January 1840, Canales joined forces in Laredo with fellow separatist leader Antonio Zapata and declared the independence of a separate Republic of the Río Grande, which included the present-day states of Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, Coahuila, and a portion of Texas which lay below the Nueces River. Appointed secretary of war and commander in chief of the fledgling republic's armed forces, Canales opposed the Mexican Army of the North under the command of General Mariano Arista, but was ultimately defeated at Monterrey and forced to retreat to the Río Grande. Following the execution of President Zapata and a contingent of allied Texian troops at Santa Rita de Morelos, Coahuila, on March 29, 1840, Canales capitulated to Arista's forces and forsook his Texian allies, a move for which he received a commission from Santa Anna appointing him to the rank of brigadier general on January 12, 1843. Having become a mortal enemy of the Texians via his perceived treachery, Canales continued to promote border violence against Texas and led punitive campaigns against Corpus Christi and Lipantitlán. Along with General Pedro de Ampudia, Canales played an instrumental role in containing a Texian filibuster at Mier

in 1842. Two years later, Canales was briefly dismissed from the army for abandonment of his post but was subsequently reinstated.

Upon the outbreak of war with the United States, Canales incorporated himself into the Army of the North at Matamoros and was given command of an irregular cavalry brigade, composed of the “Villas del Norte” Mounted Auxiliary Battalion and various independent companies of mounted *rancheros*. Accompanying the army’s march north to confront Taylor, Canales and his 425-man brigade were lightly engaged at the battle of Palo Alto on May 8, 1846, where they charged a considerable distance into the scattered chaparral on the Mexican left with the intention of threatening Taylor’s supply line. The following day, Canales’ brigade, with a pair of light artillery pieces, was assigned to protect the army’s left flank and watch a crossroad that led to the rear of the Mexican position at Resaca del Guerrero. When the Mexican position crumbled beneath the withering fire of the famous American “flying” artillery, Canales was unable to stop the flood of refugees seeking safety and was forced to withdraw across the Río Grance. Covering the army’s subsequent withdrawal to Monterrey, Canales harassed the American pursuit and was badly mauled by their leading elements in a skirmish at Cerralvo in mid-April. Somewhat discouraged by a lack of artillery and increased desertion amongst his men, Canales reverted to the defensive and did little to oppose the American advance on Monterrey in September. Remaining in command of the irregular cavalry, Canales participated in the battle of Monterrey, September 21-23, 1846 and subsequently covered the army’s withdrawal to San Luis Potosí.

Upon the Santa Anna’s reorganization of the army, Canales was retained in command of the irregular cavalry and in that capacity assisted the army’s march north, acting as

part of the advance guard which screened the army's movements. Attached to General Anastasio Torrejón's 3rd Cavalry Brigade, Canales' irregulars participated in the battle of La Angostura on February 23, 1847, where they joined in an assault which succeeded in turning the U.S. left and gained the American rear in strength until halted by the superior firepower of Taylor's redeployed batteries. Following the army's return to San Luis Potosí, Canales' command was disbanded and the general returned to his home state, where he spent the rest of the war conducting guerrilla operations against Taylor's supply lines in conjunction with the forces of General José Urrea. Having survived several attempts on his life by Texians personally seeking reprisal for his actions during the rebellion of 1840, Canales remained in command of irregular troops in Tamaulipas until the end of the war.

Upon the termination of hostilities, he settled into the life of a politician, serving several terms as a deputy in the National Congress and one term as governor of Tamaulipas in 1851. The following year, he donned the uniform once more and defended the central government against a local rebellion sponsored by Texian filibusters. Subsequently retiring from the army, Canales died of a sudden illness in the town of Miquihana, at the age of fifty years, in 1852. He left a widow, María del Refugio Molano, with whom he had five children. Two of his sons, Servando and Antonio Canales Jr., played leading roles in opposing the French Intervention in Tamaulipas and later served several terms as governors of the state. Dubbed the "Chaparral Fox" by his Texian adversaries for his wiliness and cunning, the moustachioed Canales was a most colorful character who believed in divination and would govern many of his actions by having his horoscope read.

CANALIZO, Valentín, *General de División*, was born in Monterrey, Nuevo León, on January 14, 1794. He embarked upon a military career as a cadet at the age of seventeen years in the royalist Infantry Regiment of Celaya in August 1811. After extensive service against the insurgents, Canalizo adhered to Iturbide's *Plan de Iguala* and was integrated into his Army of the Three Guarantees as a lieutenant-colonel on March 2, 1821. Two years later, Canalizo pronounced in favor of Santa Anna's anti-monarchical *Plan de Casa Mata* in 1823 and then opposed Guerrero's federalist presidency in 1829, rising up in favor of General Anastasio Bustamante. Sent to subdue Oaxaca in Bustamante's stead with the rank of colonel, he then participated in the pacification of the entire Costa Chica region, being present and serving in the military *junta* that condemned ex-president General Vicente Guerrero to death on February 14, 1831.

Promoted to the rank of brigadier general in May 1831, Bustamante assigned Canalizo to head the commandancy-general of Oaxaca, where he remained until pronouncing against the interim presidency of arch-federalist Valentín Gómez-Farías. Raising the cry of "*¡Religión y Fueros!*" Canalizo attacked Oaxaca, demanding Gómez-Farías resignation in favor of Santa Anna. Upon the latter's return to power, Canalizo was made prefect of Cuernavaca and in May 1835, he defended Santa Anna's regime against a federalist insurrection in southern Mexico led by General Juan Álvarez, whereby he was appointed second-in-command of a *santanista* force that liberated Acapulco and suppressed the rebellion. Following the successful termination of the campaign against Álvarez, Canalizo reported for duty in Matamoros in April 1836, but was too late to take part in the Texas campaign. After brief service in Tampico, Canalizo served the central

government against the separatist forces of Longinos Montenegro and General Antonio Canales in Tamaulipas and successfully conducted operations against the rebels at Tampico, Monterrey, and Monclova. Following his capture of Nuevo León, Canalizo aided General Mariano Arista in pursuing the remaining rebel forces of General Canales, whose subsequent capture brought an end to the campaign.

In September 1841, Canalizo defended the Bustamante's regime against the rebel forces of General Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga in Guadalajara, but subsequently endorsed Santa Anna's seizure of power in early 1842, being promoted by his grateful chief to the rank of major general in late 1841 and ascending to the governorship and commandancy-general of the Department of the Valley of México. Supporting Santa Anna's dictatorship, Canalizo twice served Santa Anna as interim president, from October 4, 1843-June 4, 1844, and from September 21-December 6, 1844. Facing the outbreak of a nation-wide federalist rebellion at the end of his latter term, Canalizo was arrested by rebel troops at the National Palace on October 25, 1845 and exiled to Cadiz, Spain, where he languished even upon the outbreak of war with the United States.

Upon Santa Anna's return to power in October 1846, Canalizo was recalled from exile and made minister of war in the interim presidency of Gómez-Farías. Appalled by the anti-clerical appropriation bill introduced by the federalists, the arch-conservative Canalizo pronounced against Gómez-Farías and threw his weight behind the reactionary Polkos Revolt of March 1847, which resulted in Santa Anna's renunciation of his vice-president and the repudiation of the offending bill. Appointed second-in-command of the Army of the East facing the American invasion from Veracruz, Canalizo was assigned to fortify defensible points along the National Highway from Veracruz to Corral Falso and

mobilize the citizenry to oppose the invaders. Failing to generate support from the masses, in mid-April Canalizo consolidated all available troops and joined Santa Anna, who gave him command of the cavalry reserve in the army deployed to block the American advance down the National Highway near Jalapa, at Cerro Gordo. During the battle of April 18, 1847, Canalizo's 2,000 lancers were positioned in direct support of the infantry defending El Telégrafo and were instructed to defend that position to the last should the Mexican defense begin to falter. When the Americans gained the position and unexpectedly turned the Mexican flank, flooding towards the National Highway and threatening to cut off the Mexican line of retreat, Canalizo's lancers failed to check this move and merely shared in the rout as the panicked soldiery abandoned their positions and fled in fright. Canalizo, who had been skeptical of the army's chances in the first place due to his dissatisfaction with Santa Anna's deployment of troops on El Telégrafo and the lack of maneuverable ground for his cavalry, attempted to effect an orderly withdrawal, but fled the battlefield upon realizing that his efforts were of no use in stemming the tide of refugees intent only upon seeking safety.

After rejoining his chief at Orizaba, Canalizo was appointed commandant-general of Puebla and assigned to the task of mobilizing what troops he could to oppose the American advance upon that city. Somewhat cowed by his experience at Cerro Gordo, Canalizo withdrew upon first sight of the Americans at the village of San Martín and offered no resistance during their advance on Puebla. Having lost confidence in his chief's ability to win, Canalizo was merely posted to the reserve upon rejoining Santa Anna in the capital. Thereafter, on his own initiative, Canalizo assisted in the defense of the *Garita de San Cósme* on September 15th, but was awarded no official appointment by

Santa Anna. Following the termination of hostilities, Canalizo left the army and retired to private life, dying in Mexico City, a widower, unnoticed and in abject poverty, at the age of 66, on February 20, 1860. His wife, Josefa Benita Dávila, with whom he had several children, preceded him in death in January 1844.

CORONA, Antonio, *General de Brigada*, was born in 1808 to a wealthy aristocratic family in Guadalajara, Jalisco. After receiving his preliminary education in France, Corona entered military service as a subaltern in the *Activo Militia Battalion* of Jalisco in 1831, at the age of 22 years. After nearly ten years' service and specialization in the artillery, Corona was promoted to the rank of colonel of artillery on August 31, 1839. During the August 1841 Santa Anna/Paredes uprising against Bustamante's centralist regime, Corona served the *santanistas* as a senior artillery officer and remained in favor with the triumphant Paredes regime.

On the eve of war with the United States, Corona was appointed by Paredes to command the fortress of San Juan de Ulúa, guarding the harbor at Veracruz. Thereafter, upon Santa Anna's return from exile, Corona was appointed to the rank of *general graduado* and given overall command of the artillery in the reorganized Army of the North at San Luis Potosí. Apparently, his appointment was facilitated by the resignation of former federalist artillery chief, General Tomás Requena, who denounced his position in protest over Santa Anna's appointment to supreme command. As artillery chief, Corona rendered distinguished service at the battle La Angostura on February 23, 1847, where he ably directed his batteries despite disagreeing with the general battle plan put forth by other officers of Santa Anna's staff. Thereafter, Corona accompanied the army

during its withdrawal to San Luis Potosi and was promoted to the rank of brigadier general on March 31, 1847, in recognition of his service at La Angostura. After languishing in San Luis Potosí for some months, Corona was recalled to active service when the Army of the North was summoned to aid Santa Anna's defense of Mexico City in the wake of his disaster at Cerro Gordo.

Arriving in the Valley of Mexico with the army under the command of General Gabriel Valencia on July 30, 1847, Corona supervised the positioning of the army's artillery at El Rancho de Padierna and directed the repulse of an American probe against that position on the evening of August 19th. During the disaster of the following day, Corona was captured by American troops while attempting to rally his gunners, many of whom it was rumored, were chained to their pieces in order to prevent them from abandoning the field.

Paroled following the armistice, Corona was not recalled to serve in the postwar army by the federalists, but was subsequently restored to rank and appointed governor and commandant-general of the state Veracruz by Santa Anna following the latter's return to power in 1853. Remaining in command at Veracruz until 1854, Corona continued to serve on the Supreme War Council until Santa Anna was removed from power in 1856. Thereafter, Corona fought with the conservatives during the War of The Reform and exerted much energy in perpetuating conservative power in his native Jalisco. During General Miguel Miramón's brief presidency, Corona was promoted to the rank of major general, on April 11, 1859, and served as minister of war, from April 1859-December 1860. Following Miramón's decisive defeat at the battle of San Juan del Río, on December 22, 1860, Corona accompanied him into exile in France, where he busied

himself in conservative schemes to abet a monarchy in Mexico until he died in the city of Nice, at the age of 55, on February 8, 1863.

GAONA, Antonio, *General de Brigada*, was born in Havana, Cuba, in 1793. He initiated his military career as a cadet in the "Nueva España" Infantry Regiment in 1803 and went to Mexico with the *realistas*, where he participated in fourteen actions against the insurgents before supporting independence and pronouncing in favor of Iturbide's *Plan de Iguala* in 1821. Two years later, Gaona supported Santa Anna's anti-monarchical *Plan de Casa Mata* and was promoted to the rank of colonel upon Iturbide's abdication. After supporting Santa Anna's coup against Bustamante in 1832, Gaona was rewarded with promotion to the rank of brigadier general on April 30, 1832.

During Santa Anna's campaign against Texas in 1836, Gaona commanded the 1st Infantry Brigade, which reached The Alamo shortly after the siege had been completed. Thereafter, Santa Anna tasked Gaona with conducting a follow-up operation against Nacogdoches with 725 men by way of Bastrop and the Old San Antonio Road. In light of Santa Anna's pursuit of Houston's forces, the orders were canceled on April 15th and Gaona was redirected to proceed from Bastrop to join Santa Anna at San Felipe. Apparently, Gaona lost his way between Bastrop and San Felipe and his command did not participate in the battle of San Jacinto on April 21st, whereupon Gaona returned his troops to San Antonio de Béjar and withdrew with the rest of the army to Matamoros.

Following Santa Anna's downfall, Gaona was appointed commandant of the garrison at the fortress of San Juan de Ulúa, guarding the Veracruz harbor, and bore the ignominious responsibility of capitulating to the French under Admiral Jean Baudoin

following a brief bombardment in 1839. Although arrested for having capitulated, a military tribunal found Gaona's actions to be consistent with the tenuous reality of the military situation and he was acquitted of all charges.

After serving as commandant-general of Puebla in late 1846, Gaona was appointed by Santa Anna to command the fortress of San Carlos de Perote and tasked with fortifying that jurisdiction's line of defense in conjunction with the main army's position at Cerro Gordo. In the chaos that followed Santa Anna's disaster at Cerro Gordo, Gaona found himself defending Perote with a mere 23 gunners and scarcely any powder with which to serve the guns. In view of the hopelessness of the situation, Gaona evacuated Perote on General Valentín Canalizo's orders on April 19th and made his way to Mexico City, where Santa Anna assigned him to command an infantry detachment in General José Joaquín de Herrera's Army of the Center, protecting the southern approaches to the capital at Mexicalzingo. Following the battle of Molino de Rey, Gaona was assigned to second General Ignacio Martínez Pinillos in command of the defenses at the *Garita de Candelaria*, but his troops saw little action the following day, as the primary American thrust was leveled against the northern causeways into the city, at the Belén and San Cósme Gates beyond the Castle of Chapultepec. After accompanying the army's withdrawal to the Villa de Guadalupe Hidalgo, Gaona resigned his command due to illness and died in the capital during the American occupation, at the age of 55 years, in June 1848.

GARCÍA CONDE, José María, *General Graduado*, was born in Mexico City in 1801. He began his military career at the age of thirteen years, on April 26, 1814, as a cadet in the

Provincial Regiment of Zacatecas. After extensive service against the insurgents during which he was wounded once and participated in two sieges and six battles, García Conde endorsed independence via Iturbide's *Plan de Iguala* and was integrated into the royalist *Ejército del Triguarante* as a lieutenant of infantry in 1821. After adhering to Santa Anna's anti-monarchical *Plan de Casa Mata* in 1823, García Conde served primarily as a staff officer, initially as an aide-de-camp to various generals and then as a secretary in the commandancy-generals of México and Puebla, 1833-1836. Promoted to the rank of colonel on June 12, 1843, García Conde continued service in administrative positions in the capital until awarded promotion to the rank of *general graduado* in 1846, on the eve of war with the United States.

After the Army of the North's withdrawal to Monterrey following the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca del Guerrero, García Conde was sent north in July 1846 to take command as chief of staff of the army. In that capacity, García Conde assisted the commander-in-chief, General Pedro Ampudia, in the fortification of the city and presided over the positioning of the artillery at Tenería Hill, the Purísima Bridge, and the Bishop's Palace. During the initial American investment of the city, when Taylor threatened the Mexican army's line of retreat along the Camino de Saltillo with a diversionary attack around the southern flank of the Mexican position, García Conde headed a relief force composed of two artillery pieces and the *Activo* battalion of Aguascalientes which aided General Anastasio Torrejón's cavalry in repelling this effort. Thereafter, García Conde supervised the defense of the high ground at Cerro del Obispado, but was eventually forced to withdraw on September 22nd. Two days later, when all hope for continued resistance evaporated with the fall of Tenería Hill and the Purísima bridge, García Conde

was appointed to serve as member of a three-man peace commission that secured a favorable surrender which enabled the Mexican army to march out of Monterrey somewhat intact.

Upon the Army of the North's reorganization by Santa Anna at San Luis Potosí in the waning months of 1846, García Conde was appointed to command the 1st Infantry Brigade in General Manuel María Lombardini's 2nd Infantry Division, composed of the *Activo* Battalion of Jalisco and the 1st, 2nd, and 5th Line Infantry Regiments. In this capacity, García Conde rendered distinguished service at the battle of La Angostura, on February 23, 1847, where he led his brigade in Lombardini's drive against the American left and contributed to the destruction of the 1st Illinois Infantry Regiment before being repulsed by the superior firepower of the American artillery. Following the army's retreat to San Luis Potosí, García Conde was recalled to the capital and served during the rest of the war as a chief of staff in the various armies defending the Valley of Mexico.

Upon the cessation of hostilities, García Conde served for a time in the War Ministry and was appointed to head the commandancy-general of México, 1852-1853. Following the triumph of the anti-*santanista* Revolution of Ayutla, García Conde joined forces with the liberals and was appointed governor and commandant-general of Puebla on September 19, 1857, in recognition of his prior service as commandant of the *guarnición* at Puebla in quelling a reactionary rebellion proclaiming "*¡Religión y Fueros!*" headed by Colonel Joaquín Orihuela of the Puebla Garrison. Serving as governor of the state until December 1858, García Conde was appointed war minister by the liberal President Ignacio Comonfort and in that capacity, confronted General Felix Zuloaga's reactionary Revolution of Tacubaya. Following Comonfort's downfall, García Conde resigned his

position as war minister on January 20, 1858 and retired to private life. Settling thereafter in his native Mexico City, García Conde did not participate in the War of the Reform or the French Intervention and died in the capital surrounded by his family at the age of 76 years, on January 19, 1878.

GARCÍA CONDE, Pedro, *General de Brigada*, was born in Arizpe, Sonora, on February 8, 1806, the son of Alejo García Conde and María Teresa Vidal. At the tender age of eleven years, he embarked upon a military career as a cadet in the *Compañía Presidencial de San Carlos de Cerro Gordo* on November 29, 1817. After promotion to the rank of lieutenant, García Conde adhered to the independence movement on August 26, 1821 and was integrated into Iturbide's *Ejército del Triguarante* as a lieutenant in the 9th Cavalry Regiment of the Line. From 1822-1825, García Conde served on the General Staff and was immersed in studies in the capital, at the prestigious *Seminario de Minería*. On July 7, 1828, García Conde was promoted to the rank of captain of engineers and served on the faculty of the Military College as professor of mathematics until 1831. From 1829-1831, García Conde also served on the Superior Council of the Corps of Engineers and oversaw a survey of Guerrero's coastline together with the construction of a highway in the Valley of Mexico, between the villages of Chalco and Tenango del Aire.

In 1832, García Conde defended Bustamante's presidency against the Santa Anna/Paredes coup of that year and served as chief of engineers at the battle of El Gallinero, being promoted thereafter by Bustamante to the rank of lieutenant-colonel on September 18, 1832 and assigned to organize the defense of San Luis Potosí against the *santanistas*. From 1834-1835, García Conde carried out a survey of the state of

Chihuahua, which resulted in the publication of his monumental work, "*Ensayo Histórico y Estadística del Estado de Chihuahua*." In 1835, García Conde defended the *santanista* regime against the federalist rebels in Zacatecas and served as chief of engineers at the battle of Guadalupe, on May 11th, being promoted by Santa Anna to the rank of colonel on July 25th. Assigned to head Chihuahua's Inspectorate of Rural Militias from June 1835-August 1836, García Conde was then appointed commandant of the *Colegio Militar* in Mexico City, where he served for ten years until September 1, 1846. During General José Urrea's July 1840 federalist rebellion in the capital, García Conde defended Bustamante's regime once more and was awarded promotion to the rank of *general graduado* on October 15, 1840. Subsequently, García Conde supported Santa Anna's *Plan de Regeneración* and participated in the ouster of Bustamante, being promoted by Santa Anna to the rank of brigadier general on October 23, 1841.

After serving as commander-in-chief of the Corps of Engineers, January 1, 1841-December 31, 1843, García Conde was appointed minister of war during the *moderado* presidency of General José Joaquín de Herrera. Removed from the position upon General Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga's seizure of power in January 1846, García Conde briefly served as *segundo cabo* in the commandancy-general of Guanajuato before being sent in October to aid in preparing the defense of Chihuahua against a potential American invasion.

Arriving in Chihuahua on October 31st, García Conde devoted himself to organizing the state's militia forces in conjunction with Governor Ángel Trías Álvarez and the resident commandant-general, Brigadier General José Antonio Heredia. Upon learning of Doniphan's approach, García Conde prepared a seemingly impregnable defensive

position, 15-18 miles north of Chihuahua, along the Sacramento River, complete with cannon redoubts stationed above a dry streambed with its flanks protected by steep ravines. Given command of the cavalry, composed of a force of 1,200 lancers, during the battle of February 28, 1847, García Conde attempted to check an unexpected American flanking movement with his cavalry, but was repulsed with heavy losses by the superior firepower of Doniphan's artillery, which sent the lancers reeling back in utter disorder. With their position flanked, the Mexican troops abandoned their redoubts and the battle degenerated into a rout, whereby Heredia's 1,500-strong infantry column was rolled up within fifteen minutes, despite the best efforts of García Conde to rally the troops sword in hand. Blamed for the loss of the battle by Heredia, García Conde issued a public manifesto rectifying his part in the battle and retired to the city of Durango following the American capture of Chihuahua on March 2nd, where he remained unemployed for the remainder of the conflict.

Following the war, García Conde regained favor in the pro-peace *moderado* regime of Manuel de La Peña y Peña and was appointed to head the commission assigned to survey the border established by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in January 1848. Apparently, García Conde was in the midst of completing this task when he died suddenly in Arizpe, at the age of 45, on December 19, 1851.

GARCÍA, José María, *General Graduado*, was born in Mexico City on November 6, 1815. After initiating his military career as a cadet in the cavalry in 1829, García specialized as a staff officer and served in administrative offices, rising to the rank of colonel by 1846, when he was appointed commandant-general of Tlaxcala in reward for

supporting General Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga's coup against the *moderado* government of General José Joaquín de Herrera.

Upon the onset of war with the United States, García was placed at the head of a cavalry detachment in a punitive expedition sent to suppress a separatist revolt in the Yucatán in March 1847. Following a positive conclusion to the campaign, García was promoted to the rank of *general graduado*, on May 31, 1847, and in July, was summoned to assist in the defense of the capital against the Americans. Appointed chief of staff in the Army of the North, García assisted his commander, General Gabriel Valencia, in the selection of El Rancho de Padierna as an ideal defensive position against the Americans threatening the Mexican position at San Ángel and the bridge at Churubusco. During the action of August 19th, García oversaw the defense of the Mexican position against Pillow's attack and successfully maintained his defenses intact. The following day, however, when the Americans unexpectedly fell upon them from the rear and precipitated the disintegration of the entire army, García attempted to lead a counterattack with elements of the 3rd Cavalry Brigade from the direction of La Loma del Pelón, but was repulsed by enemy artillery. Unhorsed, García was attempting to rally the fleeing troops, sword in hand, when he was toppled with a severe leg wound and taken prisoner together with the commander of the 4th Infantry Brigade, General Santiago Blanco.

