

SOLDIERS AMIDST THE RUBBLE

THE UNITED STATES ARMY

AND THE

~~SAN FRANCISCO EARTHQUAKE OF 1906~~

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

FLOYD J. DAVIS, MAJOR, USA  
B.A., Auburn University, 1967  
M.P.A., Golden Gate University, 1976

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas  
1980

**Document Title :** Soldiers Amidst the Rubble: The United States Army and the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906.

AD Number: ADA092457

Subject Categories: HUMANITIES AND HISTORY SEISMOLOGY MILITARY OPERATIONS, STRATEGY AND TACTICS

Corporate Author: ARMY COMMAND AND GENERAL STAFF COLL FORT LEAVENWORTH KS

Title: Soldiers Amidst the Rubble: The United States Army and the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906.

Descriptive Note: Master's thesis,

Personal Authors: **Davis**, Floyd J. ;

Report Date: 06 JUN 1980

Pages: 189 PAGES

Monitor Acronym: SBI

Monitor Series: AD-E750 037

Descriptors: \*DISASTERS, \*MILITARY ASSISTANCE, \*EARTHQUAKES, \*ARMY OPERATIONS, \*CIVIL AFFAIRS, MILITARY FORCES(UNITED STATES), MILITARY OPERATIONS, UNITED STATES, THESES, HISTORY, MILITARY APPLICATIONS, CALIFORNIA, FIRES, ARMY.

Identifiers: \*San Francisco(California), San Francisco earthquake, Natural disasters, Military history, Relief operations, Funston F, Greely AW, Civilian/ military cooperation, Disaster relief, Disaster assistance, Military civic action

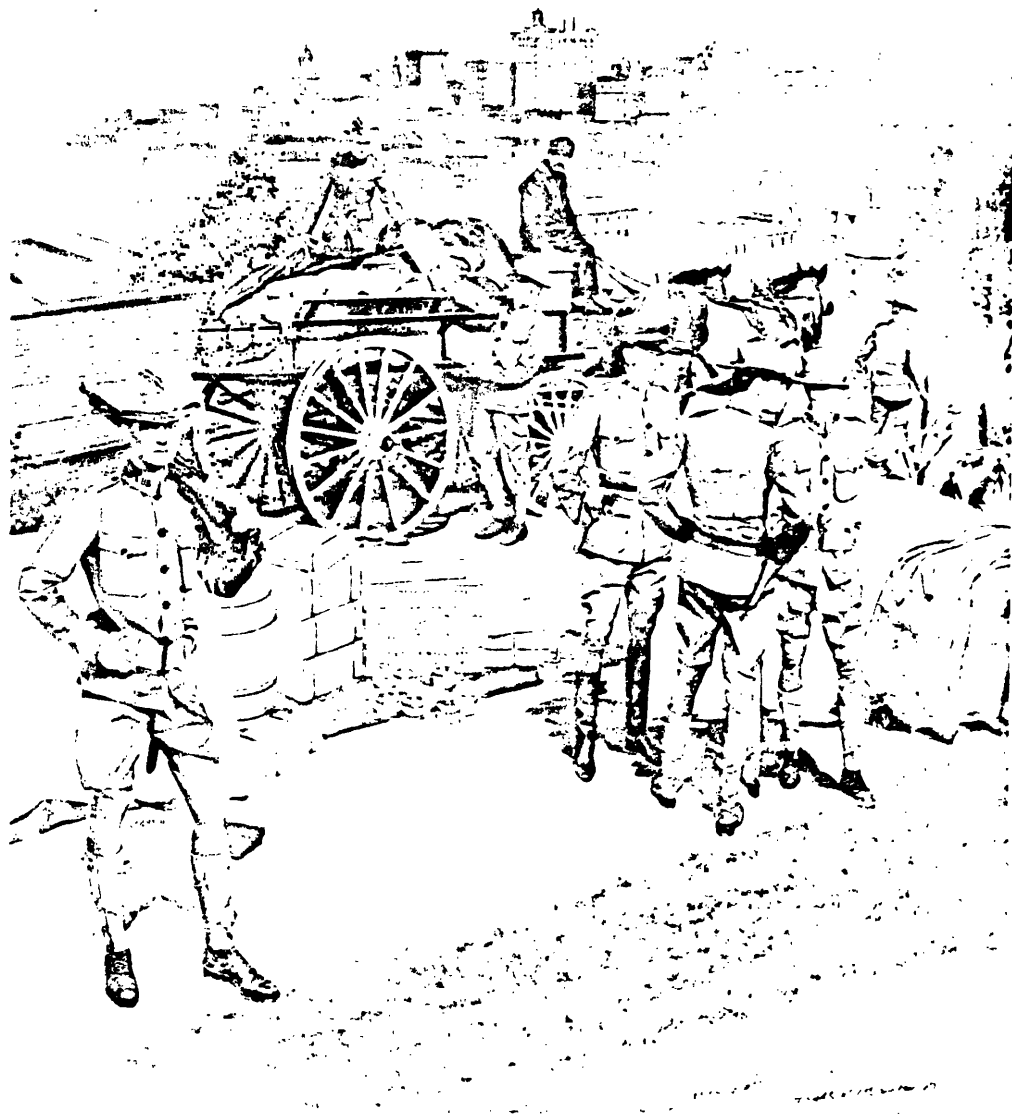
Abstract: This study tells the story of the involvement of the United States Army in the events surrounding the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906. During a period of approximately seventy-five days a force of over 5,000 soldiers, aided by sailors, Marines, and National Guardsmen, assisted civil authorities by fighting fires, treating the injured, delivering supplies, feeding the population, guarding the city, and providing shelter and clothing for refugees. The conclusion of the study is that the work of the Army in subduing the fire and in aiding in the relief effort was a noble peacetime accomplishment which well served the citizens of California and which enhanced the Army's reputation and honor. The story of the Army's contribution is one in which American soldiers and civilians alike may quite justly be proud because that contribution was made in the best spirit of the American tradition of subordination of the military to civilian authority.

