

Shasta Courier, Volume 3, Number 17, 1 July 1854 — Letter from Cette [ARTICLE]

[Back](#)

Letter from Cottonwood.

Cottonwood, July 27

COTTONWOOD, July 27, 1854.

FRIEND COURIER:—I passed by Fort Reading to-day, and saw a very fine body of Uncle Sam's soldiers at drill. There were over 60 rank and file, and a sprinkling of officers going through all manner of military evolutions—forming squares, running after imaginary enemies, taking steady, cool aim at—empty space, &c., &c. I stood admiring, and thought the whole scene very pleasing and brilliant. The men were tall and soldierly, and their officers *distingue* and elegant; the bayonets of the former glistened in the sunlight as only polished steel could, while the bright epaulettes and sword trappings of the latter sparkled as only the brightest gold—or brass—should. Above them, from the top of a tall pine pole, floated the glorious banner of the stars and stripes—the martial file and drum played a stirring march, and the fine form of the white haired Colonel, whose rank was evident at the first glance, was seen guiding and directing the proceedings of the day.

Now, friend Courier, I think you mentioned some time since that there were not sufficient men at the Fort to meet a certain exigency which arose some months ago in the region of the Pitt and McCloud rivers; I therefore thought I would tell you what I saw, and I have no doubt you and the public will be glad to learn that there are now eighty available men at the Fort—Lieut. Van Voast having arrived on Saturday last with fifty men of Co. D, 3d Artillery.

The post is much complained of on account of the prevalence of fever and ague, and the probability is, that all those fine fellows "whom I gazed on so fondly to-day," will, in a few short months, be shaking in most unmilitary fashion. The truth is, that all the garrison at Fort Reading have their regular and constantly recurring attacks of chills and fever through the summer and fall, and many a fine constitution is permanently injured by the ordeal. All this might be avoided by moving the command some 20 or 30 miles up the hills during the hot season, which would further have a good effect with the Indians of that section, who were troublesome last winter, and being more remote, have less fear of the troops. It would do those red-skins some good, and perhaps save the settlers some cattle, if the *native* Americans of Pitt River were to see among them the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war, which I had the satisfaction of witnessing to-day. I am told this movement to the mountains is to be made very soon. So perhaps you had better not say anything about it, lest you may change their minds by your newspaper suggestions, for, between you and me, military men don't like to be talked to in that fashion. Civil interference with the army is not in accordance with martial law or military etiquette; though if you were to drop a private line to Gen. Wool—whom you will find with "his head quarters in the saddle," somewhere in the Sierra Nevada, or getting up some political prosecutions in San Francisco—and tell the General that the move in question would add to *his* popularity, then sir, I rayther guess and calkilate it shall be carried into effect forthwith.

Having seen the drill, I took a drink with the Lieutenants, a fine jolly set of fellows, (I hope they will continue as agreeable when they get to be Captains and Majors,) and came on here,

where I concluded to write you these thoughts for the benefit of whom it may concern.

Yours, SAMUEL.

MILITARY HEAD QUARTERS.—The War Department has ordered Gen. Wool, the Commander of the Pacific Division, to remove his head quarters from San Francisco to Benecia. The execution of this order will leave San Francisco perfectly unprotected in these stirring times of war. Of course the press of that city are justly indignant at this most remarkable order. The reasons for the order are not known. Some suppose it was occasioned by the fact that Gen. Wool attended a public dinner in San Francisco, at which the President, his superior officer, was named with disrespect. This, however, is entirely too puerile to be entitled to credence. The *Sacramento Union* suggests the following:—

In our view, the origin of the order, was the indiscreet moves made by Gen. Wool in advising those steps which led to the seizure of the ship *Challenge*, and the arrest and trial of the Mexican and French Consuls. No necessity, in our estimation, has ever been shown to exist which justified those steps on the part of our government officials. They were calculated to embarrass our government with France and Mexico, and that upon a matter in which the United States had only a very remote interest. General Wool's connection with these moves, we considered a political blunder, however pure may have been his intentions, and we presume the administration has acted upon a somewhat similar conviction in ordering him to make Benecia his head-quarters.

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