Following his parole upon the advent of peace in January 1848, García was retained in the war ministry and in addition to being promoted to the rank of brigadier general on December 25, 1851, was awarded a shield of honor (*escudo de honor*) for heroism at the battle of Padierna. Known thereafter as "*El Cojo García*" because of his wound, García was appointed honorary commander of the *Cuerpo de Inválidos* upon Santa Anna's return

to power in 1853. Although he did not actively support the Revolution of Ayutla, García demonstrated a sufficiently liberal outlook as to be perceived by them as politically reliable and upon their triumph he was appointed to head the governorship and commandancy-general of Oaxaca on August 29, 1855. Persuaded by conservative conspirators to support a reactionary rebellion against General Ignacio Comonfort's liberal presidency, García pronounced in support of the failed revolt and was obliged to relinquish the governorship as a result, on January 10, 1856. A short time later, García pronounced in support of General Felix Zuloaga's reactionary *Plan de Tacubaya* and sided with the conservatives during the War of the Reform, serving as Zuloaga's Minister of War and Marine, from July 10, 1858-February 2, 1859.

Following the liberal triumph in 1860, García withdrew from the service for a time, but was restored to rank by the imperialists following the ascension of Maximilian to the throne. Thereafter, García endorsed the monarchy and was appointed commandant-general of the military district of Guadalajara by Maximilian in 1865. Retiring from the army shortly thereafter, Garcia was arrested nevertheless for complicity in the monarchy following the liberal triumph in 1867. Following his subsequent release, García retired to private life and died nearly twenty years later, in the village of Atcapotzalco near the capital, at the age of 68, on April 17, 1884.

GONZÁLEZ de Mendoza, José María, *General Graduado*, was born in Puebla in 1809. After pursuing his collegiate studies at Puebla's prestigious *Colegio Carolino* (where he graduated in the same class as future liberal leaders José María Lafragua and Ignacio Comonfort), González initiated his military career as a lieutenant in the *Activo Militia*

Battalion of Puebla on February 28, 1829. Specializing in the cavalry, González won promotion to the rank of colonel by 1846 and found himself at the head of the Mounted *Cazadores* Regiment upon the onset of war with the United States.

During Santa Anna's reorganization of the Army of the North at San Luis Potosí following the American investment of Monterrey, González's regiment was incorporated into General José Vicente Miñón's 1st Cavalry Brigade, which was assigned to act as the army's advance guard and screen its march north. Arriving on the parched foothills north of the Hacienda de Buena Vista on February 22, 1847, González's command was ordered as part of Miñón's brigade to feint eastward towards Saltillo, behind the American position, and threaten Taylor's supply and communication lines. The following day, while Santa Anna's main army was engaged a few miles east at La Angostura, Miñón attacked the Americans at Saltillo, but was easily repulsed by American batteries hastily brought up to disperse the threat. During the army's subsequent withdrawal to San Luis Potosí, González was appointed to the rank of *general graduado* and given interim command of the remnants of the 1st Cavalry Brigade upon Miñón's arrest at Matehuala by Santa Anna for incompetence during the battle of La Angostura.

Thereafter, González languished at San Luis Potosí until the Army of the North was recalled to Santa Anna's aid in defending the Valley of Mexico following the disastrous engagement at Cerro Gordo. Upon the army's deployment on the outskirts of the capital on July 29th, González served as member of a three-man reconnaissance team assigned to survey the army's initial defensive position at San Ángel. Following the team's appraisal that the position could be turned by the Americans, the commander-in-chief, General Gabriel Valencia, ordered the army's removal to a perceived better position at El Rancho

de Padierna, thereby precipitating the disaster of August 20th, whereby the Army of the North was virtually annihilated. On the eve of battle, González was given command of the 1st Infantry Brigade (composed of the 1st Infantry Regiment of the Line, the *Fijo* Battalion of México, and the *Activo* Battalion of San Luis Potosí) in General Anastasio Parrodi's division comprising the rear guard positioned in support of El Rancho de Padierna at the base of La Loma del Pelón. During the subsequent battle, González distinguished himself in attempting to rally the panicked soldiery, but was captured by the Americans while attempting to organize a counterattack with the remnants of the reserve.

Subsequently paroled upon the termination of hostilities in January 1848, González served as a *diputado* from his native Puebla in the *moderado*-dominated congress of 1848-1851. Upon Santa Anna's return to power, González was appointed prefect of Puebla and following the Revolution of Ayutla, he continued to serve successive conservative governments on the General Staff until his resignation from the military following Miramón's exile in 1860.

At the onset of the French invasion, González tendered his sword to the republican cause and was appointed chief of staff in General Ignacio Zaragoza's *Ejército del Oriente* on December 6, 1861. In this capacity, González served at the famous battle of Puebla, May 5, 1862, and was subsequently appointed governor and commandant-general of the Federal District in light of the short-lived republican triumph. During the renewed siege of Puebla the following year, González again served as chief of staff in the Army of the East and was captured during the French investment of the city on May 29, 1863. Refusing to sign the terms of parole offered by the French, González was shipped to Paris

as a prisoner of war, where he lingered until being allowed to re-enter Mexico after signing an agreement with his captors to never again raise arms against the imperial regime of Maximilian. Following the Republican triumph in 1867, González retired from active military service and became a well known patron of education and the arts in Mexico City. González died in his native Puebla, at the age of 66 years, on April 11, 1875.

GUZMÁN, Luis Ángel, *General Graduado*, was born in Chapa de Mota, Michoacán in 1795. He initiated his military career at the age of nineteen years in 1814 as a cavalryman in the *Realista* Cavalry Company of Jilotepec. After extensive service against the insurgents in Puebla, Hidalgo, Guerrero, and Michoacán, Guzmán adhered to the independence movement in 1821 and was integrated into Iturbide's *Ejército del Triguarante* as a captain of cavalry. In 1823, Guzmán remained faithful to the emperor and actively opposed Santa Anna's anti-monarchical *Plan de Casa Mata*. Allying himself with the conservative elements of his day, Guzmán supported General Anastasio Bustamante's centralist regime against Santa Anna's coup of 1832 and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel for his efforts. From 1833-1838, Guzmán opposed federalist rebellions led by General Juan Álvarez in Guerrero and Michoacán, thereby establishing himself as a bitter rival of the federalist movement in the south.

In 1841, Guzmán deserted Bustamante's regime and pronounced in favor of Santa Anna's federalist-inspired *Plan de Regeneración*, being promoted by a grateful Santa Anna to the rank of *general graduado* on March 2, 1842. Appointed *prefecto* of Tacámbaro (an important town in the present-day state of Guerrero), Guzmán was

accused of graft and corruption in 1845 and forcibly removed from his post by the local population. Allowed to peacefully retire by the *moderado* regime of General José Joaquín de Herrera rather than face charges, Guzmán subsequently pronounced in favor of General Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga's arch-conservative coup of August 1846 and did much to secure the latter's acceptance in the south, where he successfully kept the federalist Álvarez at bay, utilizing the greatest subterfuge to elude the wily *caudillo* and keep him misinformed as to happenings in the capital.

Upon the outbreak of war with the United States, Guzmán remained in southern Mexico as commandant of the garrison at Tixtla, but upon Santa Anna's return from the exile, he pronounced in his favor and traveled with a small contingent of troops to join the refitted Army of the North at San Luis Potosí. Well received by Santa Anna, Guzmán was initially appointed to command the 3rd Infantry Division, but for reasons that remain unclear, was subsequently transferred to command the 4th Infantry Brigade, composed of the 4th Line Infantry Battalion and the *Activo* Battalions of México and Lagos de Moreno. In that capacity, Guzmán marched north with the army and rendered solid service at the battle of La Angostura, where his command was involved in a drive against the American center which momentarily breached the position and nearly allowed the Mexican forces to invest the Hacienda de Buena Vista.

Returning with Santa Anna to the capital following the army's withdrawal to San Luis Potosí, Guzmán was given command of a cavalry brigade in General Juan Álvarez's Army of the South, which was tasked with harassing the American advance on the capital following the disaster at Cerro Gordo. It is ironic that Guzmán was selected to serve under his old rival and the appointment seems to reflect an attempt by Santa Anna to

check any potential deviancy on Álvarez's part by injecting *santanistas* into his local command structure. During the battle of Molino del Rey, on September 7th, Guzmán was amongst Álvarez's subordinates in the Army of the South who rendered distinguished service and complied with the latter's orders to launch a pre-planned countercharge against the waning American assault. Although the attack failed, Guzmán's actions in the battle were applauded by his superiors and he was retained in command. During the battle of September 15th, Guzmán volunteered his command to reinforce the defenders of Chapultepec, but his troopers' efforts to alleviate pressure on the castle garrison proved in vain and all gestures against the vulnerable American right flank were dispersed by enemy artillery fire. Following the army's evacuation of the capital, Guzmán reported for duty in the army reassembled at the Villa de Guadalupe Hidalgo and was retained in command of a cavalry brigade.

Converted to moderate political beliefs following the termination of hostilities, Guzmán defended the pro-peace *moderado* regime of General José Joaquín de Herrera against a pro-war coup led by General Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga in February 1849. While campaigning against the rebels in Guanajuato, Guzmán faced an unexpected predicament when a battalion commander in his brigade, Lieutenant-Colonel Leonardo Márquez, suddenly pronounced in favor of the rebellion and arrested his commander. Liberated by nearby relief forces, Guzmán continued to serve against the rebels in the Sierra Gorda region until the successful termination of the campaign in October, when he was assigned to command the garrison at Tacámbaro. The following year, Guzmán died in Tacámbaro during a severe cholera epidemic, at the age of 55 years, on February 24, 1851.

JARERO y Ruiz, José María, *General de Brigada*, was born in Xalapa, Veracruz, on April 19, 1801. He began his military career at the age of fourteen years, as a cadet in the royalist “Urbana” Infantry Regiment of Xalapa on January 1, 1816. After extensive service against the insurgents, Jarero was incorporated into Iturbide's *Ejército del Triguarante* in 1821 and was amongst the first of the liberating forces to enter Mexico City under the command of Major General Vicente Filisola.

Having attained the rank of colonel, Jarero was assigned command of the garrison at Orizaba in 1831 and rallied to Santa Anna during his subsequent rebellion against the centralist regime of General Anastasio Bustamante. Given command of a brigade in the rebel forces assembled in Veracruz, Jarero took part in the Orizaba campaign of 1832 and was appointed membership in Santa Anna's peace commission to negotiate terms with Bustamante. For his service in the ouster of Bustamante, Jarero was assigned command of the garrison at Perote and promoted to the rank of brigadier general on November 28, 1832. Placed by Santa Anna at the head of an expeditionary force tasked with quelling a federalist uprising in Guerrero, Jarero met with defeat at the battle of Chilpancingo in November of 1833, for which he was court martialed and imprisoned for a time.

Released upon Santa Anna's downfall in the wake of the Texas disaster, Jarero returned to service under his former chief in the campaign against the French at Tampico in 1839 and was appointed commandant of the fortress of San Juan de Ulúa following the French withdrawal. Regaining favor once more for supporting the Paredes/Santa Anna coup against Bustamante in 1840, Jarero was appointed to head the commandancy-general of Aguascalientes in 1841 and then became governor and commandant-general of

Jalisco, from 1842 until March 23, 1843, when he was transferred once more to command the garrison at the Castle of Perote.

At the start of the war with the United States, Jarero found himself at the head of the commandancy-general of Sonora, but was recalled to the capital in August 1846 to take command of the Department of México. Assigned to command a brigade in the Army of The East, facing Scott's invasion by way of Veracruz, Jarero was appointed by Santa Anna to command the Mexican far right wing in his army blocking the enemy's advance along the National Highway. Apparently, Jarero's position was well entrenched and consisted of log and earthen works constructed at the base of the National Highway at the top of a steep ravine beyond the southeast reaches of La Atalaya about a half mile east of the main camp at the village of Cerro Gordo. During the battle of April 18, 1846, Jarero's 1,100 men and 23 artillery pieces successfully maintained their position, but when the American forces flanked the Mexican left and stormed the summit of El Telégrafo, threatening the Mexican route of escape, Jarero panicked and was compelled to surrender his largely intact force. Denounced by Santa Anna for his timorous behavior, Jarero marched off into American captivity with his troops, never again to see action in the war with the United States.

Following his parole and Santa Anna's exile, Jarero was appointed commandant-general of the new interim seat of government at Querétaro in January of 1848. Thereafter, he was appointed to head the commandancy-general of Puebla in 1849, where he remained until 1857, being promoted in the meantime to the rank of major general on March 20, 1855, during the last days of Santa Anna's eleventh and final presidential term. Recalled to head the Supreme Military Tribunal in 1857, Jarero subsequently retired and

did not take an active role in the War of The Reform or the French Intervention. A lifelong bachelor, Jarero died in Mexico City, at the age of 66, on June 25, 1867 and is buried in the city's *Panteón de San Fernando*.

JUVERA, Julián, *General de Brigada*, was born in the town of Atitalaquia, in the present-day state of Hidalgo, in 1784. He began his military career as a lancer in the royalist Auxiliary Cavalry Battalion of Querétaro on September 16, 1810. After extensive service against the insurgents, Juvera adhered to independence and briefly served in Iturbide's *Ejército Trigarante* before opposing the monarchy in 1823 and pronouncing in favor of Santa Anna's *Plan de Casa Mata*, thereby initiating a strong relationship with the *caudillo* that would be amply reflected in his subsequent career. During the tumultuous 1820s and 1830s, Juvera remained loyal to Santa Anna in all of his political and military gestures and created a substantive power base for himself in his native Querétaro.

During the Texas Campaign of 1836, Juvera served as colonel of the Guanajuato Auxiliary Cavalry Battalion in General Juan José Andrade's cavalry brigade, taking part in the occupation of San Antonio de Béjar and in the subsequent retreat to Matamoros in the wake of Santa Anna's disaster at San Jacinto. Four years later, Juvera was promoted by Santa Anna to the rank of brigadier general on October 13, 1841, in recognition of his service in bringing Querétaro under *santanista* control during the coup against General Anastasio Bustamante's centralist regime. Less than a year later, Santa Anna appointed Juvera governor and commandant-general of Querétaro, a position he held for two years, 1842-1844. As governor, he sponsored the construction of the *Escuela Lancasteriana*, but his tenure was cut short by a political scandal that resulted in a call for

popular elections, whereby Dr. Sabás Antonio Domínguez ascended to a short governorship of six months, being succeeded once more by Juvera who governed until December 22, 1844.

Although unemployed by the Paredes regime even unto the outbreak of war with the United States, upon Santa Anna's return from exile in August 1846, Juvera rallied to his support and hastened to integrate himself into the reformed Army of the North at San Luis Potosí. Upon his arrival with a contingent of troops, Santa Anna awarded his loyal subordinate with an appointment to command the 2nd Cavalry Brigade, composed of the 5th and 9th Cavalry Regiments of the Line and the Cuirassier Battalion of Tulancingo and the *Activo* Battalion of Morelia. At the subsequent battle of La Angostura, on February 23, 1847, Juvera's cavalry guarded the right flank of General Francisco Pacheco's 2nd Infantry Division and made a valiant headlong thrust for the American rear at the Hacienda de Buena Vista. Though the bold move failed to generate support from the supposedly nearby cavalry brigade of General José Vicente Miñón and was repulsed with heavy loss by American artillery batteries perched on higher ground, Santa Anna nevertheless rewarded Juvera's audacity with promotion to the rank of major general that same day on the battlefield. In the wake of the army's subsequent withdrawal to San Luis Potosí, Juvera was appointed to command the cavalry that remained of the Army of the North.

In this station, he languished for several months until recalled to the defense of the capital in August 1847 and given command of a cavalry brigade forming in the large cavalry force assigned to *puro* federalist General Juan Álvarez, in the vicinity of the entrenched position at El Molino del Rey. During the battle of September 8th, when the

critical moment came for Álvarez to support the entrenched Mexican position with a counterattack by his four thousand lancers, he failed to carry out the pre-conceived plan put forth by Santa Anna and allowed his force to be committed piece-meal over undesirable ground, whereby it was decimated by the superior firepower of the American artillery, which in turn leveled its fire on the unaided defenders of the Molino and forced their withdrawal. Unfortunately, Juvera's role in this action was limited to a concerted though unsuccessful effort to animate his command in the third line of assault, which became irretrievably entangled in the droves of fleeing men and horses of General Manuel Andrade's shattered brigade. Apparently, Juvera's efforts did not escape his chief's notice and his actions did not elicit accusations of treason from Santa Anna, who denounced Álvarez and some of his subordinates for their role in the defeat.

Remaining with the army thereafter, Juvera accompanied its withdrawal from Mexico City on the night of September 15th and remained at the disposal of the federal government during the following months. Greatly respected for his professionalism, Juvera was appointed commandant-general of the interim seat of government at Querétaro during the peace negotiations, a position he held until the ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in February 1848, when he retired to his estates in the countryside. Ten years later, in 1858, Juvera and his family hosted the newly wed first couple of the nation, General Miguel Miramón and Concepción Lombardo, in their home during their presentation and stay in Querétaro where Juvera arranged elaborate celebrations. After nearly twelve years in retirement, Juvera died in Querétaro, at the age of 76 years, on March 31, 1860. He was survived by his wife, María del Carmen Gelati Fernández-Munilla, with whom he had several children. One of Juvera's grandsons and

namesake, Julián Malo Juvera, became a *Villista* general and served as governor of Querétaro, 1924-1925.

LANDERO y Bausá, José Juan de, *General de Brigada*, was born in Veracruz in 1802, the son of a prominent lawyer, D. Pedro Telmo de Landero. He initiated his military career at an early age with the pursuit of military arts studies at the prestigious *Seminario de Nobles* in the town of Vergara. After specializing in the artillery and serving as an officer with that arm under Santa Anna in the Texas Campaign of 1836, Landero was promoted to the rank of brigadier general in 1842 for political support he rendered his former commander in his *pronunciamento* against the centralist government of General Anastasio Bustamante.

At the outbreak of war with the United States, Landero was posted to command the garrison of his native Veracruz under the overall command of the able *puro* federalist, General Juan Morales, with whom he had shared service in Texas in 1836. A staunch *santanista*, Landero pronounced in favor of his former chief upon the latter's return from Cuban exile on July 31, 1846 and with the aid of fellow centralist compatriot, General Francisco Pérez, he successfully rallied the garrison of Veracruz to Santa Ana's cause without his federalist commander's support or blessing. Thereafter, detecting political instability in the city's populace, who had traditionally favored federalism, Santa Anna dismissed the unenthusiastic, though popular Morales and left the politically reliable Landero in command of the garrison. Soon thereafter, however, popular federalist sentiment and a sudden change of heart amongst the troops restored General Morales to overall command and relegated Landero to his original position of *segundo cabo*. He

remained in this position at the onset of the unopposed American landing on March 9, 1847. Discouraged by the inferior number of troops at his disposal and a lack of ammunition for the city's available heavy artillery, Landero adhered to a nonchalant strategy whereby the pessimistic Morales concentrated all of the available Mexican forces within the city in anticipation of a siege he had no hope of opposing successfully. Four days after the commencement of the American bombardment of the city on March 21st, when the situation's hopelessness was exacerbated by merciless bombardment and the expenditure of all available ammunition, the despondent, but defiant, Morales resigned his position as garrison commander and relinquished command to his political rival, Landero, who was obliged to seek terms from the Americans. Three days later, on March 28th, the nearly intact 3,000-man garrison of Veracruz, along with the wholly intact 1,000-man garrison of the fortress of San Juan de Ulúa, stacked their arms before Scott's victorious army and were allowed to march out of the surrendered city. Thereafter, an infuriated Santa Ana had both Morales and Landero imprisoned in the nearby Castle of Perote to await court-martial on charges of ineptitude and treason, from which the pair were subsequently liberated by American troops on their way to Mexico City following the battle of Cerro Gordo.

Languishing in Veracruz until the advent of peace, the embittered Landero was converted to liberal ideology following the war and pronounced in favor of the anti-*santanista* Revolution of Ayutla in 1855. Thereafter, Landero became an ardent supporter of Benito Juárez and actively opposed the conservatives in Veracruz during the War of the Reform, 1854-1857. For a brief period, beginning in May 1861 and culminating in July 1862, Landero served as interim governor and commandant-general of the entire

state of Veracruz. Thereafter, during the French Intervention, Landero rallied to the republican cause and fought with Juárez against the imperialists. Following the triumph of the republican forces in 1867, Landero retired to private life and died in his native Veracruz in 1869, at the age of 67, in the company of his wife, Juana Pasquel y Palma, with whom he had six daughters.

LEÓN, Antonio de, *General de Brigada*, was born in Huajuapán, Oaxaca, on June 4, 1794, the son of Manuel de León and María de La Luz Loyola. After completing his primary education in local schools, León initiated his military career as an ensign in the Provincial Militia Company of Huajuapán, at the age of 16 years, in May 1811. After taking part in 19 actions against the insurgents and winning promotion to the rank of captain on April 18, 1817, León adhered to the independence movement and was integrated into Iturbide's *Ejército del Triguarante* with the rank of lieutenant-colonel in June 1821. Thereafter, León joined the federalist forces of Generals Vicente Guerrero and Nicolás Bravo and fought in the ouster of the remaining royalist forces from Mexico at the sieges of Puebla and Mexico City, winning promotion to the rank of colonel in October 1822. The following year, León pronounced in support of Santa Anna's republican *Plan de Casa Mata* and upon the collapse of Iturbide's monarchy, played an instrumental role in declaring Oaxaca's sovereignty on June 10, 1823. Subdued by a military expedition under General Manuel Rincón, León adhered to the central government and served his native state as a deputy in the National Congress which passed the federalist Constitution of 1824.

After establishing a *puro* federalist York Rite Masonic Lodge in Oaxaca, León served

as commandant of his native Huajuapán, from April-August 1827, and in 1830, served the Bustamante government in quelling a separatist rebellion in the south of Chiapas. Two years later, in 1832, León supported Santa Anna's federalist rebellion against Bustamante and was again elected to serve his state as a deputy to the failed National Congress of that year. On June 19, 1834, León was appointed commandant-general of the Department of Huasteca and in 1835, was named by Santa Anna to head the commandancy-general of Oaxaca. Three years later, León briefly governed Chiapas and helped pacify the rebellious Soconusco Region before serving under Santa Anna against the French at Tampico in 1839. Rewarded for his support of the federalist Santa Anna/Paredes coup against Bustamante, León was promoted to the rank of brigadier general in January 1843 and served as governor and commandant-general of Oaxaca from September 18, 1841 until November 13, 1843. Thereafter, León regained the governorship of Oaxaca, which he held from October 17, 1844 until September 2, 1845, when he retired into private life in the face of increasing conservative opposition. It was under León's fourth term as governor that the subsequently famous Lic. Benito Juárez initiated his political career as *secretario de gobierno* of Oaxaca.

Upon the outbreak of the reactionary Polkos Revolt in February 1847, León became partisan to the installation of a revolutionary federalist government in Oaxaca which despite its political differences with the emergent *moderado* central government, pledged its wholehearted support to the national cause in the war with the United States. Thus, in March 1847, León mobilized the *activo* militia units of Oaxaca and rushed at the head of his *Oaxaqueño* brigade to the aid of Santa Anna's Army of The East, standing against Scott's invasion forces along the National Road near Orizaba. Arriving just in time for the

disastrous battle of Cerro Gordo, on March 27th, León's brigade was posted to the reserve and did not see action in the main battle, but subsequently became the core from which Santa Anna rebuilt his army for the defense of the Valley of Mexico.