(author)

Limitation Code: APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

Source Code: **037260**

---



THE AMERICAN SOLDIER, 1906

"Thank God for the Soldiers"

San Francisco, California


MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

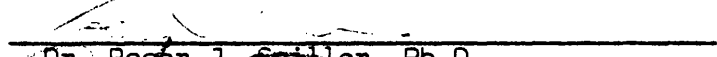
THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

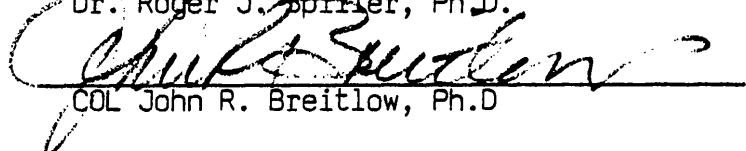
Name of candidate Floyd J. Davis, Major, United States Army

Title of thesis Soldiers Amidst the Rubble: The United States Army and the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906

Approved by:

 Thesis Committee Chairman  
LTC Charles R. Shrader, Ph.D

 , Member, Graduate Faculty  
Dr. Roger J. Spiller, Ph.D.

 , Member, Consulting Faculty  
COL John R. Breitlow, Ph.D

Accepted this 11<sup>th</sup> day of June 1980 by Philip J. Brookes ,  
Director, Graduate Degree Programs.

The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

## ABSTRACT

SOLDIERS AMIDST THE RUBBLE: THE UNITED STATES ARMY AND THE SAN FRANCISCO EARTHQUAKE OF 1906, by Major Floyd J. Davis, USA, 178 pages.

The purpose of this study is to tell the story of the involvement of the United States Army in the events surrounding the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906. During a period of approximately seventy-five days a force of over 5,000 soldiers, aided by sailors, Marines, and National Guardsmen, assisted civil authorities by fighting fires, treating the injured, delivering supplies, feeding the population, guarding the city, and providing shelter and clothing for refugees.

The local acting commander, Brigadier General Frederick Funston, acted on his own initiative in violation of Federal law when he ordered troops into the city. However, he was subsequently supported by elected officials from the President down and by his division commander, Major General Adolphus W. Greely, upon the latter's return to San Francisco.

The operations in 1906 were conducted at a time when the procedures for disaster relief assistance were not as developed as they are today and this adds to the significance of the Army's accomplishments in San Francisco. Never before or since have the military forces administered to so many people in need at the same time in one area of this country.