Held in reserve during the battle of Churubusco, León's command played a pivotal role in the battle of Molino del Rey and was posted to hold the center of the Mexican line at the *molino*. With great bravado, León called the soldiers of the "Patria" Battalion to attention on the eve of battle and issued a challenge for "those to take a step forward amongst you who are prepared to die with me for our Motherland because we shall surely not survive the coming battle."¹²⁸ During the battle of September 8th, León was to be seen at the forefront of his troops, directing their fire and encouraging them with sword in hand. When the Mexican troops finally ran out of ammunition and the Americans stormed the *molino*, vicious hand-to-hand fighting ensued, during which, León was mortally wounded by a shot that struck him in the side. Rescued from the field by his withdrawing troops who wrapped him in the folds of the national banner, León died later that evening nonetheless. It was said that León's last words in consciousness were uttered to Lieutenant-Colonel Miguel María de Echegaray of the 6th Light Infantry Regiment, "*Haga lo imposible por nuestra patria, que ella sabrá recompensar sus servicios.*"¹²⁹ León died at the age of 53 years, and was survived by his wife, Manuela Torres de León, with whom he had several children. A greatly revered hero of the war with the United States, a bronze memorial to the slain general was erected on September 15, 1885, in downtown Oaxaca's aptly named *Alameda de León*. A dedicated *puro* federalist who died fighting on behalf of a conservative *moderado* government, León distinguished himself

¹²⁸ *Los gobernantes de Oaxaca*, pp. 39-45.

¹²⁹ Gayón Córdova, *La ocupación yanqui*, pp. 143-158.

from the rest of Mexico's military hierarchy by being one of the few generals who served the national cause unswervingly and refrained from partisanship. In his memoirs, even the hypercritical Santa Anna referred to the general as "the brave León."¹³⁰

MARTÍNEZ de Lejarza, Mariano, *General Graduado*, was born in Mexico City on July 30, 1808, the son of Manuel Martínez Chacón and Josefa Martínez de Lejarza, both natives of Spain. At the age of seventeen years, Martínez gained a commission and initiated his military career as a lieutenant in the Provincial Battalion of Meztitlán, being promoted to the rank of captain by June 1827. In March 1829, Martínez rallied to Santa Anna and pronounced against General Manuel Gómez Pedraza's centralist regime in support of General Vicente Guerrero's federalist presidential candidacy. After fighting against the Spanish at Tampico, Martínez continued to cultivate a fruitful association with Santa Anna that was amply reflected in his career.

In 1830, Martínez again defended Guerrero's presidency against the centralist coup of General Anastasio Bustamante and fought to preserve his regime under Santa Anna in Veracruz. With Bustamante's ultimate victory, Martínez was chastised for his opposition and exiled to an obscure post in Tabasco, where he defiantly continued to cultivate support for the *santanistas* and eventually pronounced in support of Santa Anna's coup against the centralists on June 3, 1832. In recognition of his actions at the battle of Acachapa on July 27, 1833, where he defeated pro-Bustamante forces in Tabasco, Santa Anna promoted Martínez to the rank of lieutenant-colonel on August 20th and elevated him to head the commandancy-general of Tabasco.

In December 1835, Martínez was attached to the garrison of Monterrey and was

¹³⁰ Crawford, *The Eagle*, p. 104.

subsequently appointed commandant-general of Nuevo León on January 6, 1836. In this capacity, Martínez provided logistical support for Santa Anna's army in Texas and sent a 300-man detachment under Colonel Rafael Vázquez to provide relief in the wake of his chief's disaster at San Jacinto. In July 1839, Martínez was recalled to the capital and occupied an administrative financial position in the war ministry before rallying to the federalists and supporting General José Urrea's revolt against Bustamante in July 1840. With the defeat of this rebellion, Martínez went on to support General Gabriel Valencia's defection against Bustamante and pronounced in favor of Santa Anna's *Plan de Regeneración* in September 1841. Thereafter, Martínez was promoted to the rank of colonel on January 20, 1842 and assigned to second General Francisco García Conde's commandancy-general in Chihuahua. Due to García Conde's illness, Martínez briefly served as commandant-general of Chihuahua from September 27-October 3, 1842.

During the Texian expedition against New Mexico, which necessitated General José Mariano Monterde's absence in relief of Santa Fe, Martínez again served as commandant-general of Chihuahua from June-August 1843, after which he was promoted to the rank of *general graduado* on October 3rd and assigned to the interim governorship of New Mexico, where he served from April 1844-March 1845. During his term, Martínez was noted for playing a key role in facilitating a peace treaty with the Apaches and Navajos in Santa Fe that did much to improve Indian relations with the province.

Following Paredes' coup against Herrera's *moderado* government, Martínez fell out of favor and left the army, settling in Chihuahua, where he served as chairman of a *junta* assigned to draft a defense plan for the state in the face of an imminent American invasion. With Santa Anna's return to power, Martínez was summoned to the Valley of

Mexico in August 1847 and placed in command of the 2nd Infantry Brigade, composed of the *Activo* Battalion of Morelia and the Batallón de Invalidos, in General Manuel María Lombardini's Army of the East defending Mexico City. Positioned in the reserve during the battles of Padierna and Churubusco, Martínez's command was subsequently posted with ten artillery pieces to defend the *Garita de San Antonio* against an impending American attack following the battle of Chapultepec on September 8, 1847. Although the Americans did not attack Martínez's position in force, he was obliged to withdraw from Mexico City that night and reform with the main army at the Villa de Guadalupe Hidalgo.

After the war, Martínez served on the Supreme Military Tribunal for a time before being assigned to head the commandancy-general of Chiapas upon Santa Anna's return to power in 1853. The following year, Santa Anna transferred Martínez to head the commandancy-general of Coahuila, where he died suddenly in Saltillo, at the age of 46 years, on December 18, 1854. He left behind a widow, Teresa Bolío of Chihuahua, with whom he had several daughters.

MEJÍA, Francisco, *General de Brigada*, was born in Ixtapan, Cuernavaca in 1791. At the age of twenty years, he initiated his military career by enlisting in the Royalist Tulancingo squadron. After extensive active service against the insurgents during which he participated in twenty engagements, Mejía was incorporated into Iturbide's *Ejército del Triguarante* on March 2, 1821. After promotion to the rank of major, Mejía served on Santa Anna's staff during the battle for Tampico in 1829 and was sent by Santa Anna to present the captured Spanish standards to President Guerrero in the capital.

Thereafter, he was appointed military commander of Iguala and supported Santa Anna's 1832 revolution against Bustamante's centralist regime. During Bustamante's advance on Puebla, Mejía was captured and held captive in the village of Palacio, but was subsequently released upon the cessation of hostilities. In 1833, Mejía was awarded the newly-created *Cruz de Tampico* in commemoration of his services rendered in 1829 and promoted to the rank of colonel. During the rebellion of August 1841, Mejía again supported Santa Anna and was subsequently rewarded with promotion to the rank of brigadier general and appointed *segundo cabo* to General Mariano Arista in command of the Army of the North at Saltillo.

In June 1842, Mejía was appointed governor and commandant-general of the state of Coahuila and in that post, received the Texian prisoners recovered from the Mier expedition of that year. When ordered to arrange the summary execution of the prisoners by President Nicolás Bravo, Mejía refused on moral grounds and resigned the commandancy in 1843. After reconciling himself to the Herrera government, he was assigned to command the post at Matamoros and in that position, tasked with continuously threatening Texian border security by dispatching irregular cavalry raids across the Río Grande. From 1845, Mejía was tasked with organizing a campaign against Texas and was thus engaged when the war broke out with the United States.

In April 1846, Mejía and his troops from the Matamoros garrison opposed Taylor's march from Corpus Christi and threatened battle at Arroyo Colorado before retiring back to Matamoros, where Mejía set himself to the task of fortifying the town in anticipation of the arrival of his superior, General Pedro de Ampudia, who was shortly thereafter superseded by General Arista. Although assigned to command an infantry brigade in the

Army of the North, Mejía missed the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca del Guerrero due to a protracted illness, but was subsequently elevated to command the army after Arista's dismissal. As commander, Mejía oversaw the army's withdrawal to Monterrey, where he was credited with doing much to restore the troops' morale. Although ordered to abandon the city as indefensible in the wake of Taylor's approach, Mejía remained there until he was again superseded by Ampudia and relegated to command the 1st Infantry Brigade. Prior to the battle, Mejía served on the council of war that ultimately persuaded the uninspired Ampudia to make a stand in the city in order to retain the mountain passes leading south into the interior. During the battle for Monterrey, Mejía valiantly defended El Fortín de La Purísima with the 300 soldiers of his dilapidated brigade, composed of the 3rd Line Infantry Regiment and the *Activo* battalions of Aguascalientes and Querétaro, being forced to abandon the position on the evening of the September 21st. Mejía's own personal home was located near the bridge at La Purísima and the incessant American bombardment obliged his own family to take shelter in the nearby home of a neighbor. After the battle, Mejía accompanied the remains of the army to San Luis Potosí, where he remained until Santa Anna's arrival and reorganization of the army, whereupon Mejía was given command of the 3rd Infantry Brigade in General Lombardini's division, composed of the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 10th, and 11th Line Infantry Regiments. In this capacity, he served at the battle of La Angostura, where he was in the thick of the fight during Lombardini's drive on the American center.

After the army's withdrawal to San Luis Potosí, Mejía remained with the Army of The North and subsequently accompanied it south under General Gabriel Valencia to oppose Scott's invasion of the Valley of Mexico. Assigned to command the 1st Infantry Division

(which included the famed San Patricio Battalion) at the battle of Contreras, Mejía commanded the Mexican center at El Rancho de Padierna on August 20, 1847, when his command was overtaken from the rear and decimated beyond recovery. During the panicked fighting, which degenerated into a shameless rout within a mere 17 minutes, Mejía was wounded in the leg and taken prisoner while attempting to rally his troops.

Paroled upon the cessation of hostilities, Mejía was retained in the army and was assigned as commandant-general of Durango in 1849. Retiring to private life the following year, Mejía returned to live at Monterrey with his family for a time until being recalled to the commandancy-general of San Luis Potosí where he died in the town of Venegas, at the age of 61, on December 2, 1852. He was survived by his wife of only eight years, María Antonia Barragán Arizpe (1822-1895), with whom he had only a daughter, Francisca, born in 1845.

MIÑÓN, Jose Vicente, *General de Brigada*, was born in the city of Cadiz, Spain in 1802. Brought to Mexico as an infant, Miñón initiated his military career at the age of fourteen, as a cadet in the *Dragones del Principe* Cavalry Regiment, on September 11, 1816. After extensive service against the insurgents, during which he participated in three sieges and fifty actions, Miñón adhered to Iturbide's *Plan de Iguala* and was incorporated into the royalist *Ejército del Triguarante* in 1821. Two years later, Miñón adhered to Santa Anna's anti-monarchical *Plan de Casa Mata* of 1823 and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel in reward for his support. In 1832, Miñón defended Bustamante's centralist regime against the federalist forces of General Estéban Moctezuma and participated in the battle of El Gallinero on September 18th, where he commanded the left wing of the

victorious loyalist army. The following year, Miñón served as chief of staff in General Mariano Arista's expedition against the federalist rebels of Morelia and was promoted to the rank of colonel in recognition of his services.

Almost three years later, in April 1836, Miñón participated in Santa Anna's Texas campaign and served at the battle of The Alamo, where he distinguished himself as second-in-command of the fourth column assigned to invest the south gate. Following the Mexican victory, Miñón was dispatched by Santa Anna to deliver orders to General José Urrea to execute the Texian prisoners he had taken at Goliad and did not take part in the subsequent disaster at San Jacinto. Following the army's withdrawal to Matamoros, Miñón was recognized for his services in Texas with promotion to the rank of brigadier general on March 19, 1836. In July 1840, he supported Bustamante's presidency against the federalist rebellion of General José Urrea and took part in the destructive fighting in the capital begun on July 15th. Almost two months later, Miñón defected in favor of Santa Anna's coup against Bustamante and defended the former's regime in command a 2,720-man infantry brigade sent to aid General Juan Morales in pacifying the separatist rebels of the Yucatán in August 1842.

Dissatisfied with the stance of General José Joaquín de Herrera's *moderado* regime towards war with the United States, Miñón associated himself with federalist firebrand Valentín Gómez Farías in a failed *puro* federalist plot to overthrow the government in June 1845. Not taking an active role in the early phase of the war, upon Santa Anna's return to power, Miñón was incorporated into the reorganized Army of the North at San Luis Potosí and placed in command of the 1st Cavalry Brigade, composed of the "Jalisco" Lancer Battalion, the 4th Cavalry Regiment of the Line, and the *Activo* Cavalry

Battalions of Puebla and Oaxaca. In this capacity, Miñón led his brigade north, well ahead of the main army and engaged the Americans on January 26, 1847, near the Hacienda de Encarnación, where he overpowered a squadron of Kentucky cavalry and took 82 prisoners, whose subsequent exhibition in San Luis Potosí did much to bolster Mexican morale just prior to the army's exodus north. Assigned to screen the army's movements and threaten Taylor's supply and communication lines with a direct assault on Saltillo, Miñón failed to coordinate a concentrated attack in support of the main army engaged a few miles east at La Angostura on February 23rd and his troopers were scattered by the superior firepower of American batteries defending the Saltillo Road. It is conceivable that had Miñón staged a more skillful attack, he could have supported a successful cavalry penetration of the main American position at the Hacienda de Buena Vista, whereupon the Mexican cavalry could have succeeded in turning the U.S. position and cut off the line of retreat. Upon rejoining the army at Matehuala during its withdrawal to San Luis Potosí, Santa Anna removed Miñón from command and had him arrested for incompetence.

Thereafter, Miñón remained unemployed pending an investigation into his actions at the battle of La Angostura until following the termination of hostilities, when a special military tribunal absolved him of guilt and restored him to rank. From 1850-1851, Miñón served the *moderado* government of Herrera as commandant-general of Querétaro and later defended Arista's presidency against a *santanista* rebellion led by Colonel José María Blancarte in Guadalajara. Unemployed during Santa Anna's final presidential term, upon his downfall, Miñón served briefly as interim head of the commandancy-general of the Federal District, August 13-August 29, 1855.

During the War of the Reform, Miñón sided with the conservatives and contributed to the defeat of a liberal force led by Colonel Ignacio Mejía at the battle of Teotitlán, on October 30, 1859, for which he was promoted to the rank of major general on November 3rd. Unemployed following the liberal triumph in 1860, Miñón rallied to the imperialists and endorsed the French Intervention, serving on the General Staff until his arrest upon the investment of the capital, on June 2, 1867, by the Republican forces under General Porfirio Díaz. Briefly imprisoned for collaborating with the French, Miñón retired to private life upon his parole and died in the capital at the age of 76, in 1878. His was survived by his wife, María Ana Domínguez, with whom he had several children. One historian referring to Miñón's treatment of the American prisoners taken at Encarnación described him as "a most accomplished and elegant gentleman."¹³¹

ORTEGA, José María, *General de Brigada*, was born in Mexico City in 1793. Although only ten years old, he embarked upon a military career as a cavalryman in the Royalist "España" Dragoon Regiment on January 3, 1804. Heavily engaged against the insurgents, Ortega participated in three sieges and five battles before adhering to Iturbide's pro-independence *Plan de Iguala* in 1821. Integrated into the royal *Ejército del Triguarante* as a lieutenant-colonel of artillery, Ortega served thereafter as chief of artillery in General Anastasio Bustmante's division. Assigned command of the *provincias internas* of northeastern Mexico in 1822, Ortega then served as chief of light artillery in General Nicolás Bravos' division during the campaign against the federalist forces of General Vicente Guerrero in southern Mexico, which culminated in the capture and execution of Guerrero at Culiapan, Oaxaca, on February 14, 1831. Five years later, in 1836, Ortega

¹³¹ Carelton, *The Battle of Buena Vista*, p. 146.

was placed in command of a portion of the artillery in Santa Anna's army during the Texas campaign and was left in command of The Alamo after the fortress was taken by the Mexican forces. In this capacity, Ortega oversaw the withdrawal of the intact artillery train to Matamoros after Santa Anna's subsequent disaster at San Jacinto.

After supporting the Paredes/Santa Anna coup against Bustamante's centralist regime in early 1841, Ortega was promoted to the rank of brigadier general on October 24th and assigned to head the commandancy-general of Nuevo León, where he remained until January 1846, when he was made commandant-general of the department of San Luis Potosí. Remaining there following the outbreak of war with the United States, Ortega received the remnants of the shattered Army of the North in October and was tasked with maintaining the organization of the troops until Santa Anna's arrival. Thereafter, Ortega distinguished himself via his administrative talents during the reorganization of the army and housed Santa Anna and his staff at his own personal residence. In reward for his services, Santa Anna appointed Ortega to command the 3rd Infantry Division, made up of three brigades headed by Generals Ángel Guzmán, Andrés Terrés, and Anastasio Parrodi. Apparently, Santa Anna had originally given command of the division to General Guzmán, but replaced him with Ortega shortly before the army's embarkation without a clear indication as to why. At the battle of La Angostura, on February 23, 1847, Ortega commanded the reserve of the Mexican army and supported Lombardini's assault on the American center. During the latter half of the day, Ortega oversaw a gesture over Lombardini's left towards the American right, but the assault was repulsed by the superior firepower of the American artillery. Although scathing of the performance in the battle of many of his generals, Santa Anna noted in his official report that Ortega

"performed his duties to my satisfaction." Following the army's withdrawal to San Luis Potosí, Ortega resumed the commandancy-general and did not accompany Santa Anna to the capital nor take part in the defense of the Valley of Mexico. In August 1847, Ortega was transferred to mobilize the regular forces of Jalisco and in November, reported to the central government that he had mobilized a total of 823 men in Guadalajara.

Upon Santa Anna's return to power, Ortega was promoted to the rank of major general and on July 16, 1853, and assigned to head the commandancy-general of Jalisco, where he suppressed statewide *ayuntamientos* as his first order of business and attempted to restore conservative power. Remaining in Jalisco as governor and commandant-general until Santa Anna's downfall in 1855, Ortega later played a minor role on the conservative side during the initial stages of the War of The Reform before retiring to private life. A lifelong bachelor, Ortega died in humble conditions in Mexico City, at the age of 78, on November 1, 1871.

PACHECO, Francisco, *General de Brigada*, was born in León, Guanajuato in 1795. At the age of twenty-nine, he enlisted as an infantry cadet in Iturbide's *Ejército del Triguarante*. His initial career was spent in his native Guanajuato, where he consistently demonstrated centralist *santanista* political leanings, for which he was rewarded with promotion to the rank of brigadier general on August 31, 1841, following his support of the triumphant Santa Anna/Paredes coup against the government of General Anastasio Bustamante. Two years later, in 1843, Santa Anna appointed Pacheco to second an expedition that succeeded in crushing a major separatist rebellion in the Yucatán. Pacheco distinguished himself in the campaign by overseeing the investment of

Campeche with a mere thousand-man force at his disposal. After returning to head the military garrison at León for a time, Pacheco pronounced against General José Joaquín de Herrera's moderate government on January 8, 1846 and marched on the city of Guadalajara with his forces in support of General Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga, a fiery monarchic conservative whom Pacheco had previously supported in the coup of 1841. In gratitude for his services, Paredes appointed Pacheco interim governor and commandant-general of Guanajuato in May of 1846, after which he was relegated once more to garrison command at León.

Upon Santa Anna's return from exile, Pacheco was serving in command of the *activo* troops from Guanajuato in General Gabriel Valencia's powerful contingent of auxiliary troops collected from the Bajío. In this subordinate capacity, Pacheco marched with Valencia to Santa Anna's aid at San Luis Potosí in November 1846, where he was recognized by the Generalissimo as a potentially more reliable subordinate than his superior and was elevated to command the 1st Infantry Division in the reformed Army of The North (whereby Valencia was transferred to command the troops assembled at Tula threatening Taylor's supply line). Pacheco's division was composed of the 3rd and 5th Infantry Brigades, headed respectively by Generals Francisco Mejía and José López Uruga. At the head of his division, Pacheco marched north and finally reached the Hacienda de La Encarnación on February 21st in anticipation of a great battle to be fought in the vicinity of the nearby Hacienda de Buena Vista. At the battle of La Angostura, on February 23rd, Pacheco's division was placed on the Mexican center right and with Lombardini's division on its left, and executed the main drive against the American right wing, which momentarily succeeded in crumbling the American position

before being forced to withdraw by the American artillery. Following the retreat to San Luis Potosí, Pacheco accompanied Santa Anna in the defense of Mexico City and served as foreign minister in August 1847. On September 8th, Pacheco fought at the battle of El Molino del Rey at the head of the *Activo* Battalion of Hidalgo and in conjunction with the brigade of General Francisco Pérez, conducted a desperate, but unsuccessful counterattack in support of the beleaguered defenders of La Casa Mata.

After the war, Pacheco returned to Guanajuato, where he was appointed commandant-general in 1852. A fervent conservative, Pacheco was briefly imprisoned for complicity in a *santanista* conspiracy against the liberal Juan Bautista Ceballos' government in 1853. Upon his subsequent release, Pacheco supported Lombardini's conservative coup and welcomed the return of Santa Anna, who rewarded his faithful subordinate with promotion to the rank of major general and an appointment to the governorship and commandancy-general of Guanajuato in June 1853. Nearly a month later, Pacheco was briefly held captive by liberal rebels of the 3rd Light Infantry Battalion who pronounced against the government in León, but were ultimately defeated by conservative troops loyal to Pacheco.

After Santa Anna's downfall, Pacheco pronounced against the liberal government of Ignacio Comonfort in conjunction with General Agustín Zires and raised his forces against the liberals in Guanajuato. In this capacity, Pacheco successfully defended León and Guanajuato for a time against the liberal forces of Generals Santos Degollado and Epitacio Huerta. Ultimately defeated and apprehended by his adversaries, Pacheco was exiled for three years at Havana, Cuba, until the issuance of a general amnesty in 1858.

During the War of The Reform, Pacheco adhered once more to the conservative cause

and fought under General Miguel Miramón against the liberal forces in the Bajío. During Miramón's brief presidency, Pacheco was appointed commandant-general of the Department of León in 1859 and once again governor and commandant-general of Guanajuato in 1860. He was serving in this capacity when appointed to command a division in the conservative forces mobilized by Miramón to confront the liberal forces of General Jesús González Ortega in Puebla. While leading his division at the battle of Silao, on August 10, 1860, Pacheco was mortally wounded in action when a cannonball tore off both legs and killed his horse. His widow, Concepción Plowes Sánchez de Haro, was later made a *dama de honor* in the Imperial Household of Maximilian and Carlota. In 1881, after nearly fifteen years in disfavor because of her cooperative role in the imperial regime, Sra. Plowes Sánchez de Hara was finally rehabilitated by the Mexican Congress and granted a pension in the name of her deceased husband.

PARRODI, Anastasio, *General de Brigada*, was born in Havana, Cuba in 1805. After joining the military, he came to Mexico at an early age and established himself in the state of San Luis Potosí, where he acquired land. Although little is known of Parrodi's early military service, he reached the rank of colonel by October 1836, when he led the 1st *Activo* Battalion of San Luis Potosí to Matamoros as part of a reinforcement intended to aid Santa Anna's expedition against Texas. Following the campaign's disastrous end and the army's withdrawal to Matamoros, Parrodi remained with the garrison and was involved in subsequent incursions into Texas. In 1842, Parrodi pronounced in favor of Santa Anna's coup against Bustamante's centralist regime and in recognition of his loyalty, was promoted to the rank of brigadier general on June 12, 1843.

Upon the outbreak of war with the United States, Parrodi was serving as commandant-general of Tamaulipas and in October 1846, found himself in command of the garrison at Tampico facing a potential American investment of the city. Despondent over his chances of sustaining a siege with only 870 men and a low ammunition supply, Parrodi apprised Santa Anna of the situation in the bleakest of terms and sent a letter to the commander-in-chief, dated October 3rd, stating that he could not defend the city. Regarded as indefensible by Santa Anna, who was preoccupied with concentrating all available forces in San Luis Potosí in anticipation of confronting Taylor's army in northeastern Mexico, Parrodi was issued orders to evacuate the city and withdraw his forces with all available artillery and supplies to the town of Tula, from which he would proceed to join Santa Anna. However, the central government countermanded Santa Anna's orders shortly thereafter and it was not until October 22nd that the confusion was cleared and Parrodi allowed to withdraw. However, because the perplexing issuance of orders had been detrimental to Parrodi's evacuation timeline, he was forced to execute a flight rather than a withdrawal, with the result that much of the heavy artillery and supplies remained in the city and fell into the hands of the Americans. After withdrawing to Tula with 1,000 men and uniting with General Gabriel Valencia's assembled forces from the Bajío, Parrodi proceeded to join Santa Anna at San Luis Potosí, where he endured a cool reception from his chief and was arrested for incompetence at Tampico.

Reconciling himself to Santa Anna with the result that all charges leveled against him were dismissed, Parrodi was assigned to the command of the 7th Infantry Brigade (composed of the *Activo* Battalion of Puebla, the *Fijo de México* Regiment, and the *Guardacosta de Tampico* Battalion) in General José María Ortega's 3rd Infantry

Division. In that capacity, Parrodi led his command north and on February 23, 1847, was engaged at the battle of La Angostura, where he led his brigade in Ortega's assault on the American center late in the day. Returning with the army to San Luis Potosí, Parrodi replaced Ortega in command of the 3rd Infantry Division when the latter resumed his post as commandant-general of San Luis Potosí.

In that capacity, Parrodi languished for some months under the command of the newly appointed *general en jefe*, General Gabriel Valencia, until the Army of the North was summoned to aid Santa Anna's defense of the Valley of Mexico following the disaster at Cerro Gordo. Due to his commander's dissatisfaction with Santa Anna's orders to take up position at San Ángel, Parrodi accompanied the army to El Rancho de Padierna, where his division was posted to the center of the Mexican line, holding the main fortified position. During the battle of August 29th, Parrodi conducted himself admirably and was wounded while encouraging his men, who sustained their position at considerable cost. The following day at dawn, however, when the Americans fell upon the Mexican position from both front and rear, Parrodi's division disintegrated into a panicked mass and in the ensuing chaos, the badly wounded Parrodi fell into the hands of the enemy.

Paroled upon the resumption of peace in January 1848, Parrodi had recovered sufficiently from his wound to accept an appointment on behalf of Arista's *moderado* regime and head the commandancy-general of San Luis Potosí. Skeptical of Santa Anna's return to power, Parrodi pronounced in favor of General Juan Álvarez's anti-*santanista* *Plan de Ayutla* and was rewarded for his service with an appointment to the governorship and commandancy-general of Jalisco on July 31, 1856. Serving in that post until December, Parrodi opposed General Felix Zuloaga's reactionary *Plan de Tacubaya* and

fought to uphold the liberal Constitution of 1857 in Jalisco. Promoted to the rank of major general on February 9, 1857, Parrodi sided with the liberals during the ensuing War of The Reform, but was defeated by conservative forces under General Luis G. Osollo on March 10, 1858, at the battle of Salamanca, which resulted in the fall of Guadalajara three days later, on March 13th.

Briefly elevated by the liberals to head the commandancy-general of the Federal District in January 1862, Parrodi sided with the imperialists after the fall of Puebla in May 1863 and endorsed the French Intervention. Rewarded by Maximilian with an appointment to head the Inspectorate of Infantry, Parrodi was awarded the Order of Guadalupe on April 10, 1865 and appointed commandant-general of San Luis Potosí. Retiring shortly thereafter due to failing health, Parrodi died in Mexico City just before the fall of Maximilian, at the age of 61, on January 9, 1867. Described by a contemporary as “affable and good-natured, with a prominent Caribbean accent,” Parrodi was well regarded for his bravery in combat, despite exhibiting a certain timidity when tasked with higher level commands.¹³²

PEÑA Y BARRAGÁN, Matías de la, *General Graduado*, was born to a wealthy aristocratic family of Spanish origin in Mexico City in 1800. Amongst his close relatives were two presidents of Mexico of the same surname, General Miguel Barragán and Lic. Manuel de la Peña y Peña. After receiving his education in France, Peña y Barragán returned to the capital and pursued a business career with his family while participating in the civic militia of Mexico City. During the July 1840 federalist revolt of General José Urrea, the arch-conservative Peña y Barragán defended the Bustamante regime in the

¹³² *Historia de la intervención francesa en México*, p. 339.

capital and successfully held the National Palace, thereby gaining promotion from a grateful Bustamante to the rank of *general graduado* on October 15th of the same year. Thereafter, Peña y Barragán rendered distinguished service against the Yucatecan separatist rebels and served briefly as commandant-general of Oaxaca upon the eve of war with the United States.

Perceived as a potential threat to his forthcoming policy of appropriation, whereby funding for the war would be secured at the expense of The Church via forced loans, liberal vice-president Valentin Gómez Farías ordered Peña y Barragán and several battalions of Mexico City militia to leave for Veracruz in February 1847, ostensibly to aid in the port's defense against an impending American attack. Seen as a direct effort to clear the capital of potential conservative opposition to his liberal policies, Peña y Barragán refused to comply and revolted against the government on February 26th, launching the so-called Polkos' Revolt. An indecisive power struggle continued in the streets of Mexico City as Peña y Barragán's forces battled the loyalist troops of General Valentín Canalizo until a cease-fire was arranged on March 23rd. Obligated to return to Mexico City in the wake of the revolt, Santa Anna quickly appeased the dissidents by rescinding the anti-clerical appropriation law and abolishing the office of vice-president, thereby firing Gómez-Farías.

Reconciled to the government, Santa Anna assigned Peña y Barragán to command a reserve infantry brigade in the defense of Mexico City. At the end of the cease-fire following the battle of Churubusco, Peña y Barragán was assigned to command the defenses of the *Garita de San Cosme* in conjunction with General Joaquín Rangel. After the fall of Chapultepec on September 13th, Peña y Barragán conducted a defensive stand

at San Cosme that prevented the entry of American troops into the capital for a few hours until a lack of ammunition forced his withdrawal into the city. Following the war, Peña y Barragán was appointed to head the commandancy-general of Veracruz, where he died of cholera at the age of fifty, in Xalapa, on August 2, 1850.

PÉREZ, Francisco, *General de Brigada*, was born in Tulancingo, México in 1808. He initiated his military career at the age of eighteen years as a cadet in the *Activo* Infantry Battalion of Tulancingo and entered the regular army as a lieutenant in the elite *Cazadores* Infantry Regiment in 1826. Ten years later, Pérez accompanied his regiment north to Santa Anna's aid in Texas, but arrived too late, meeting the remnants of the defeated army at Matamoros in October 1836. Returning from the frontier in May 1837, Pérez's regiment was assigned to a special expeditionary force under the command of General Juan Morales sent by the central government to put down a separatist rebellion in the Yucatán. During his tenure of service in the tropical peninsula, Pérez distinguished himself in the storming of a rebel fortress at San Miguel and was promoted to the rank of colonel for bravery at the battle of Chiná in late 1841.

Recalled to the capital following the termination of hostilities in the Yucatán, Pérez was promoted to the rank of *general graduado* in early 1846 and upon the outbreak of war with the United States, was sent to aid in the fortification of Veracruz pending a potential American landing. Just prior to Santa Anna's return in July 1846, Pérez supported the *santanista segundo cabo* of the Veracruz garrison, General José Juan de Landero, in generating a pronouncement in Veracruz that secured a safe and welcome landing for the returning *caudillo*. Recalled to aid in the reorganization of the Army of

the North at San Luis Potosí in August 1846, Pérez was promoted by Santa Anna to the rank of brigadier general and awarded command of the 3rd Infantry Brigade in General Manuel María Lombardini's 2nd Infantry Division, composed of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Light Infantry Battalions. At the battle of La Angostura on February 23, 1847, Pérez was thrust into Lombardini's place as division commander when the latter was severely wounded. As commander, Pérez rendered distinguished service in overseeing the final effort against the American left which contributed to the destruction of the isolated 1st Illinois Infantry Regiment. Upon the army's withdrawal to San Luis Potosí, Pérez accompanied Santa Anna in the defense of the Valley of Mexico and served on his staff while preparing the defenses at Cerro Gordo.

Following the army's disintegration at the battle of April 18, 1847, Pérez was assigned to head a brigade in Lombardini's Army of the East, which was composed of the 1st, 3rd, and 4th Light Infantry Battalions, along with the 11th Infantry Regiment of the Line. In response to the American approach on the southern reaches of the capital, Pérez's brigade was assigned to garrison the defensive line at Churubusco and occupied a position stretching along an embankment from the Churubusco bridgehead to the San Mateo Convent. Hoping to support Valencia's exposed Army of the North, Santa Anna shifted Pérez's command from Churubusco and placed his 3,500-man in a new defensive position two miles east of San Ángel and ½ mile north of the village of San Gerónimo. Ordered to remain strictly on the defensive, Pérez's brigade failed to aid Valencia's beleaguered troops during the disastrous battle of August 20th and was forced to withdraw to its original position at Churubusco, where Pérez valiantly contributed to its unsuccessful defense before executing the orderly withdrawal of his troops to the safety

of a hastily built up secondary defensive position below Chapultepec Castle. During the subsequent battle of September 15th, Pérez's dilapidated brigade, now composed of barely 1,500 men of the 4th Light and 11th Line Infantry Battalions, contributed to the defense of El Molino de Rey, holding the position at Casa Mata at considerable cost before being forced to withdraw to the *Greta de San Come* by a lack of ammunition. Upon the loss of the San Come Gate, Pérez was amongst the officers who counseled Santa Anna to evacuate the capital and the following day, was assigned to second Lombardi in command of the army assembled outside the capital at the Villa de Guadalupe Hidalgo.

Immediately after the war, Pérez was assigned to head a special service commission tasked with rebuilding the fortifications of Monterrey, and in 1850, was transferred to command the garrison of his native Tulancingo. Enthusiastically endorsing Santa Anna's return, Pérez was rewarded for his fealty with an assignment as governor and commandant-general of Puebla, where he remained until his chief's demise in August 1855. Upon the liberal triumph, Pérez was perceived politically acceptable enough to be retained in the army, securing an appointment on February 6, 1856, as senior justice of the military court system. Aligning himself with the liberals thereafter, Pérez played a minor role in the War of The Reform, but was appointed by the triumphant liberals to head the governorship and commandancy-general of the Department of the Valley of México. During the French Intervention, Pérez actively fought the imperialists and their French allies and was appointed by Juárez to serve as commandant of the garrison at Tulancingo, where he died suddenly, at the age of 56 years, in 1864.

PINZÓN, Luis, *General de Brigada*, was born in Acapulco in 1792, reputedly the son of a wealthy Spaniard and his mulatto mistress. He initiated his military career in 1810 at the age 18, when he joined the ranks of the insurgent forces led by Morelos as a private soldier. Following the demise of Morelos, Pinzón continued his adherence to the insurgent cause and served as a junior officer in the forces of Galeana and Julián de Ávila. In 1814, Pinzón joined the insurgent army of General Vicente Guerrero and rose to the rank of colonel by 1821, when he followed his chief into the ranks of General Agustín de Iturbide's Ejército Trigarante. A close friend of Guerrero, Pinzón was described as "one of his most loyal subordinates."¹³³

After supporting Santa Anna's anti-monarchical *Plan de Casa Mata* in 1823, Pinzón adhered to the federalist cause and in 1826, supported General Nicolás Bravo's *moderado* uprising against General Guadalupe Victoria's presidency. Upon that uprising's defeat, Pinzón was exiled along with Bravo, from which he returned upon the granting of a general amnesty by Santa Anna in 1829. In 1841, Pinzón pronounced against General Anastasio Bustamante's centralist regime in favor of Santa Anna's *Plan de Regeneración* and upon the latter's ascension to power, Pinzón was promoted to the rank of brigadier general on May 21, 1842. From 1844-1845, Pinzón served as commandant of the garrison of Zacatula and was involved in *moderado* plots against the forces of General Juan Álvarez.

Upon the outbreak of war with the United States, Pinzón was appointed commandant of Puebla where he remained following Santa Anna's takeover in July 1846. In the wake of the American investment of Veracruz, Pinzón was ordered by Santa Anna to mobilize his forces for the defense of Puebla and was subsequently incorporated as a brigade

¹³³ Herrera Serna, *México en Guerra, 1847-1848*, p. 337.

commander into the Army of the East with which Santa Anna intended to halt Scott's invasion. During the battle of Cerro Gordo, Pinzón was entrusted with co-command of the Mexican far right wing, which blocked the enemy's advance along the National Highway from a well entrenched position consisting of log and earthen works constructed at the base of the highway at the top of a steep ravine beyond the southeast reaches of La Atalaya about a half mile east of the main camp at the village of Cerro Gordo. During the battle of April 18, 1846, Pinzón's 1,100 men and 23 artillery pieces successfully maintained their position, but when the American forces flanked the Mexican left and stormed the summit of El Telégrafo, threatening the Mexican route of escape, the position's viability was jeopardized and panic set in. When Pinzón's co-commander, General José María Jarero raised a white flag, Pinzón angrily rebuffed this premature action and sought to rally the soldiery into prolonged resistance. Nonetheless, the rapidly deteriorating situation obliged Pinzón to capitulate and he went into American captivity along with Jarero and the survivors of their command. It is significant that although Santa Anna admonished Jarero for his surrender of the right flank, Pinzón's role was apparently never questioned.

Following his release upon the termination of hostilities, Pinzón retired from military service and settled in his native Acapulco in the newly created state of Guerrero. Rallying to Álvarez during the anti-*santanista* Revolution of Ayutla in 1853, Pinzón actively opposed Santa Anna's regime, but retired once again to private life following the toppling of his old chief. Pinzón died at the age of 71, in the town of Cuadrilla de Corral Falso, Guerrero on June 10, 1863. A valiant and dedicated patriot, Pinzón was described as "a venerable old warrior who served his country faithfully in all of its wars and whose body

was covered with the scars of wounds received during the war of independence.”¹³⁴ One of Pinzón’s sons was the well-known *juarista* hero of the French Intervention, General Eutimio Pinzón.

QUIJANO, Benito, *General de Brigada*, was born in Mérida, Yucatán, on December 24, 1800, the son of Lieutenant-Colonel Ignacio Quijano and Micaela Gutiérrez de Cosgaya. He began his military career as a cadet in the royalist *Activo* Battalion of Merida, at the age of twelve years, on December 25, 1812. After nearly ten years’ service in the royalist army, Quijano adhered to the pro-independence *Plan de Iguala* and was integrated into Iturbide's *Ejército Trigarante* in 1821. During the latter half of that year, Quijano served under Santa Anna in the expulsion of the remaining royalist troops from Veracruz and two years later, he pronounced in support of Santa Anna's anti-monarchist *Plan de Casa Mata*. Thereafter, Quijano was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel and served as adjutant to the governor of Veracruz in 1823. Six years later, in 1829, Quijano again served under Santa Anna in the defense of Veracruz against the Spanish and was promoted to the rank of colonel for his services. During the political upheaval of the 1830s, Quijano enhanced his reputation with distinguished service in various anti-federalist expeditions against Jalisco and Michoacán and served as commandant of the garrisons at Tampico and Veracruz. In 1839, Quijano served under Santa Anna against the French in the defense of Tampico and was awarded the Cross of Tampico for his services.

In early 1840, Quijano defended Bustamante's regime against the forces of federalist rebels generals José Urrea and José Antonio Mejía and commanded a brigade in the

¹³⁴ Trens, *Historia de Veracruz*, p. 506.

forces of General Gabriel Valencia at the battle of Acajete. Then in the Fall of 1840, Quijano joined his commander, Valencia, and pronounced against Bustamante in support of the Santa Anna/Paredes coup and was rewarded with promotion to the rank of brigadier general in July of that year. Initially assigned to head the commandancy-general of Tamaulipas in 1840, Quijano was later appointed commandant-general of Veracruz in 1843 by Santa Anna, where he remained until being transferred to a position on the Supreme War Council in Mexico City on April 21, 1844.

Thereafter, he remained at the disposal of the Supreme War Council for a time even upon the outbreak of war with the United States, until Santa Anna's return to power, when he was assigned to Santa Anna's staff. In August 1847, Quijano was given command of a cavalry brigade in the Army of The East, made up of the "Húsares de Mexico" Battalion and the *Activo* Cavalry Battalion of Veracruz. Following the disaster at Padierna, the remnants of the cavalry from Valencia's destroyed Army of The North were integrated under Quijano's command. During the battle of Churubusco, Quijano's brigade was posted to cover the Mexican far right in the vicinity of the Hacienda de Portales. When the Americans succeeded in turning that position, Quijano's brigade launched a counterattack against the American left in order to alleviate pressure on the entrenched infantry. The attack was mounted over difficult ground however, and the Americans repulsed Quijano's gesture with ease, sending the Mexican cavalrymen reeling back in utter disorder. Following the battle, Quijano was selected to serve as a commissioner along with General Ignacio Mora y Villamil in arranging terms for a temporary cease fire with the Americans, ratified on August 23rd, which served to give Santa Anna some time in preparing the forthcoming defense of the capital. During the

battles of Molino del Rey and Chapultepec, Quijano commanded a brigade of cavalry and following the army's evacuation of the capital, was appointed *segundo cabo* to General Juan Álvarez in command of the cavalry that remained in the army assembled at the Villa de Guadalupe Hidalgo.

After the war, Quijano served as commandant-general of the Department of México, from 1847-1849. Three years later, in 1851, he was appointed once again to serve on the General Staff and later served as interim chief of that organization in 1854. A committed liberal following the war, Quijano opposed Santa Anna in 1855 and became a *diputado* representing his home state of Yucatán in the liberal congress of Benito Juárez's presidency. In February 1858, Quijano opposed General Felix Zuloaga's *Plan de Tacubaya* and pronounced for the liberal constitution of 1857, which he had signed previously during Juárez's presidency. Committed to the liberal cause, Quijano supported Juárez in the War of The Reform and took the field against the conservative forces of General Miguel Miramón, commanding a cavalry brigade at the battle of Calpulalpan in 1860. A close friend of Juárez, Quijano was appointed governor of Yucatán in 1863 and assigned to mobilize the forces of his state to battle the imperialists. Discouraged by the fall of Puebla in May of 1863, Quijano fled to New York City, where he helped found *El Club Mexicano* as a rallying point for exiled Mexican liberals. While serving as the club's first president, Quijano died in New York, at the age of 64, on May 25, 1865. He was survived by his wife, Dolores Pérez Palacios, with whom he had several children.

RAMÍREZ, Simeón, *General Graduado*, was born in the village of Texcoco, México in 1803. He initiated his military career at the age of thirteen, as a cadet in the *Permanente*

Auxiliary Militia Battalion of Texcoco and was shortly thereafter promoted to the rank of lieutenant. After extensive service against the insurgents which included participation in the defense of Actopan, the battle of Arenal, and the storming and razing of the major rebel base camp at Cerro de Rinconada, Ramírez adhered to the independence movement and was integrated into Iturbide's *Ejército del Trigarante* in 1821. After service under the command of General Vicente Filisola against the separatists in Guatemala in 1822, Ramírez adhered to Santa Anna's anti-monarchical *Plan de Casa Mata* and participated in the expulsion of the remaining royalist troops from the Fortress of San Juan de Ulúa. After defending Veracruz's coastline against Spanish privateers, 1827-1828, Ramírez supported the Santa Anna/Paredes coup against General Anastasio Bustamante's centralist regime in 1832 and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel upon Santa Anna's ascension to the presidency. In 1834, Ramírez opposed a federalist rebellion in central Mexico and served in the forces of General Arista at the siege and storming of Morelia.

The following year, Ramírez served under Santa Anna against the federalist rebels of Zacatecas and took part in the investment of the city in May 1835, whereby local Zacatecan military power was decidedly broken and a blossoming separatist movement brought under control. In reward for his services, Ramírez was promoted by Santa Anna to the rank of *coronel graduado*, but following his chief's downfall the following year, he defended Bustamante's regime against a federalist rebellion in the Bajío, taking part in the battle of Hacienda de San Ysidro under the command of General Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga. In 1841, Ramírez pronounced in favor of Santa Anna's *Plan de Regeneración*

and was promoted to the rank of *coronel efectivo* upon the caudillo's renewed ascension to the presidency.

Dissatisfied with the war stance of General José Joaquín de Herrera's *moderado* administration, Ramírez rallied to Paredes' centralist coup of 1845 and was promoted to the rank of *general graduado* in appreciation of his fealty. Following the Mexican defeats at Palo Alto and Resaca del Guerrero, Ramírez was sent north from the capital at the head of an infantry brigade composed of the 2nd and 3rd Light Infantry Regiments and the *Activo* Battalion of Aguascalientes. Upon joining the Army of the North at Monterrey in mid-1846, Ramírez was appointed commander of the 1st Infantry Brigade and assigned to oversee the fortification of the city's defenses in the face of an imminent American investment of the city. Serving in the defense of the works at Cerro del Obispado, Ramírez assisted the army's withdrawal to San Luis Potosí following the city's capitulation and embraced Santa Anna's return from exile, serving at the battle of La Angostura as a staff officer.

Remaining at Santa Anna's side following the army's retreat to San Luis Potosí, Ramírez subsequently rendered solid service at the battle of Cerro Gordo as a staff officer before returning to the field and being assigned to command an infantry brigade in the defense of the capital. During the battle of September 8th, Ramírez's brigade was assigned to occupy a defensive position behind a dry irrigation ditch linking the Casa Mata and El Molino del Rey. Discouraged by his troops' lack of ammunition and poor morale, Ramírez rendered a poor performance in the battle. Despite his troops' dogged and determined defense of their position, when ammunition began to run low, Ramírez unexpectedly "took flight" and abandoned his post without warning, thereby precipitating

a panic amongst his troops which resulted in a general retreat that left the remaining troops at Casa Mata utterly exposed. Evading punishment for his actions, Ramírez was assigned to the command of an ad-hoc brigade, composed of the 1st and 12th Infantry Regiments of the Line, the 2nd Light Infantry Regiment, and the “Fijo de México” Infantry Battalion. Positioned to guard the *Garita de Belén* in a secondary defensive role, Ramírez failed to support General Andrés Terrés y Masaguér’s troops in the defense of the gate during the battle of September 18th and again unexpectedly retired without authorization without rejoining the army or assisting in its evacuation from the capital that night.

Employed by the *moderados* in minor administrative posts, Ramírez enthusiastically supported Santa Anna’s return in 1853 and was promoted to the rank of brigadier general during his last days in power, on January 2, 1855. Opposing the anti-*santanista* Revolution of Ayutla in 1855, Ramírez supported the conservative cause during the subsequent War of The Reform, dying at the village of San Juan del Río, Querétaro just before the liberal triumph, at the age of 57, on February 9, 1860. He was survived by his wife, María Antonia Benigna Padilla, with whom he had two surviving children.

RANGEL, Joaquín, *General de Brigada*, was born in Mexico City in 1803. He initiated his military career at the age of twenty in 1823, as a cadet in the *Permanente* Artillery Brigade. Rising to the rank of captain in 1826, Rangel served as director of the Santa Fe munitions manufacturing plant from June 1830-November 1832, but retired from active service with the rank of lieutenant-colonel in 1833 due to his dissatisfaction with the central government at having been retained in administrative rather than combat

positions. Nearly ten years later, Rangel rallied to Santa Anna's pro-federalist *Plan de Regeneración* and actively participated in the ouster of General Anastasio Bustamante's centralist regime. Elevated by Santa Anna to the rank of colonel, Rangel was appointed to head the construction of fortifications in Tacubaya and then supervised the survey and construction of a road between the village of San Ángel and the causeway of Niño Perdido. In 1844, Rangel was appointed by Santa Anna to assist in the construction of the great *Monumento de la Independencia* in the capital and upon that project's successful termination, he was promoted to the rank of brigadier general and appointed commander-in-chief of artillery. After defending Santa Anna's regime against the federalist rebellion of late 1844, on June 7, 1845 he initiated an unsuccessful pro-*santanista*, *puro* federalist-backed *pronunciamento* against the *moderado* government of General José Joaquín de Herrera. Regarded as a politically unreliable and potentially dangerous *santanista*, Rangel was arrested and subsequently dismissed from service upon his capture by government forces in June 1845.

Briefly imprisoned and exiled to the village of Huichapan for nearly two years, Rangel languished in obscurity until August 1846, when he pronounced in Tula in favor of Santa Anna and the restoration of the Constitution of 1824. Rushing to meet his chief's landing party at Veracruz, Rangel was well received by Santa Anna and appointed to reorganize the elite "Supremos Poderes" Grenadier Battalion that became Santa Anna's personal escort. Appointed interim commander-in-chief of artillery, Rangel spent the early days of Santa Anna's presidency overseeing the improvement of roads in the capital and the mobilization of the city's National Guard units. In September 1846, Rangel marched north of his own accord to the aid of Tampico, but returned to Mexico City upon the

port's fall in October. Appointed by Santa Anna to command the capital's powerful *Ciudadela* garrison, Rangel was courted by interim president Valentín Gómez Farías to help maintain the federalist regime, but upon the outbreak of the reactionary Polkos' Revolt in February, Rangel suddenly switched sides and aided in the demise of the *puro* federalists.

Upon the conflict's resolution by Santa Anna, Rangel was appointed to command an infantry brigade, composed of the "Supremos Poderes" Grenadier Battalion, the "Mixto de Santa Anna" Infantry Battalion, the San Blas National Guard Battalion, and the *Activo* Battalions of Matamoros and Morelia, in General Manuel María Lombardini's Army of the East. Held in reserve during the battle of Cerro Gordo, Rangel rallied to Santa Anna's side in August 1847 and promulgated a defense measure for a sector of the capital's southern front which was approved by Santa Anna, whereby Rangel was authorized to organize a force with which to aid in the defense of the capital. Designated commander of the 3rd Infantry Brigade in the army defending the southern approaches to the capital, Rangel's troops occupied a reserve position in support of the fortified line at Churubusco. In this capacity, Rangel took part in the battle of August 20th and greatly distinguished himself in the defense of the San Mateo Convent. Thereafter, Rangel and his brigade were assigned to occupy an old powder mill on the north end of a defensive line established between El Molino del Rey and Casa Mata.

During the battle of September 7th, Rangel furthered his reputation as a commander by directing the tenacious defense of the mill against repeated American infantry assaults and cannonades. Even upon the American rupture of the center position, which severed communications with the defenders of Casa Mata, Rangel continued to fight tooth and

nail against the Americans until a dwindling ammunition supply forced him to execute an orderly withdrawal towards Chapultepec Castle. Subsequently, in preparation for an impending American attack on Chapultepec, Santa Anna placed Rangel's brigade in a courtyard behind a walled park at the base of the castle's heights. Defending their position to the last, Rangel's brigade was decimated during the battle of September 15th, with one battalion, the gallant San Blas, losing its commander and suffering near annihilation. Retiring in the face of the untiring American onslaught, Santa Anna shifted the remains of Rangel's brigade to the defense of the *Garita de San Cósme*, where he left Rangel in command with General Matías de la Peña y Barragán acting as *segundo cabo*. Here, Rangel distinguished himself once more, "fighting like a lion" against the American advance down the Belén causeway.¹³⁵ Forced to relinquish his initial position, Rangel rallied his command at Santo Tomás and with the aid of disparate forces under the command of General Anastasio Torrejón, launched a determined counterattack that succeeded in momentarily halting the American assault. Forced to withdraw to the ramparts of the main gate, Rangel succeeded in rallying a few elements of his fleeing command and organized a desperate defense in conjunction with General Peña y Barragán. While courageously exposed to the enemy's fire, Rangel was struck down and carried from the field bleeding profusely from a severe leg wound. Thereafter, when a dwindling ammunition supply finally forced his troops to withdraw, the incapacitated Rangel was carried along and he subsequently accompanied the army's late-night evacuation of the capital.

Upon Santa Anna's abdication, Rangel was arrested by the newly empowered *moderado* authorities and imprisoned for two months before being stripped of rank and

¹³⁵ Gayón Córdova, *La ocupación yanqui*, p. 211.

dismissed from the army. From 1852-1853, Rangel served as a deputy to the National Congress from the Federal District and upon Santa Anna's return to power, was restored to rank and named honorary commander of the prestigious *Corporación de Mutilados*. Following the Revolution of Ayutla, Rangel was appointed by liberal President Ignacio Comonfort to command the "Libertad" National Guard Battalion of the Federal District and assigned to supervise the fortification of the capital in opposition to General Felix Zuloaga's reactionary rebellion. Assigned to an administrative post in the Artillery Inspectorate in 1856, Rangel retired from the army soon thereafter and did not play an active role in the War of the Reform or the French Intervention. After seventeen years in retirement, Rangel died of a fever, surrounded by his family, near the capital in the Cacahuatl de San Pablo, at the age of 71, in 1874. Described by one source as "tall and light complected, with a prominent forehead, long nose, gray eyes, and blonde moustache,"¹³⁶ Rangel was described by another as "energetic, limber, and prone to fighting like a lion in battle."¹³⁷

REQUENA, Tomás, *General de Brigada*, was born in Campeche, Yucatán, in 1799. After integration into Iturbide's *Ejército del Triguarante* and his subsequent adherence to Santa Anna's *Plan de Casa Mata*, Requena specialized in the artillery and rose to the rank of lieutenant-colonel by 1829. During the separatist disturbances of 1830, Requena defended Bustamante's regime against the federalists and served in his native Yucatán as chief of artillery in the punitive expedition of General Miguel Barragán. In February 1830, following the successful execution of the campaign, Requena was appointed

¹³⁶ Gayón Córdova, *La ocupación yanqui*, pp. 95-101.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 211

membership in the peace commission that secured a favorable treaty with rebel leader, D. Manuel Carabajal. Two years later, in 1832, Requena supported the Paredes/Santa Anna coup against Bustamante and was rewarded for his services with promotion to the rank of colonel.

A moderate federalist with firm liberal convictions, Requena briefly served as chief of artillery during the campaign against Texas in 1836 until replaced by Colonel Pedro de Ampudia, whom Santa Anna considered more politically reliable. In the wake of Santa Anna's debacle at San Jacinto, Requena served as a delegate from his native Yucatán in the constitutional convention promulgated by President José Justo Corro that ratified the *Siete Leyes Constitucionales*, which strengthened the federalist Constitution of 1824. In 1839, Requena again rendered service against the separatists in Yucatán and at the head of a small punitive force, defeated the rebel troops of indigenous leader, Iman, at the battle of Tizimín, for which he was promoted to the rank of *general graduado* on May 19, 1840 and appointed commandant-general of Tabasco.

At the outbreak of the war with the United States, Requena was promoted to the rank of brigadier general and appointed chief of artillery to the Army of the North. At the battle of Palo Alto, on May 8, 1846, Requena's deficient artillery serviced by insufficiently trained gunners dueled hopelessly with the American batteries and was severely outgunned, the Americans having fired 3,000 shots as compared to a bare 653 shots fired by the Mexicans.¹³⁸ On the next day, at the battle of Resaca del Guerrero, Requena's artillery was silenced by an American cavalry charge that withered the Mexican right flank and forced the collapse of the entire army. Thereafter, during General Francisco Mejía's illness, Requena briefly commanded the decimated Army of

¹³⁸ Roa Bárcena, *Recuerdos*, p. 66

the North and directed its withdrawal to Monterrey from Linares, beginning on July 9th. Superseded in command by Ampudia, Requena continued to serve as *segundo cabo* and chief of artillery in the army and with General Mejía. He was amongst those who counseled Ampudia to defend Monterrey at all costs in opposition to Santa Anna's orders to abandon the city as indefensible. In anticipation of the American attack, Requena ably supervised the fortification of the positions at Purísima Bridge and La Tenería and skillfully directed the artillery during the battle itself, utilizing the skills of the experienced gunners serving in the San Patricio Battalion to bolster his own under-trained and demoralized crews. Upon the loss of key positions at Teneria, Independence Hill, and the Bishop's Palace on September 24th, Requena was appointed by Ampudia to serve on the peace commission that negotiated terms of capitulation with the Americans. Apparently, the negotiations proved fruitful, as the Mexican army fetched generous peace terms and was allowed to march out of the city intact and under arms.

After assisting the army's withdrawal to San Luis Potosí, Requena helped found the anti-*santanista* Red Comet Society in protest over Santa Anna's appointment to overall command in October. It seems that Requena began to cause such a stir amongst the officer corps, that Santa Anna promptly dismissed him from the army and replaced him with a more politically reliable subordinate. Thereafter, Requena remained unemployed and did not serve again during the war with the United States. Following the armistice, he was appointed by the new government to head the commandancy-general of Aguascalientes in November 1848 and then transferred as commandant-general to Jalisco, where he died suddenly in Guadalajara, at the age of 51, on October 31, 1850.

RINCÓN, Manuel, *General de División*, was born in Perote, Veracruz on July 30, 1784, the son of *peninsulares* José Miguel Rincón and Micaela Calcáneo. He initiated his military career by joining the insurgent forces in 1809 and served thereafter against the *realistas* in central Mexico until October 29, 1821, when he pronounced in favor of Iturbide's pro-independence *Plan de Iguala* and was incorporated into the royal *Ejército del Triguarante* as a colonel of infantry. During Iturbide's monarchy, Rincón was appointed to head the inspectorate of militia in Veracruz and commissioned with the purchase of vessels for the fledgling Mexican navy. After organizing the 9th Infantry Regiment of the Line and being appointed its colonel, Rincón pronounced in favor of Santa Anna's anti-monarchical *Plan de Casa Mata* and was rewarded by the emergent federal government with promotion to the rank of brigadier general, on December 23, 1823. During General Guadalupe Victoria's presidency, Rincón occupied positions of increasing responsibility and served consecutive terms as secretary of war and president of the Supreme Military Tribunal. In 1829, Rincón pronounced in favor of General Vicente Guerrero's *Plan de Perote* and endorsed his presidency in opposition to the centralist forces of General Manuel Gómez Pedraza.

That same year, Rincón served under Santa Anna against the Spanish at Tampico and was subsequently promoted to the rank of major general in 1837. Almost two years later, in November 1838, Rincón was serving as governor and commandant-general of Veracruz when he was confronted with the French invasion led by Admiral Charles Baudin. Advised by Santa Anna to surrender the fortress of San Juan de Ulúa and seek favorable terms with the invaders, Rincón capitulated to Baudin's forces on November 28th and allowed them free use of the harbor in exchange for the city's neutrality.

Enraged with Rincón's passivity, the federal government replaced him with Santa Anna and ordered him to return to the capital to face a court-martial for his conduct. Although subsequently absolved of guilt and restored to rank, the 55 year-old Rincón retired from active service and was relegated to membership in the *Cuerpo de Inválidos*. Recalled by Santa Anna to head the commandancy-general of México in 1843, Rincón spent the rest of the 1840s acting as deputy from Cuernavaca in the National Legislative Assembly.

In retirement upon the outbreak of war with the United States, the 63 year-old Rincón rallied to the national banner of his own accord and tendered his services to Santa Anna, who appointed the old veteran *segundo cabo* to General Manuel María Lombardini in command of the reserve Army of the East defending the Valley of Mexico in early March 1847. Disgusted with the *puro* federalist policies enacted by vice-president Gómez Farías, Rincón resigned from the service in late March, but was reinstated by Santa Anna in August and appointed to command the vital defenses at Churubusco in anticipation of an American strike against the southern approaches to the capital. In this capacity, Rincón rendered distinguished services during the desperate battle of August 20, 1847, during which his garrison held the San Mateo Convent and nearby bridge for most of the day until a lack of ammunition forced their withdrawal. Wishing to conserve his stock in the hopes that Santa Anna would send him a replenishment from some other point on the battlefield, Rincón devised the deceptive measure of allowing the attacking American troops to get as close as possible to the Mexican position before the latter opened fire. In practice, the strategy proved quite successful and the withering fire unleashed by the Mexican troops forced their attackers' initial withdrawal and delayed their investment of the position for most of the day. As his soldiers' ammunition eventually ran out at around

4 P.M., Rincón ordered a general retreat and escaped with a body of troops into Mexico City, where he rejoined Santa Anna.

Remaining with the army even after its evacuation from Mexico City to the Villa de Guadalupe Hidalgo on September 15th, Rincón subsequently left the service in January 1848 due to a severe illness and retired to his estates in Cuernavaca, where he died shortly thereafter at the age of 65, on September 24, 1849. He was survived by his wife, Josefa Calderón, with whom he had several children. A professional military man with a minimum interest in politics, Rincón was described by one source as "a gallant old Spaniard." A moderate federalist, it is interesting to note that even though Rincón resigned from the army in protest over Gómez Farías' attacks against the Church in March 1847, he refused to support the reactionary Polkos' Revolt, which fostered disunity amongst his countrymen in the face of a foreign invader.

SALAS, José Mariano, *General de Brigada*, was born in Mexico City on May 11, 1797. At the age of sixteen years he entered military service as a cadet in the Royalist Infantry Regiment of Puebla on November 6, 1813. After serving against the insurgents for nearly eight years, Salas pronounced for the independence movement in 1821 and adhered to the *Plan de Iguala*, being integrated into Iturbide's *Ejército del Triguarante* with the rank of captain. The following year, Salas served under Santa Anna in the ouster of the remaining Spanish troops from the fortress of San Juan de Ulúa. Four years later, in 1826, at the head of the 10th Line Infantry Battalion, Salas adhered to General Vicente Guerrero's *Plan de Montañón* and with Santa Anna, defended the federalist presidency of General Guadalupe Victoria against the *moderado* rebels under General Nicolás Bravo. In 1829,

Salas served again under Santa Anna against the Spanish in the defense of Tampico and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel in reward for his services. After supporting Santa Anna's 1831 rebellion against General Anastasio Bustamante's centralist regime, Salas served as an aide in the War Ministry before being attached to the commandancy-general of México in 1834.

After subsequent promotion to the rank of colonel, Salas was attached to the commandancy-generals of Guanajuato and Jalisco until recalled by Santa Anna to take command of the *Permanente* "Jiménez" Battalion in the Army of the North for the upcoming Texas Campaign of 1836. In this capacity, Salas seconded an assault column against the eastern wall of The Alamo and under the command of General José Urrea, rendered distinguished service against the Texian rebels at the battles of Goliad and Coleto. After the disaster at San Jacinto, Salas was assigned command of the reserve and covered the army's withdrawal to Matamoros. Despite the failure of the Mexican forces in Texas, Salas was nonetheless promoted to the rank of brigadier general for his services, with patent from March 19, 1836.

During the federalist revolt of 1839, Salas successfully defended the centralist regime of Bustamante against the rebels of General José Antonio Mejía and fought at the battle of San Miguel La Blanca, where he was carried from the field covered with seven bayonet wounds and a fractured rib. During the subsequent July 1840 revolt of his former chief, General José Urrea, Salas returned to the centralist standard and defended the National Palace. Subsequently, Salas supported Santa Anna's coup against Bustamante and was rewarded with the commandancy-general of México. Following Santa Anna's downfall in 1844, Salas was dismissed from the service by the moderates, but was

ultimately recalled by President José Joaquín de Herrera to head the commandancy-general of México once more. In reward for supporting his January 1846 coup against Herrera, General Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga assigned Salas command of the *Ciudadela*, where he remained following the outbreak of war with the United States.

Dissatisfied with both the conduct of the war and the monarchist aspirations of the Paredes regime, Salas involved himself in an intricate liberal/*santanista* plot to restore Santa Anna to power. Having hesitatingly aligned himself with the fiery liberal, Lic. Valentín Gómez Farías, Salas revolted against Paredes' when the latter left the capital to take command of the army and elevated himself to power with the backing of the powerful Mexico City garrison, on August 5, 1846. As acting chief executive, Salas proclaimed the unity of the Mexican federation and opposition to the United States, restored freedom of the press, called for new congressional elections, and declared the federalist Constitution of 1824 in effect. After subsequent elections elevated Santa Anna to the presidency and Gómez-Farías to the vice-presidency, Salas denounced the executive office on December 23rd and returned to command of the *Ciudadela*. An enemy of the *puro* federalists, perhaps it is worth noting that the conservative Salas initially refused to hand off power to Gómez Farías, whom he mistrusted, and later supported the Polkos' Revolt against him, throwing the weight of his troops behind the rebels whose intervention brought an end to the aspirations of the *puro* federalists in March 1847. It appears that Salas' complicated political gestures during this chaotic period reflect the actions of a moderate conservative *santanista*, who was willing to accept the *puro* federalists if they helped restore Santa Anna to power, but thereafter strongly opposed to them.

Somewhat unsettled by his potential unreliability, Santa Anna assigned Salas to the unenviable task of mobilizing guerrilla forces to harass Scott's advance from Veracruz until transferring him to second General Gabriel Valencia in command of the Army of the North. After the disaster at Cerro Gordo, Salas assisted the Army of the North's march from San Luis Potosí to aid in the defense of the Valley of Mexico and supported Valencia's selection of a suitable defensive position for the army at El Rancho de Padierna. During the battle of August 20, 1847, Salas commanded the 3rd (Reserve) Division, composed of General Santiago Blanco's 4th Infantry Brigade and General Anastasio Torrejón's 3rd Cavalry Brigade, behind the primary position at Padierna at the western base of La Loma del Pelón. When the American attack swept the Mexican forces from their positions and precipitated a rout along the Camino de Anzalde by way of the village of San Gerónimo, Salas attempted to rally the panicked troops, sword in hand, and led a counterattack with a small group of cavalry, but was ultimately repulsed and captured by U.S. troops along with 824 of his men. Following the armistice, Salas was paroled and assigned to head the commandancy-general of the new seat of government at Querétaro.

Thereafter, Salas played a conspicuous role in Santa Anna's return to power in 1853 and was rewarded for his efforts with promotion to the rank of major general. Remaining in command of the *guarnición* at Mexico City during most of Santa Anna's final presidential term, Salas adhered to the conservative side during the War of the Reform and briefly occupied the presidency once more on behalf of General Miguel Miramón, January 21-February 2, 1859. Following the conservative defeat in 1860, Salas cooperated with the monarchists and on July 18, 1863, was appointed to serve on a three-

member provisional regency established by the French to manage the government in lieu of Maximilian's ascension to the throne. Thereafter, Salas retired from public life and died at La Villa de Guadalupe Hidalgo, at the age of seventy, on December 24, 1867. He was survived by his wife, Josefa Cardeña, with whom he had several children.

TERRÉS y Masaguér, Andrés, *General de Brigada*, was born in Barcelona, Spain in 1777. He entered the Royal Artillery as a cadet at the age of thirteen years, on December 13, 1790, and served in the Marquis de La Romana's expeditionary force in Germany. After repatriation to Spain with the bulk of La Romana's force, Terrés was integrated into General Joaquín Blake's Army of Galicia, which was destroyed by Napoleon on November 10, 1809, at the battle of Espinosa, where Terrés was among the captured. Upon his subsequent parole, Terrés continued service against the French in the Army of Asturias until the close of the Peninsular War in 1814. Thereafter, Terrés was transferred to service in Cuba and then went to Mexico in the service of the *realistas*, under whom he rose by 1821 to the rank of lieutenant-colonel of the Provincial Infantry Regiment of Guadalajara. After brief service in Iturbide's *Ejército del Triguarante*, Terrés supported Santa Anna's *Plan de Casa Mata* and thereafter consistently supported either the *santanista* or conservative cause during the tumultuous 1820s and 30s. In reward for his support in the ouster of General Anastasio Bustamante's centralist regime in 1841, Santa Anna promoted Terrés to the rank of colonel on April 12, 1842 and assigned him command of the 2nd Line Infantry Regiment in the garrison of Mexico City.

Upon the outbreak of war with the United States, Terrés was sent north at the head of his regiment as a part of General Pedro de Ampudia's supplementary force sent from the

capital to reinforce General Francisco Mejía's troops facing the Americans at Matamoros. By May 1846, Terrés was summoned back to Mexico City, where he remained inactive for a time at the disposal of the Supreme War Council. Upon Santa Anna's return from exile, Terrés organized a force of 1,200 men, complete with a corresponding artillery train, and marched to his aid at San Luis Potosí, where he was well received by the commander-in-chief in November of 1846 and placed in command of the 6th Infantry Brigade, composed of the "Fieles de Santa Anna" Infantry Battalion and the *Activo* Battalions of Aguascalientes, Guadalajara, and Querétaro, in General José María Ortega's 3rd Infantry Division. In this capacity, Terrés rendered solid service at the head of his brigade at the battle of La Angostura, where his command saw action during the latter part of the battle despite being held in reserve for most of the day. Apparently, Terrés was promoted by Santa Anna to the rank of brigadier general in recognition of his service upon the very battlefield on February 23, 1847.

Upon the army's subsequent retreat to San Luis Potosí, Terrés' command returned with Santa Anna to the capital, where he was assigned to garrison duty once more. After the liquidation of Santa Anna's army at Cerro Gordo, Terrés was given command of an 800-man brigade, composed of the 2nd Light Infantry Regiment and the *Activo* Battalion of Mexico City, in General Manuel María Lombardini's reorganized Army of The East defending the Valley of Mexico in July 1847. Although, he did not initially see action during the battles for Mexico City, in the wake of the army's disintegration via the disasters of September 13th at El Molino del Rey and Chapultepec, Santa Ana placed him in command of a makeshift force of 200 troops and three artillery pieces guarding the *Garita de Belén* with instructions to hold the gate at all costs, should the Americans

attempt to access the capital from that direction. In addition to Terrés' force, Santa Anna left several small infantry detachments in nearby support, should the American assault materialize more rapidly than expected and he be unable to arrive with reinforcements in time from the *Garita de San Cósme*, where he expected the main attack to occur. At around one in the afternoon, when the Americans came roaring down the Belén causeway in force and bore down heavily upon the troops defending the *garita*, Terrés came to find that the detachments left by Santa Anna in his support had dissipated and abandoned the field. Suspecting treachery, Terrés abandoned his position and ordered his troops to seek refuge in the heavily fortified *Ciudadela* about 100 yards to the north. In the meantime, upon hearing the guns thundering at the Belén Gate, Santa Anna rushed from the *Garita de San Cosme* to halt the American onslaught with a handful of troops and came upon a sight that he was loath to believe; the Americans had already breached the entrance and were flooding past. Demanding to know where Terrés was and why he had not been notified of the American attack, he was met by several junior officers of Terrés' command who had marched to the sound of the guns from nearby positions, claiming that they had been initially ordered to withdraw by Terrés himself. Infuriated, Santa Anna sought out Terrés and came upon the disconcerted general in the *Ciudadela*, taking refuge in a doorway behind the line of fire. At this sight, Santa Anna became white with rage and leapt upon the hapless general, tearing the epaulets from his uniform and striking him across the face with his riding crop.¹³⁹

Stripped of his rank and placed under arrest, Terrés was in the process of being removed from the field when he fell into the hands of the Americans. After his subsequent parole, Terrés was formally absolved of guilt for his actions of September 13,

¹³⁹ Crawford, *The Eagle*, pp. 107-108.

1847 by a military tribunal and rehabilitated. He was serving as a magistrate on the Supreme Military Tribunal when he died in Mexico City at the age of 72, on February 12, 1850. During Santa Anna's subsequent return to power, Terrés' rank was formally restored and a pension granted to his surviving widow and daughters.

TORREJÓN, Anastasio, *General de Brigada*, was born in Llanos de Apan, in the present-day state of Hidalgo, in 1802. He initiated his military career at the age of fourteen, as a cadet in the royalist “Realistas de Apan” Cavalry Regiment, on July 29, 1816. After promotion to the rank of lieutenant, Torrejón saw extensive service against the insurgents and was involved in twelve actions and two sieges before being promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel and pronouncing for independence in support of Iturbide's *Plan de Iguala* in 1821. Two years later, Torrejón pronounced in support of Santa Anna's *Plan de Casa Mata* and fought against the royalist forces at the head of the 3rd Cavalry Regiment at the battle of San Lázaro, where he gallantly led the charge that broke the royalist forces and expelled them from the town. After demonstrating considerable prowess on behalf of the conservatives throughout the 1830s, in July 1840, Torrejón supported the centralist regime of General Anastasio Bustamante against the federalist rebels led by General José Urrea, but subsequently turned against Bustamante and supported Santa Anna's coup of September, for which he was rewarded with promotion to the rank of brigadier general on December 1, 1841. Four years later, Torrejón pronounced in favor of General Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga's arch-conservative agenda and helped oust the *moderado* regime of General José Joaquín de Herrera.

Thereafter, in light of imminent hostilities with the United States, Torrejón marched

north at the head of a cavalry brigade and incorporated himself into General Francisco Mejía's forces at Matamoros, facing the American buildup across the Río Grande. Ordered to secure a crossing for the Army of the North across the river below Matamoros and cut Taylor from his base at Point Isabel with the intention of forcing battle on ground of his own choosing, Torrejón and his 1,600-man cavalry detachment precipitated the skirmish at El Brazito on April 25, 1846, whereupon war was declared by the United States based upon the presumption that "American blood has been shed on American soil." Thereafter, Torrejón's cavalry covered Arista's crossing and was engaged at the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca del Guerrero. At the former, Arista held Torrejón largely responsible for the army's defeat for botching a charge against the American position that Arista hoped would scatter their artillery. Because he disagreed with the army's disposition and believed the ground to be unsuitable for a massed cavalry assault, Torrejón unenthusiastically committed his troopers piece-meal and their attack was easily repulsed by the famous American "flying artillery." Designated commander-in-chief of cavalry in the Army of the North upon the army's withdrawal to Monterrey, Torrejón was tasked with harassing and inflicting attrition on the American advance with his dilapidated brigade, composed of barely 280 men of the "México" Light Cavalry Regiment and the 1st, 7th, and 8th Cavalry Regiments of the Line. Discouraged by the low number of troops available and a lack of supporting light artillery, Torrejón abandoned his position at the town of Marín upon first sight of the Americans and withdrew into Monterrey proper on September 18, 1846.

After assisting in the defense of city, Torrejón's command was integrated into the reformed Army of the North at San Luis Potosí and Torrejón was appointed by Santa

Anna to command the 2nd Cavalry Brigade, composed of the 3rd, 7th, and 8th Cavalry Regiments of the Line and the *Activo* Cavalry Battalion of Guanajuato. In this capacity, Torrejón rendered solid service at the battle of La Angostura, on February 23, 1847, where he was credited with conducting the assault which succeeded in turning the U.S. left, whereby his command and that of General Pedro Ampudia gained the American rear in strength until halted by the superior firepower of Taylor's repositioned batteries. Following the army's withdrawal to San Luis Potosí, Torrejón remained with the Army of the North and was appointed overall cavalry commander.

Coming under the command of General Gabriel Valencia, Torrejón marched with the army to Santa Anna's aid in the defense of the Valley of Mexico in July 1847. At the subsequent battle of Padierna where the Army of the North was utterly destroyed, Torrejón escaped the battlefield by rough paths and managed to reach the village of San Gerónimo and the safety of the Mexican lines at Churubusco. In view of his flight from the battle, Torrejón was accused by his superior, General José Mariano Salas, of mismanaging the cavalry and failing to support the infantry's position at El Rancho de Padierna, thereby precipitating the Mexican disaster. Although discredited for his role in the battle, Santa Anna retained Torrejón and following the battle of Molino del Rey, assigned him command of the cavalry brigade formerly led by the disgraced General Manuel Andrade in the Army of the South. In this capacity, Torrejón assisted in the defense of the *Garita de San Cosme* following the battle of Chapultepec on September 13, 1847.

Following the war, Torrejón remained at the disposal of the War Ministry, but remained unemployed until Santa Anna's return to power, when he was appointed to head

the commandancy-general of Michoacán in 1854. Thereafter, Torrejón retired to private life and died near the capital at the village of San Martín Texmelucam, at the age of 56, on June 11, 1858.

VALENCIA, Gabriel, *General de División*, was born in Mexico City in 1799. At the age of eleven years, he enlisted as a cadet in the Royal Tulancingo Provincial Cavalry Regiment on March 19, 1810. After extensive service against the insurgents, Valencia was incorporated into Iturbide's *Ejército del Triguarante* on March 2, 1821 and was present at the sieges of Morelia, San Juan del Río, Querétaro, and Mexico City as a captain in the 4th Line Infantry Regiment. After subsequent promotion to major in late 1821, Valencia served under Santa Anna in ousting the remaining Spanish forces in Mexico from Veracruz. After supporting Bustamante's centralist coup against Guerrero's presidency in 1830, Valencia was rewarded with promotion to the rank of brigadier general in early 1831. The following year, Valencia gathered a force of 600 men under his command and lent support to the *santanistas* in Guanajuato during the revolt against Bustamante. In 1835, Valencia was appointed to head the commandancy-general of México and the following year, he accompanied Santa Anna into Texas as a staff officer, but did not see any action in that disastrous campaign. Returning from Texas to head once again the commandancy-general of his native Mexico City, he again served under Santa Anna at Tampico during the French "Pastry War" of 1839. The following year, in the service of the centralist Bustamante, he was sent with 1,600 men to oppose the federalist rebellion of Generals José Urrea and José Antonio Mejía in Puebla, where he succeeded in capturing and executing Mejía at the bloody battle of Acajete. In 1841, he

joined Generals Manuel Lombardini and Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga in supporting Santa Anna's coup against Bustamante, acting as the veritable swingman with his 4,000-man Mexico City garrison whose contribution would have ensured victory to whichever side he had chosen to support.

In gratitude for his services and with the intention of decisively winning the ambitious upstart over, Santa Anna promoted Valencia to the rank of major general and lavished expensive gifts and generous allowances upon him. A mere three years later, however, the ever-intriguing Valencia joined with federalist General Juan Álvarez in deposing Santa Anna and later assisted the centralist Paredes in ousting the moderate liberal General José Joaquín de Herrera from the presidency, whereupon Valencia was named president of the “Council of State” by the conspirators until a rightful head of state could be determined. Believing he had finally consolidated presidential power in his hands, the usurper Valencia began to help himself to public funds until the inveterate Paredes notified him that he was claiming the presidency and that he "would shoot anyone opposing him---archbishop, general, magistrate, or anyone else."¹⁴⁰ Lacking the support necessary to confront Paredes, Valencia abandoned his claim to the presidency and was relegated to membership in the “General War Council.”

Upon Santa Anna's return from exile, the politically unreliable Valencia was transferred from command of the Mexico City garrison to command of all Mexican forces in Guanajuato, where he successfully roused the troops of that state and contributed 5,000 men to the reorganization of the Army of the North at San Luis Potosí, in the hopes that he would be rewarded by his former chief with a coveted position in the reformed army. However ingratiated he might have been with Valencia's contribution,

¹⁴⁰ Calary, *Eagles and Empire*, p. 78.

Santa Anna decided to keep the headstrong Valencia at arm's length and dispatched him to command the Mexican forces threatening Taylor's supply lines at Tuna, 125 miles northeast of Saltillo. Embittered by this lackluster appointment, Valencia joined the anti-*santanista* Red Comet Society and momentarily satiated his ambitions by drawing up insubordinate plans for an offensive against Taylor's supply lines, in the face of explicit orders from Santa Anna to stay put. After languishing at Tula for several months, Valencia was relieved of command and appointed to head the much-reduced Army of the North at San Luis Potosí in May 1847 by *santanista* war minister General José María Tornel y Mendivil, who feared the rumors of a conspiracy being drawn up by Valencia in Northeastern Mexico and sought a "safer" place for him. Apparently, this move, although considered prudent at the time in anticipation of an imminent Mexican victory over Scott's forces in the vicinity of Jalapa, would soon come back to haunt Tornel and Santa Anna.

Desperate for reinforcements in the wake of his immitigable disaster at Cerro Gordo and unable to remand Valencia's assignment without generating ridicule and accusations of nepotism from the army, Santa Anna resigned himself to work with an unreliable subordinate and ordered Valencia to bring the Army of the North to his aid in the Valley of Mexico. Valencia, in turn, was only too glad to comply, eager as he was to outshine his superior and crush the Americans, and he arrived with his 4,000-man army in the vicinity of the capital on July 27, 1847. Ordered by Santa Anna to occupy a secondary defensive position at San Ángel, on the right of Santa Anna's primary defensive line, Valencia immediately scorned that inconspicuous position and moved his army forward to a hill about five miles south at El Rancho de Padierna, near the town of Contreras.

After surveying the ground and entrenching his batteries, Valencia determined his position to be impregnable and ignored an infuriated Santa Anna's orders that his army withdraw and reoccupy the position at San Ángel. When his batteries repulsed an American frontal gesture upon his position on the afternoon of August 19th, Valencia considered his plan to inflict a resounding blow upon the Americans an imminent reality and celebrated amongst his officers with drinks to his coming victory. On the morning of August 20th, however, the Army of the North awoke to find itself attacked from both the front and rear by American troops who had penetrated the impassable *pedregal* protecting Valencia's right flank against all odds. The battle lasted a mere 17 minutes as Valencia's troops broke and fled upon realizing that the Americans had outflanked their position and that reinforcements were not forthcoming from Santa Anna.

Upon his escape from the battlefield, Valencia was careful to avoid the Americans and disobeyed Santa Anna's orders to present himself and face charges, fearing the latter as a veritable death sentence. Instead, Valencia made his way to Toluca, where he began forming a small force and entered into conspiracy dealings with other Red Comet Society members, such as Generals Pedro de Ampudia, Juan N. Almonte, and Valentín Canalizo, in whose company he pronounced against Santa Anna in favor of continuing the war just after the termination of hostilities. Seen as a threat to the establishment of peace, the Americans pursued Valencia and captured him near the capital on January 2, 1848.

Paroled following the termination of hostilities, Valencia died suddenly in the capital of an apoplectic attack, at the age of fifty years, on March 23, 1848. He left behind a widow, Guadalupe Carranza de Valencia of Mexico City with whom he had three daughters. Valencia was described as a heavysset, bull-necked man of average height, but

not unusually broad, with small side whiskers and a heavy mustache. Justin Smith characterized him as “destitute of every principle of honor and honesty” and to “have a hard cruel look about his cold blue eyes.” Often described as overly ambitious and headstrong, it was rumored that in anticipation of a great victory over the Americans on the eve of his disaster at Padierna, Valencia carried in his pocket the names of the men he would appoint to his cabinet upon assuming the presidency. Despite the negative claims of his detractors, it is evident that Valencia exhibited a certain charismatic panache and enjoyed an extremely popular following amongst the common soldiers, who tended to follow him with complete confidence.

VÁZQUEZ, Ciriaco, *General de Brigada*, was born in the city of Veracruz in 1794. On December 29, 1809, Vázquez initiated his military career at the age of fifteen years as a cadet in the Royalist Veracruz Infantry Regiment of the Line, where he served alongside his friend, Antonio López de Santa Anna. After over ten years' service against the insurgents, Vázquez rallied to the independence movement and pronounced in support of Iturbide's *Plan de Iguala* in Veracruz on March 30, 1821. The following year, he served under his old friend, Santa Anna, in the expulsion of the Spanish from San Juan de Ulúa and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel for his distinguished service. Attached to the commandancy-general of Veracruz as a staff officer, Vázquez returned to serve under Santa Anna during the campaign against the Spanish at Veracruz, where he served as chief of staff and secured promotion to the rank of colonel in September 1829 via his courage on the battlefield. Following the Spanish defeat, Vázquez was sent to Havana, Cuba, as part of a commission to negotiate the terms for their capitulation and

withdrawal from Mexican territory.

During Santa Anna's coup against Bustamante in 1831, Vázquez pronounced for the *santanistas* in Veracruz and secured the commandancy-general of that state in reward, where he remained as governor and commandant-general until 1834. For his services against Bustamante, Santa Anna promoted Vázquez to the rank of brigadier general on October 17, 1832 and assigned him successive command of the garrisons at Veracruz, Xalapa, and Isla del Carmen during the 1830s. Falling temporarily out of grace with both General José Joaquín de Herrera's *moderado* government and the centralist regime of General Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga, Vázquez remained unemployed until Santa Anna's return to power in August 1846, when he was recalled to join the reformed Army of the North at San Luis Potosí and assigned to command an infantry brigade, composed of the 4th Light Infantry Regiment and the "Flying" Artillery Battalion.

In this capacity, Vázquez marched north in February at the head of his brigade (designated a veritable *corps d'observation*) and protected the right flank of the army, observing enemy movements in the region between Tamaulipas and Matehuala. Following the battle of La Angostura, Vázquez returned to Mexico City with Santa Anna and was assigned to command an infantry brigade in the Army of the East, facing Scott's invasion by way of Veracruz. When Santa Anna prepared his army to give battle and entrenched his troops on high ground blocking the National Highway near Orizaba in the vicinity of Cerro Gordo, Vázquez was given command of the extreme left of the Mexican line on a steep hill known as El Telégrafo. Initially glossing over the importance of the position at El Telégrafo in the belief that the seemingly impenetrable terrain beyond the hill would secure his left flank, an American gesture in that direction on April 17th hinted

to its importance in the coming battle and so Santa Anna reinforced the position with 100 men and an artillery battery, assigning his redoubtable subordinate and old friend to hold the position at all costs. During the battle of April 18th, Vázquez skillfully directed his troops' fire, but could not halt the American onslaught once they had gained a foothold on the position. As his panicked troops fled in disorder towards their main camp at the village of Cerro Gordo, Vázquez gallantly sought to rally them, sword in hand, but was killed defending his artillery pieces in the ferocious hand-to-hand combat that ensued as the Americans engulfed the hill and fell upon the rear of the Mexican position. A Mexican version of the battle claims that Vázquez "died a glorious death in all of his energies amidst the terrible tumult of battle."¹⁴¹ It was said that contrary to all mutually understood mores of military courtesy, the Americans left Vázquez's body to rot on the field and several eyewitnesses reported seeing his cadaver laying amongst those of his fallen troops days after the battle with his uniform shorn of its medals and insignia and his boots missing. Considered a martyr by his countrymen, there still exists a monument at Cerro Gordo commemorating the general's death and the central park in Veracruz bears his name. Apparently, Vázquez was married at the time of his death and left several orphaned children.

¹⁴¹ Alcaraz, *Apuntes*, p. 181.

APPENDIX B: FIGURES

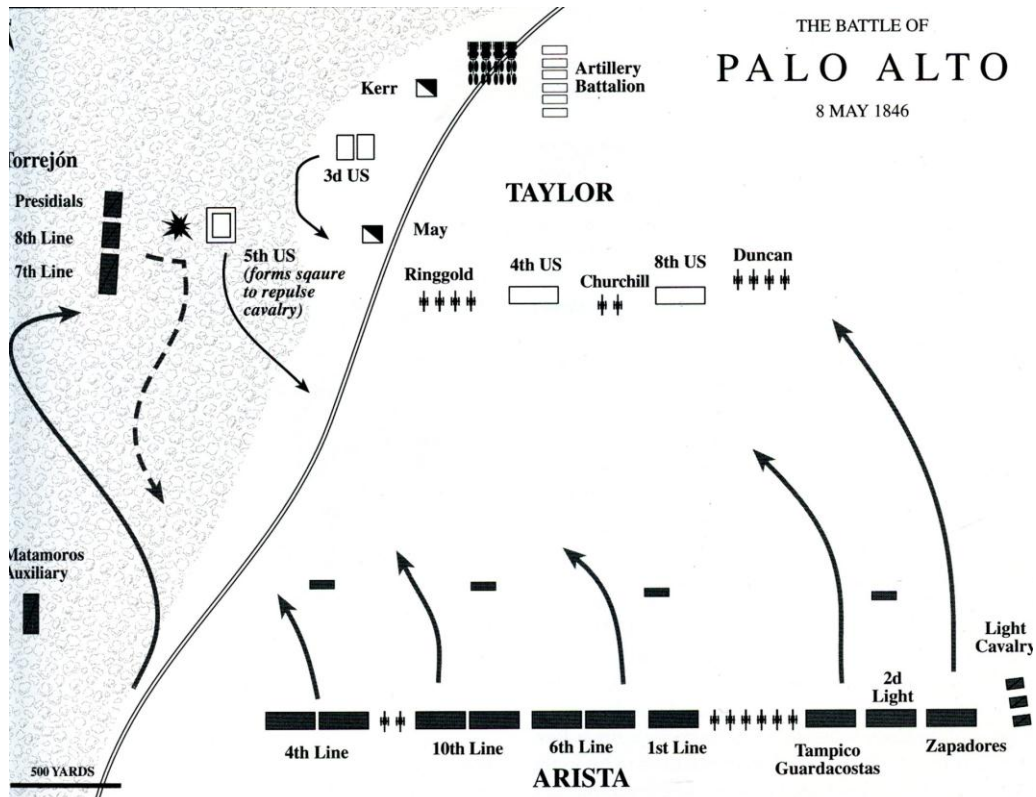


Figure 1: The Battle of Palo Alto, May 8, 1846 (Source: Frazier, p. 309)

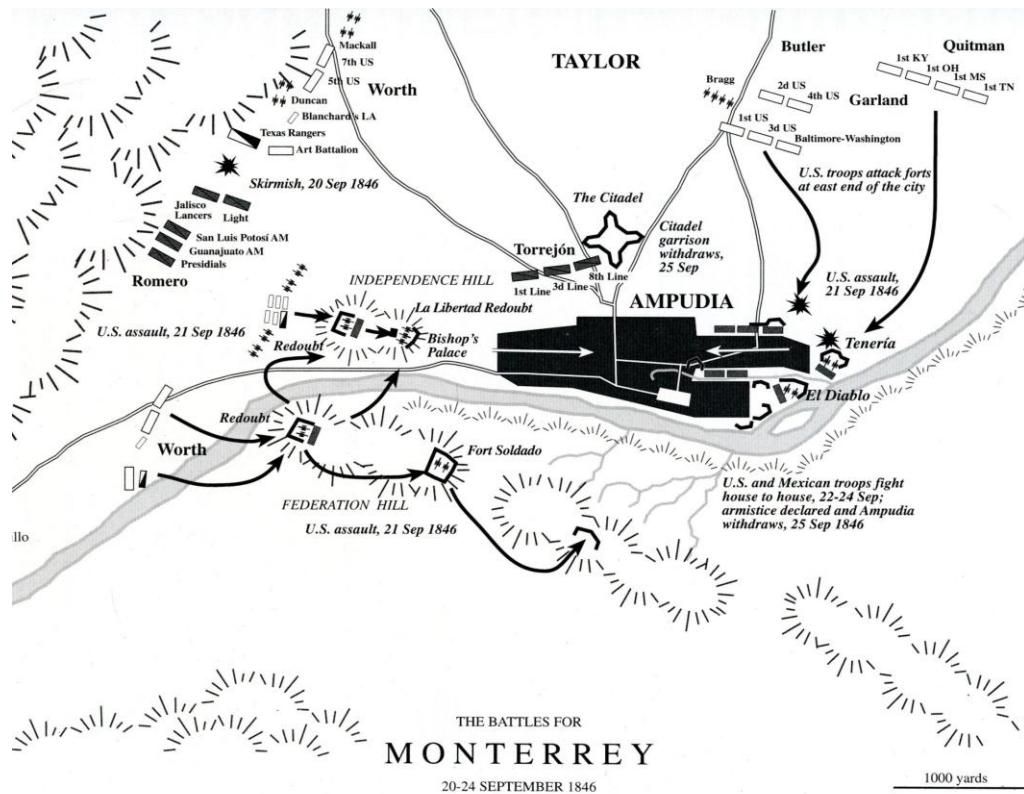


Figure 2: The Battle of Monterrey, September 20-24, 1846 (Source: Frazier, p. 273)

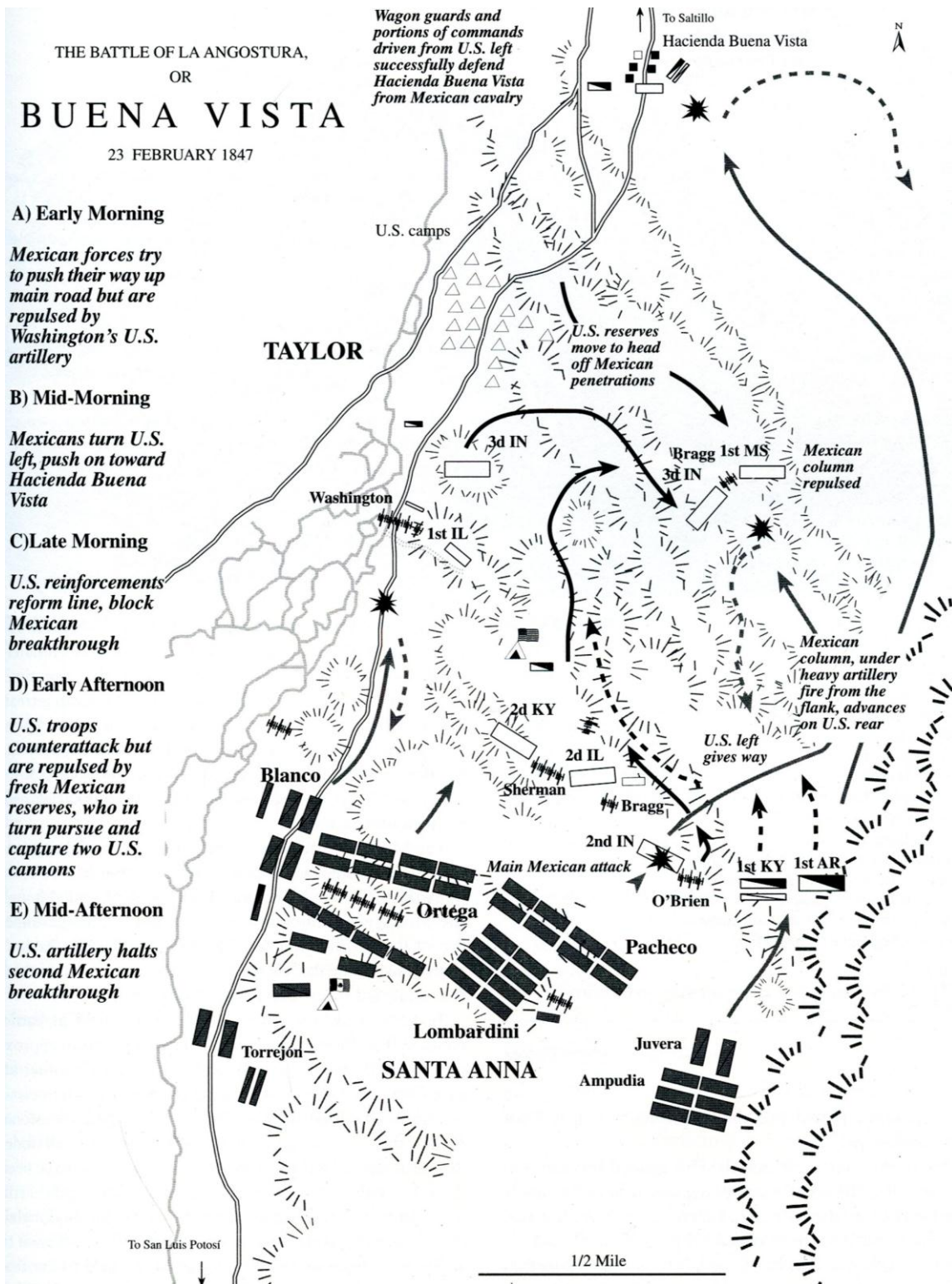


Figure 4: The Battle of La Angostura, February 23, 1847 (Source: Frazier, p. 59)

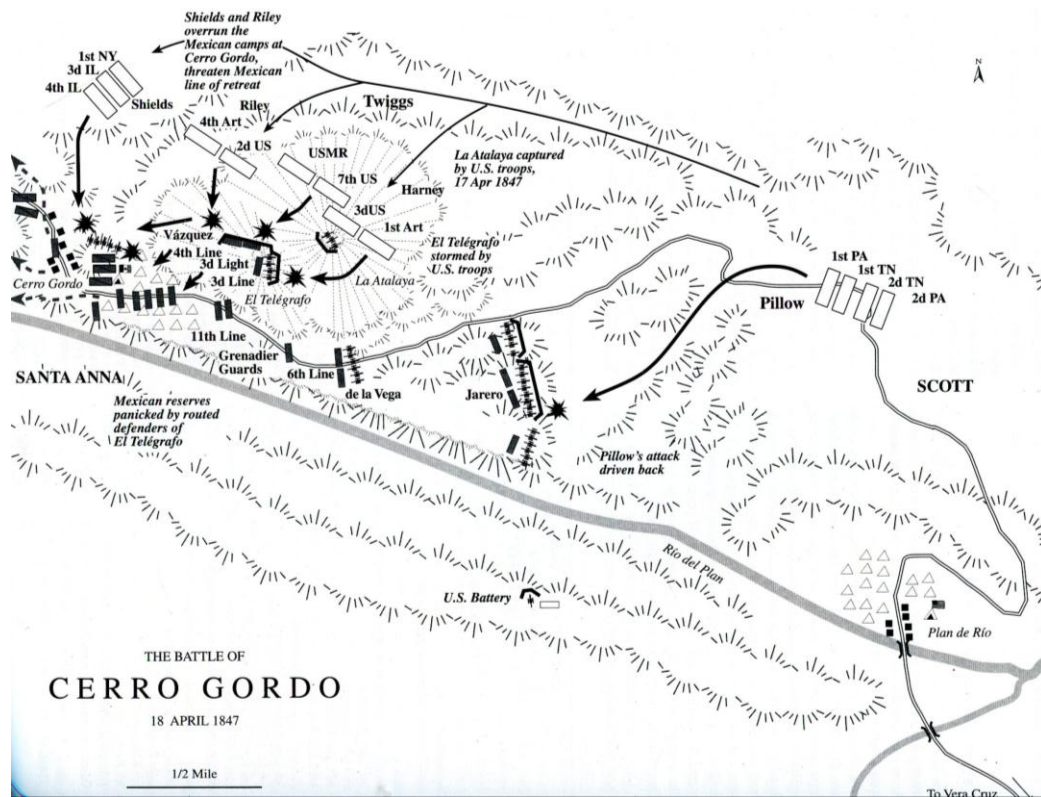


Figure 5: The Battle of Cerro Gordo, April 16, 1847 (Source: Frazier, p. 90)

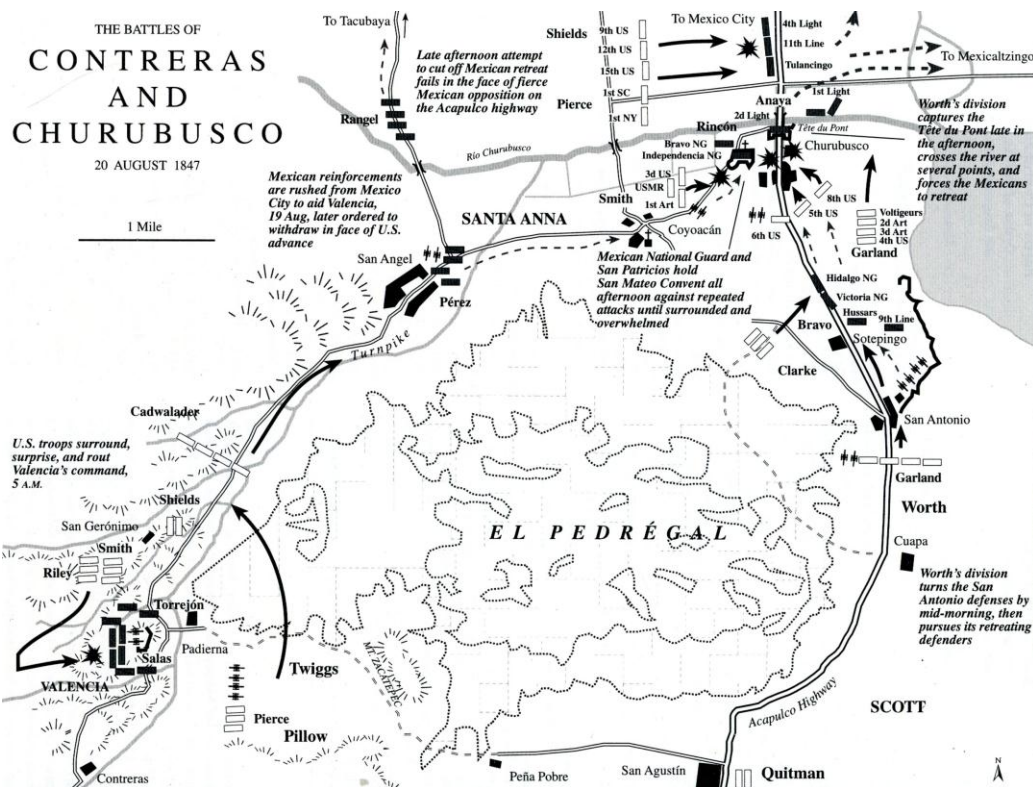


Figure 6: The Battles of Contreras and Churubusco, August 20, 1847 (Source: Frazier, p. 112)

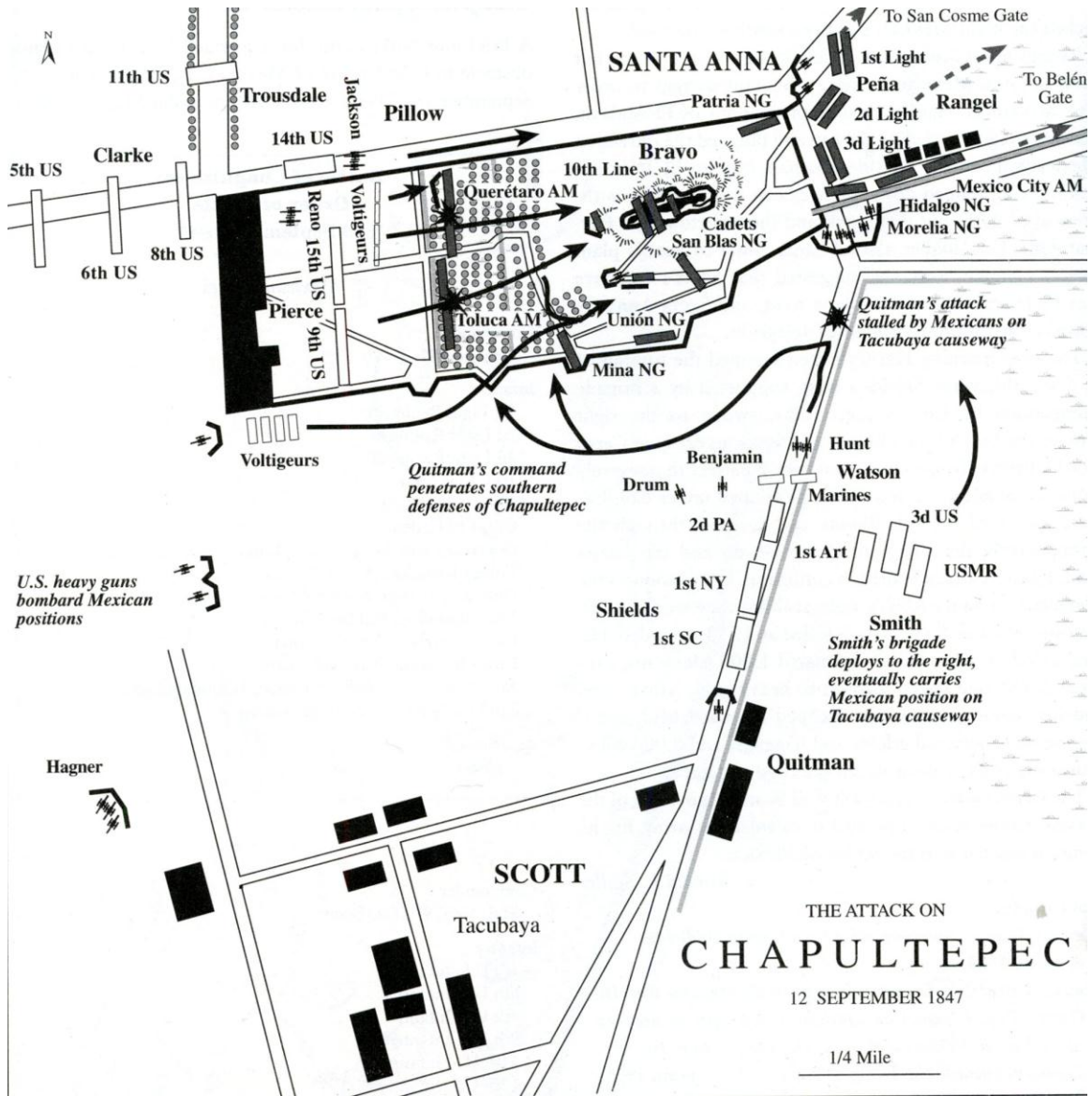


Figure 7: The Battle of Chapultepec, September 12, 1847 (Source: Frazier, p. 92)

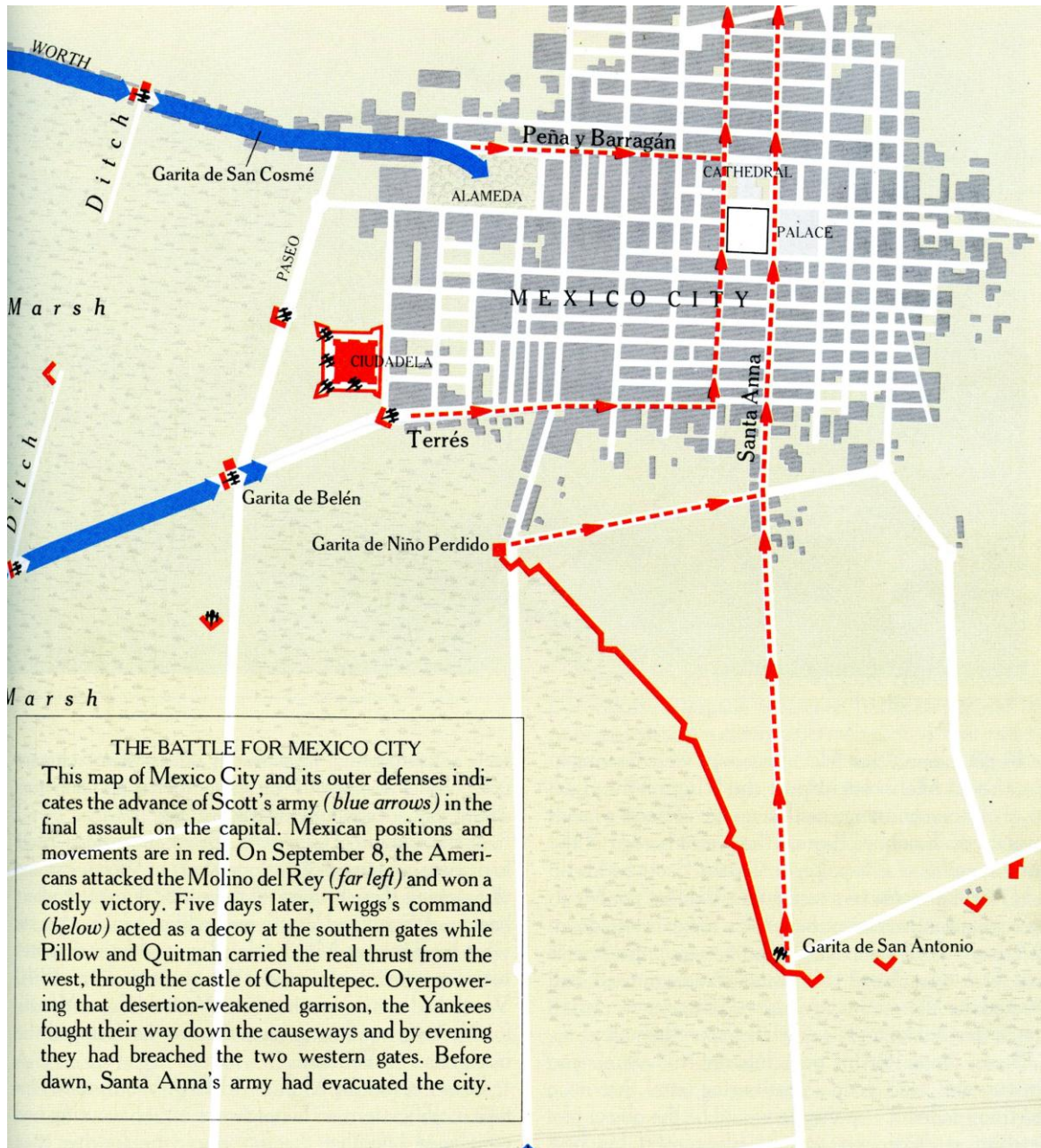
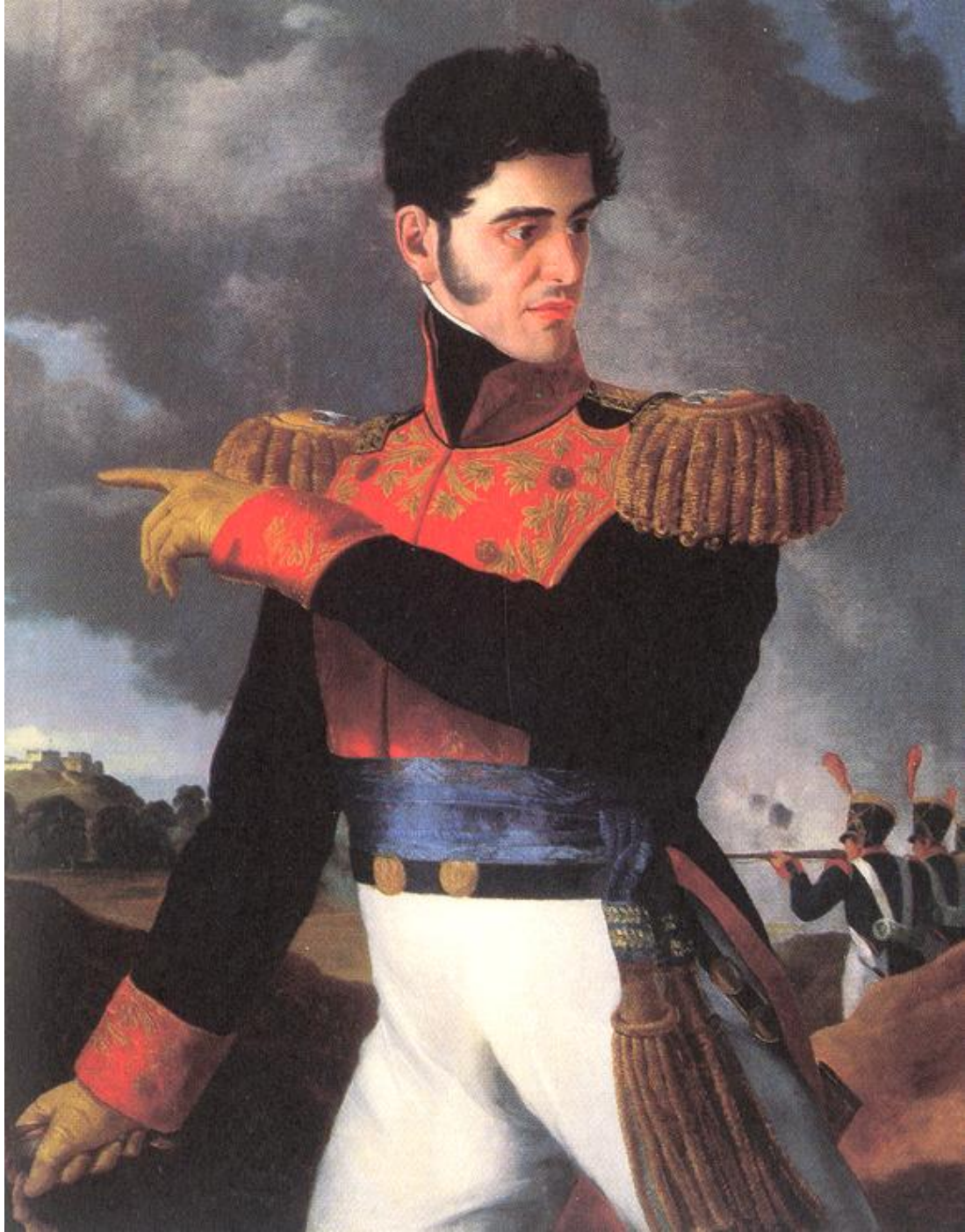


Figure 8: The Battle for the Mexico City Garitas, September 12, 1847 (Source: *Time-Life*, p. 205)

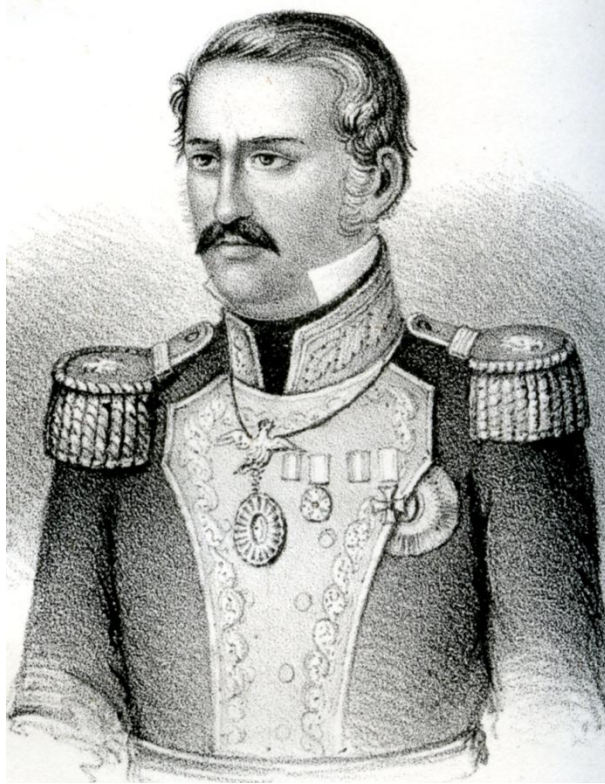
APPENDIX C: IMAGES



1. Major-General Antonio López de Santa Anna. Photo Credit: INAH.



2. Major-General Juan Álvarez. Photo Credit: INAH.



3. Major-General Gabriel Valencia. Photo Credit: Alcaraz, *Apuntes*.



10. Major-General José María Tornel y Mendivil. Photo Credit: INAH.



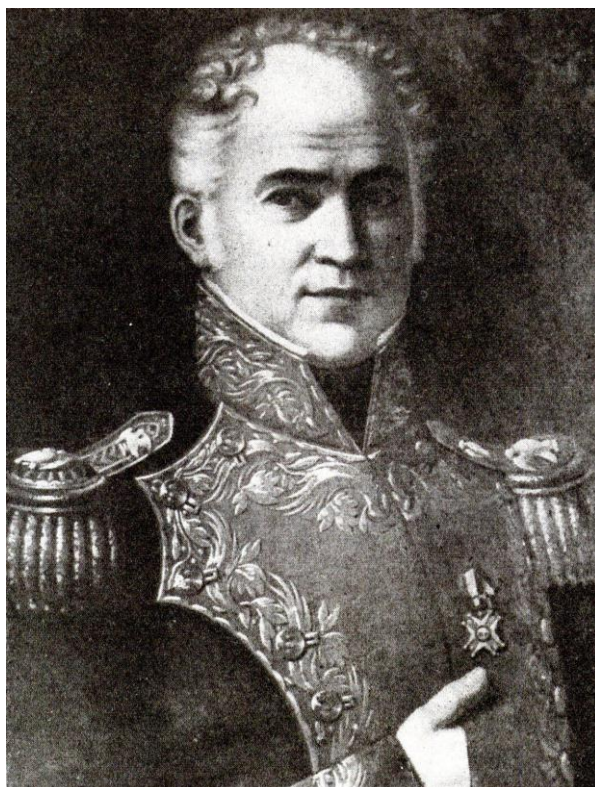
5. Brigadier-General Antonio León. Photo Credit: Alcaraz, *Apuntes*.



6. Brigadier-General Ciriaco Vázquez. Photo Credit: Alcaraz, *Apuntes*.



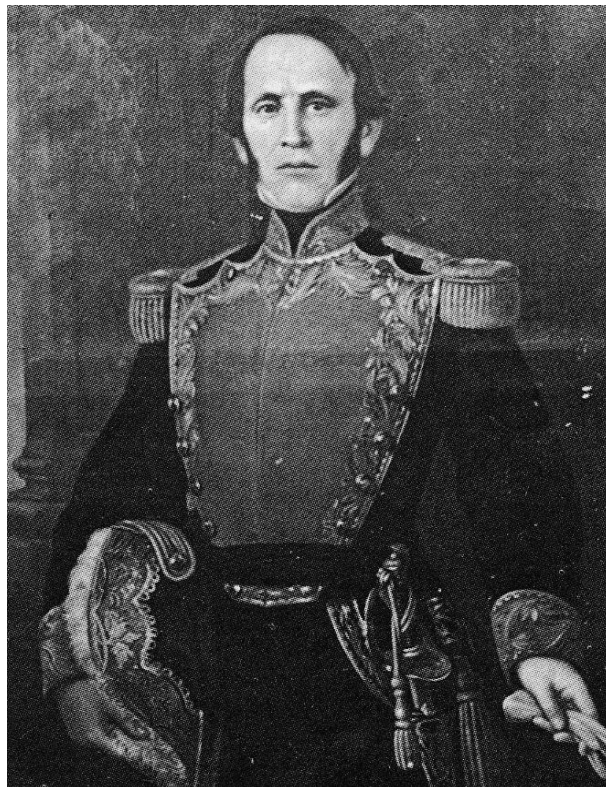
7. Brigadier-General Casimiro Liceaga. Photo Credit: Private Collection.



8. Major-General Manuel Rincón. Photo Credit: *Churubusco en la acción military del 20 de agosto de 1847.*



9. Major-General Vicente Filisola. Photo Credit: INAH.



10. Brigadier-General Antonio Gaona. Photo Credit: INAH.



11. Brigadier-General Benito Quijano. Photo Credit: Private Collection.



12. Major-General Pedro de Ampudia. Photo Credit: Alcaraz, *Apuntes*.



13. Brigadier-General Manuel Andrade. Photo Credit: INAH.



14. Brigadier-General Antonio Canales. Photo Credit: Saldivár, *Historia Compendiada de Tamaulipas*.



15. Brigadier-General Mariano Martínez de Lejarza. Photo Credit: INAH.



16. Brigadier-General Gordiano Guzmán. Photo Credit: Jiménez Camberas, *Gordiano Guzmán, insurgente y federalista*.



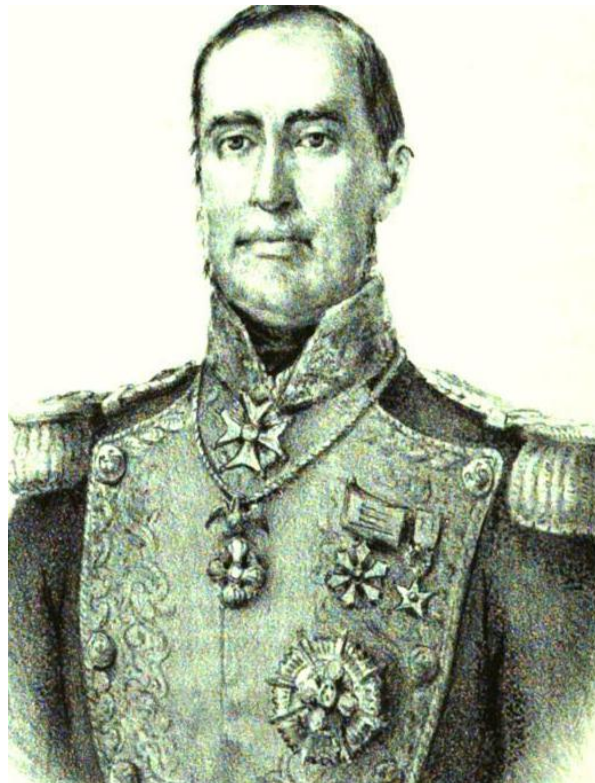
17. Brigadier-General Tomás Moreno. Photo Credit: *Los gobernantes de Guerrero*.



18. Brigadier-General Sebastián Guzmán. Photo Credit: Archivo Casasola.



19. Major-General Valentín Canalizo. Photo Credit: *Albúm Mejicano*.



20. Brigadier-General Luis Pinzón. Photo Credit: *Boletín de la Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía*.



21. Major-General Anastasio Bustamante. Photo Credit: INAH.



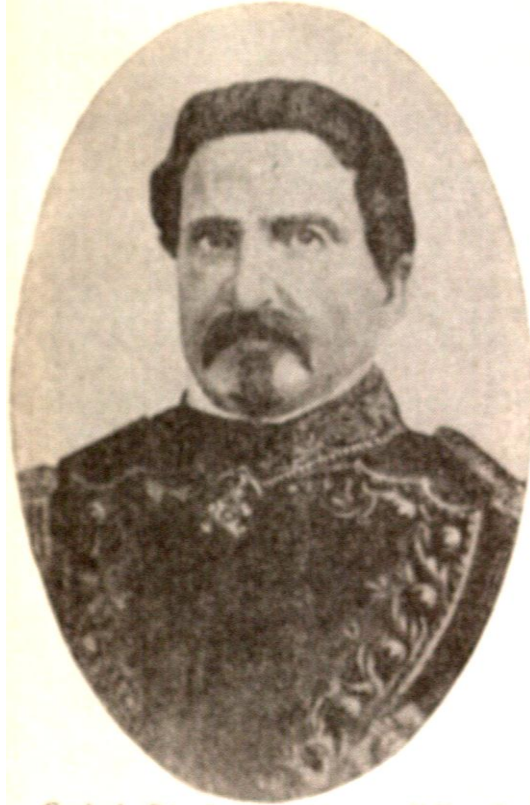
22. Brigadier-General Domingo Echegaray. Photo Credit: INAH.



23. Brigadier-General Pedro García Conde. Photo Credit: Archivo Casasola.



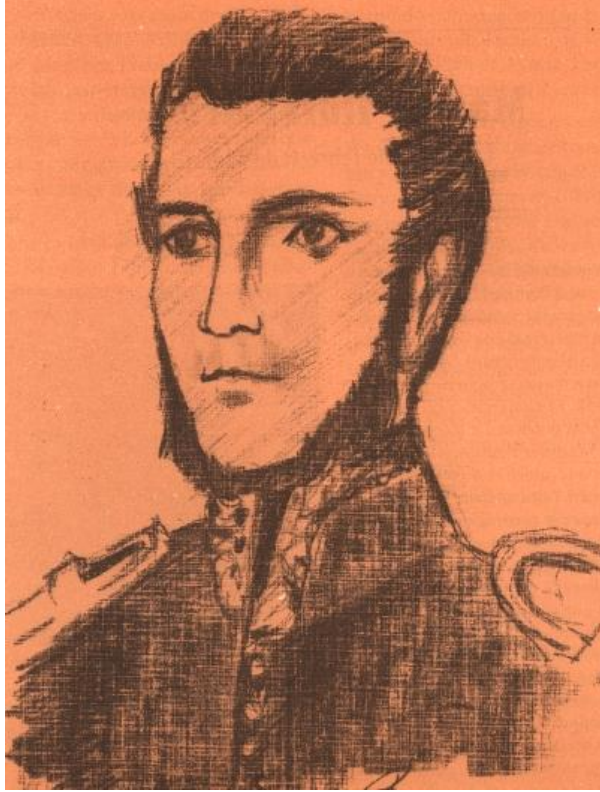
24. Brigadier-General José Mariano Monterde. Photo Credit: INAH.



25. Brigadier-General Ignacio Mora y Villamil. Photo Credit: Archivo Casasola.



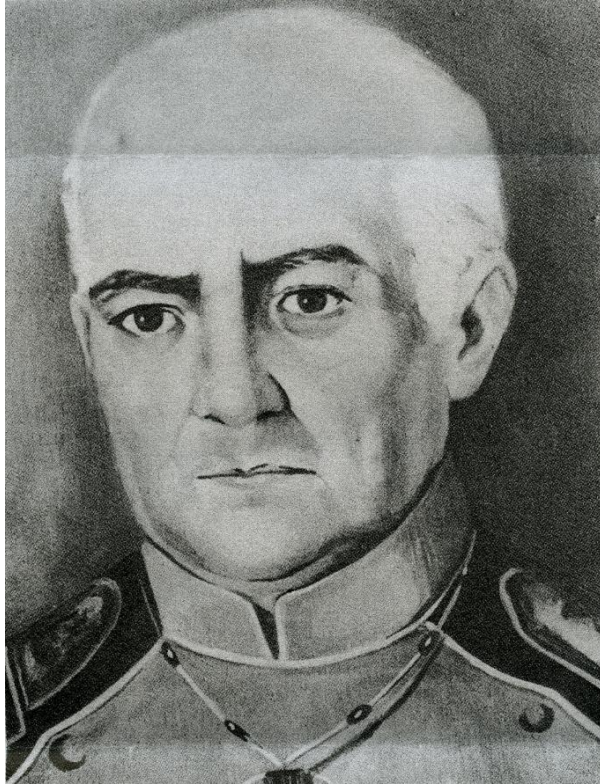
26. Brigadier-General Juan Agea. Photo Credit: Private Collection.



27. Brevet Brig.-General José María García. Photo Credit: *Los gobernantes de Oaxaca*.



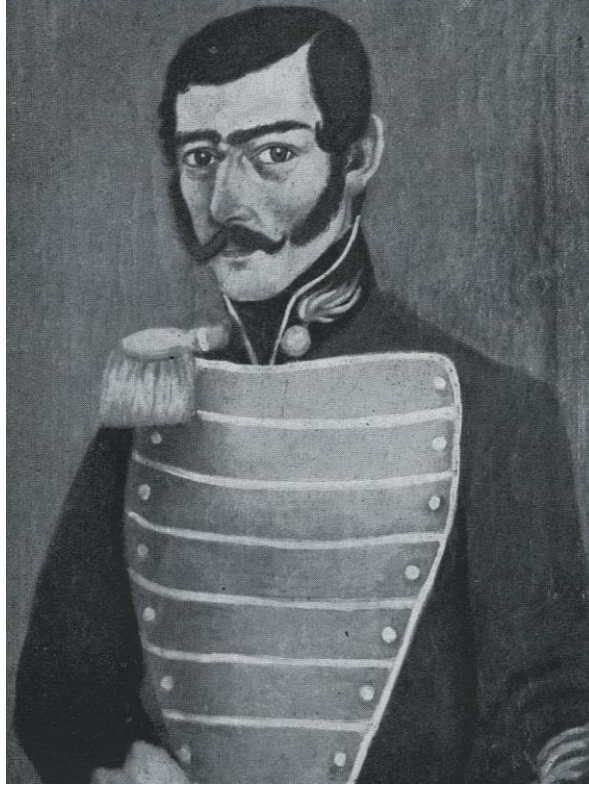
28. Brigadier-General Martín Perfecto de Cós. Photo Credit: *Pictorial History of Mexico and the Mexican War*.



29. Major-General Julián Juvera. Photo Credit: *Los gobernantes de Querétaro*.



30. Brigadier-General Ignacio Martínez Pinillos. Photo Credit: Archivo Casasola.



31. Brigadier-General Joaquín Rangel. Photo Credit: Private Collection.



32. Brigadier-General Juan Nepomuceno Pérez. Photo Credit: Escuela Secundaria Técnica Juan N. Pérez.



33. Brigadier-General José Ignacio Basadre. Photo Credit: Private Collection.



34. Brigadier-General Francisco Pérez. Photo Credit: Private Collection.



35. Major-General Mariano Arista. Photo Credit: Time-Life, *The Mexican War*.



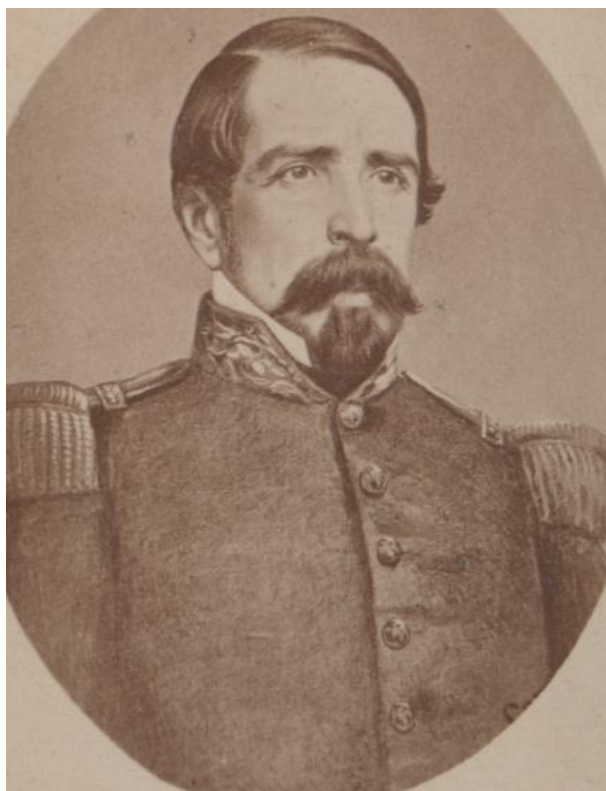
36. Brig.-Gen. José Cósme Urrea. Photo Credit: Benson Latin American Collection.



37. Major-General José Mariano Salas. Photo Credit: Rivera Cambas, *Los gobernantes*.



38. Brigadier-General Agustín Escudero. Photo Credit: Carreño, *Jefes del Ejército*.



39. Major-General Manuel María Lombardini. Photo Credit: Private Collection.



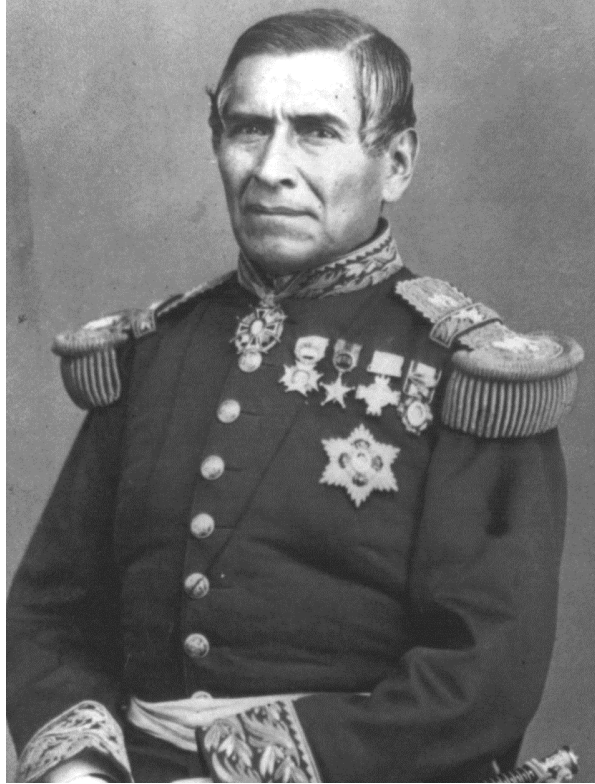
40. Brigadier-General Anastasio Parrodi. Photo Credit: Archivo Casasola.



41. Brigadier-General José María Ortega. Photo Credit: INAH.



42. Brigadier-General José Vicente Miñón. Photo Credit: Private Collection



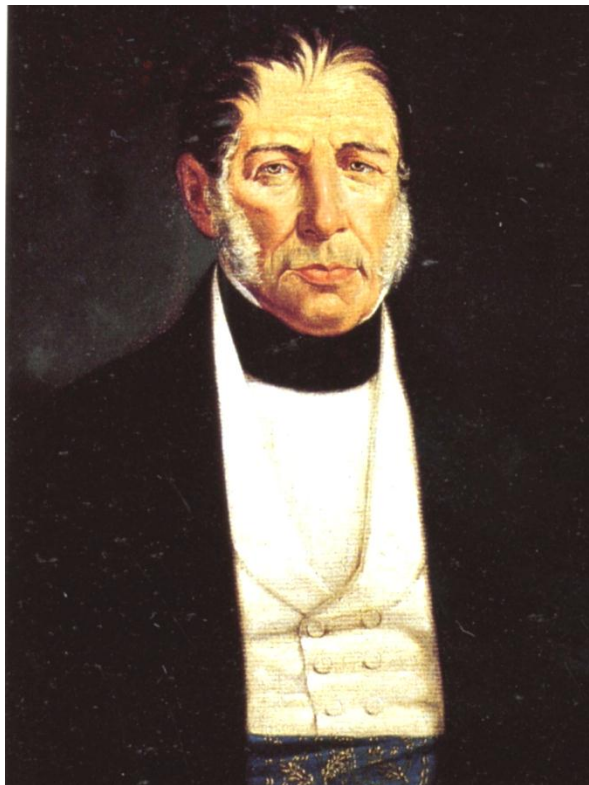
43. Brigadier-General Juan Nepomuceno Almonte. Photo Credit: INAH.



44. Brigadier-General Santiago Blanco. Photo Credit: Sánchez Lamego, *Generales de ingenieros*.



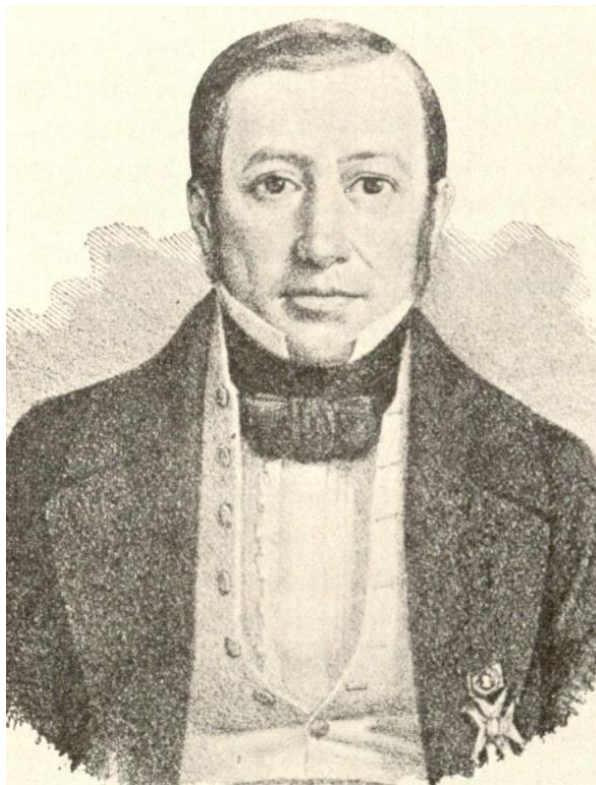
45. Brig.-General Pedro María Anaya. Photo Credit: Rivera Marín, *Si hubiera parque*.



46. Major-General José Joaquín de Herrera. Photo Credit: Private Collection.



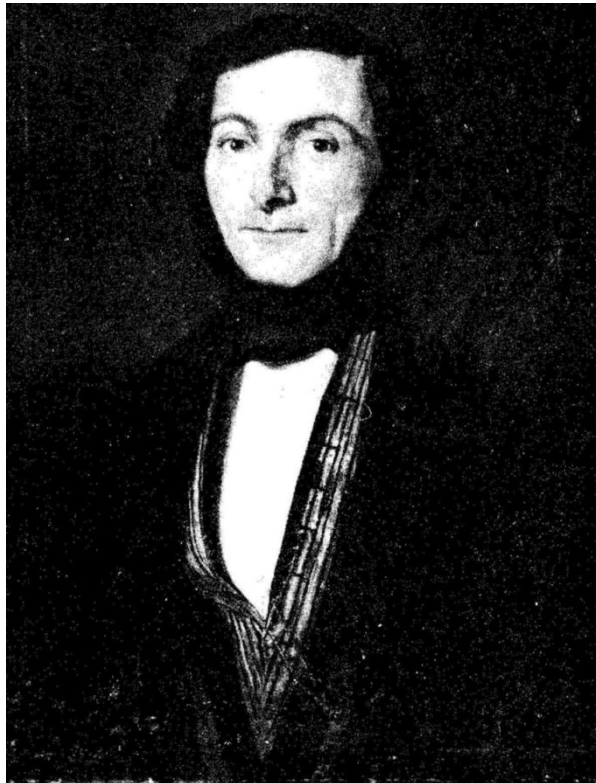
47. Major-General Nicolás Bravo. Photo Credit: *Gran Enciclopedia Salvat*.



48. Major-General Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga. Photo Credit: Rivera Cambas, *Los gobernantes de México*.



49. Brevet Brigadier-General José María García Conde. Photo Credit: INAH.



50. Brigadier-General Tomás Requena. Photo Credit: Private Collection.



51. Brigadier-General Francisco Pacheco. Photo Credit: Archivo Casasola.



52. Brevet Brigadier-General José María González de Mendoza. Photo Credit: Private Collection.



53. Brig-Gen. Rómulo Díaz de La Vega. Photo Credit: Rivera Cambas, *Los gobernantes*.



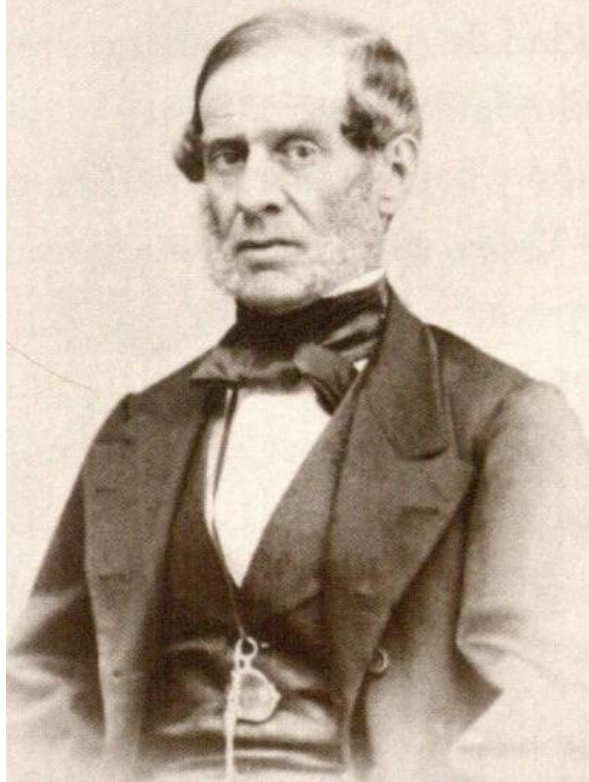
54. Brigadier-General Martín Carrera. Photo Credit: Rivera Cambas, *Los gobernantes*.



55. Brig.-Gen. Manuel Micheltoarena. Photo Credit: *Benson Latin American Collection*.



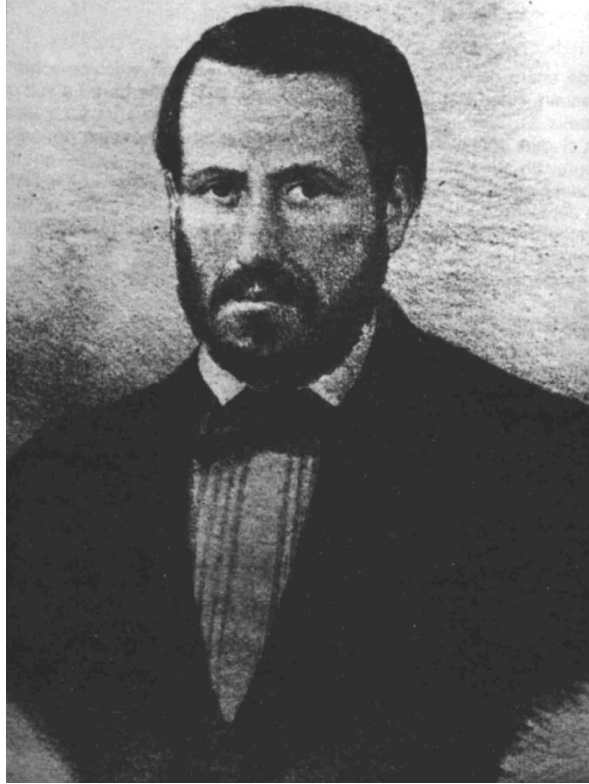
56. Brigadier-General Lino José Alcorta. Photo Credit: Carreño, *Jefes del Ejército*.



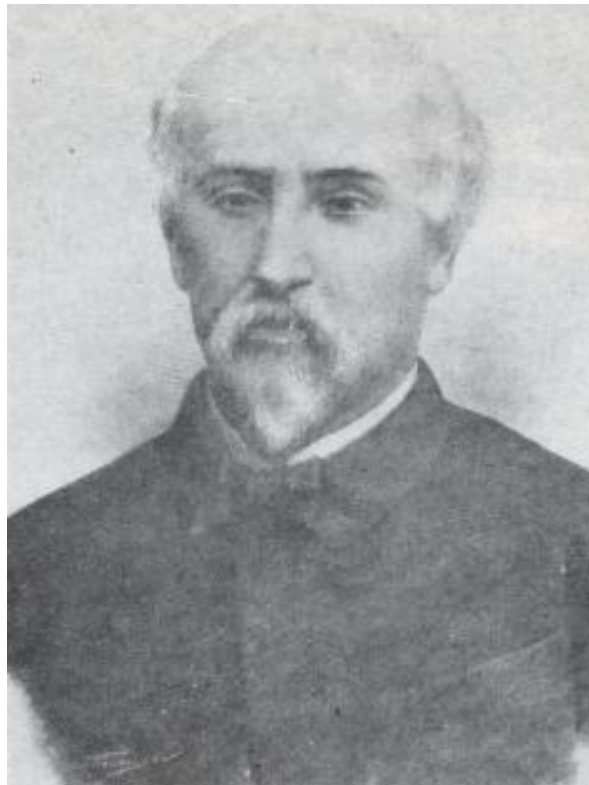
57. Brevet Brigadier-General Benito Zenea. Photo Credit: INAH.



58. Brigadier-General José Juan de Landero. Photo Credit: Pasquel, Leonardo, *Pedro Telmo, José Juan, y Francisco de Landero.*



59. Brevet Brigadier-General Antonio Corona. Photo Credit: Private Collection.



60. Brevet Brigadier-General José López Uruga. Photo Credit: Archivo Casasola.

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