The conclusion of the study is that the work of the Army in subduing the fire and aiding the relief effort was a noble peacetime accomplishment which well served the citizens of California and which enhanced the Army's reputation and honor. The story of the Army's contribution is one in which American soldiers and civilians alike may quite justly be proud because that contribution was made in the best spirit of the American tradition of subordination of the military to civilian authority.

## FOREWORD

One does not normally include a dedication in a work such as this. Nevertheless, I intend to do precisely that and to dedicate this thesis to my wife and two sons.

Attendance at the Command and General Staff College is a rewarding experience, but not necessarily one guaranteed to provide an officer with an abundance of free time. For the student who decides to write a masters' thesis, therefore, the hours of research and writing can only come from one source -- that time which he might otherwise hope to spend with his family or in the enjoyment of a favorite hobby.

Throughout this year my family has loyally supported my goal of completing this project. My wife, a transplanted Southerner who loves San Francisco as much as any native, has spent many long and late hours listening to my ideas, providing suggestions, and typing drafts of the manuscript. She has shared in my frustrations and joys, while ignoring her own pasttimes. Throughout the year she has accepted with understanding and patience, the curtailment of the amount of time that I had available for family pursuits.

Likewise, my two young sons have shown admirable patience and restraint in dealing with a father who should, no doubt, have shared more of his life with them. They accepted my promise that there truly was a light at the end of the tunnel and did a pretty good job of displaying interest when their dad wanted to talk about earthquakes, and Fred Funston, and the United States Army.

To these three this work is gratefully and affectionately dedicated.

FLOYD J. DAVIS  
MAJ, USA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
THESIS APPROVAL PAGE . . . . .	ii
ABSTRACT . . . . .	iii
FOREWORD . . . . .	iv
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS . . . . .	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . .	vii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
II. THE SETTING: SAN FRANCISCO BEFORE THE EARTHQUAKE . . . . .	6
III. THE EARTHQUAKE: CAUSE AND EFFECT . . . . .	29
IV. THE ARMY MOVES IN . . . . .	42
V. THE RELIEF EFFORT . . . . .	73
VI. AN ASSESSMENT . . . . .	136
APPENDICES . . . . .	146
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	169
INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST . . . . .	178

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	<u>Page</u>
"Thank God for the Soldiers" . . . . .	Frontispiece
Military Installations in the San Francisco Bay Area . . . . .	11
Brigadier General Frederick Funston . . . . .	19
Adolphus W. Greely as Chief Signal Officer, United States Army . . . . .	23
World-wide Distribution of Tectonic Plates . . . . .	30
Trace of the 1906 Earthquake . . . . .	31
Photograph Showing Destruction on Pine Street in the Financial District . . . . .	35
A View of the Destruction After the Earthquake and Fire . . .	38
Principal Districts Endangered or Destroyed by the Fire . . .	53
Map of the Burned Area in San Francisco . . . . .	57
The Succession of Organizations Involved with Relief . . . . .	78
The Six Military Districts as Established on 8 May 1906 . . .	81



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The picture used as the frontispiece is from the fourth set of The American Soldier series of paintings, prepared for the U.S. Army Center of Military History. The artist is H. Charles McBarron.

The photograph of General Funston on page 19 was provided by the Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Museum. The photograph of General Greely on page 23 is from his autobiography, entitled Reminiscences of Adventure and Service, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1911).

The map on page 30 which shows the worldwide distribution of tectonic plates is from Goode's World Atlas (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1974). The maps on pages 31 and 53 are by Raphael Palacios from The Earth Shook, The Sky Burned, by William Knox Bronson, copyright 1959 by William Knox Bronson and reproduced by permission of Doubleday and Company, Inc.

The picture on page 38 showing the destruction in San Francisco after the earthquake and fire is a University of California Bancroft Library photograph from James J. Hudson's article entitled "The California National Guard in the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906," which appeared in the California Historical Quarterly, 55 (Summer 1976). The photograph on page 35 of the destruction in the financial district as well as the Corps of Engineers' map of the six military districts which appears on page 81 are both from the Infantry Journal, July, 1906, copyright 1907 by the Association of the U.S. Army and reproduced by permission.

CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

San Francisco is a unique city. The product of many diverse and interesting cultures, it is a vibrant metropolis which has always been on the frontier of new ideas and trends - some good and some bad - just as 100 years ago it was on the frontier of an active and growing nation. It is a city that millions desire to visit and to which visitors yearn to return. Perhaps more than any other American city it holds the fascination and love of its inhabitants. The citizens and newspapers of San Francisco never refer to it as Frisco (only the tourists do that), or by its initials, as the smog-bound Angelinos refer to theirs, 450 miles to the south; instead, they merely call it "The City" as if to imply that there really is no other worthy of comparison. Certainly there is no other American city worthy of comparison in terms of the amount of destruction brought on by a natural disaster. Neither has any other city in this country received a comparable amount of relief support from the Army - a source which has not commonly been associated with the idea of relief. As one newspaper article read in 1906, "... it is the agency which we maintain for the destruction of human life which suddenly (became) the most available and most valuable of our agencies for saving it."<sup>1</sup>

If one is asked to conjure up a vision of what the Army does, he or she most likely will picture men or machines moving into battle. But there are other ways, equally as honorable, in which soldiers serve their nation. The enemies which the United States Army fought in 1906 in San Francisco were fire, suffering, and destitution, brought on by

the most disastrous earthquake ever to strike North America in recorded time. For seventy-five days a force of more than 5,000 soldiers, helped by sailors, Marines, and National Guardsmen assisted civil authorities by fighting fires, treating the injured, delivering supplies, feeding the population, guarding the city, and providing shelter and clothing for refugees. Never before or since have the military forces administered to so many people in need at the same time in one area of this country.

I absorbed some of the deep feeling of San Francisco natives for their city while I was stationed there in the mid-1970's. At the same time I also became aware of the vital role that the Army had played in helping to preserve the city in 1906. I began to form a desire to tell the story of the role of the United States Army in the activities following the great San Francisco earthquake and fire, but a tour of duty in Europe delayed the beginning of any concrete research. When I entered the Command and General Staff College and the opportunity to write presented itself it was, therefore, eagerly accepted.

While much has been written about the earthquake and fire, and while a very fine photographic essay has been published,<sup>2</sup> to the best of my knowledge no one has focused at length on the Army's role since General Greely submitted his report in 1906.<sup>3</sup> Others have told the overall story quite adequately or concentrated on the relief effort from a civilian standpoint. My objective has been to examine what the military did from the occurrence of the earthquake on 18 April 1906 until 2 July 1906 when all but a few remaining soldiers were withdrawn.

General Greely's report is an excellent source for the researcher, but it does not serve the needs of the layman. As with many

reports - particularly military ones - it presents the operation in segments with sub-headings such as "Casualties", "Methods of Expenditure", or "Lines of Communication". Such a presentation makes it easy for the researcher or the expert in a particular field to quickly focus on a specific area of interest, but the material is not presented from start to finish in such a way that a reader is able to grasp a coherent understanding of the complete story. This is the need which the present paper is designed to meet.

The Army's involvement in the activities following the San Francisco earthquake constitutes an important historical event as well as a military one because of its uniqueness in 1906. It is also a story in which civilians and soldiers alike may take pride. The civilian reader will find examples of cooperation between civil and military authorities, a contribution of his or her Army to the quality of American life, and a military operation conducted in the best spirit of the American tradition of subordination of the military to civilian control. The military reader will observe a rapid marshalling and deployment of troops, take pride in the manner in which military order and organization were employed to district the city as a necessary step in bringing order out of chaos, and receive a valuable lesson about the all-important contribution that the logistician makes to the success of a military operation.

The story begins with a necessary review of basic information about San Francisco and the Army in the first decade of the twentieth century and of the laws governing the use of soldiers in enforcing civil law. The causes and effects of the great earthquake of 1906 are then discussed and a description is provided of the destruction which

was inflicted by both the earthquake and the subsequent fire. The presentation then turns to the Army's role in fighting the fire and policing the city. The decision to employ troops and the course of the battle against the fire are described with due attention to the controversies which arose regarding the use of dynamite to fight the fire and the question of how much force the Federal troops employed in enforcing the law. This part is, in effect, the story of the Infantry, the Artillery, the Cavalry, and the Engineers.

The next part of the story concerns the transformation of the relief force from an ad hoc organization to a legal corporation. This is discussed in order to establish a framework by which to better understand the Army's involvement in relief activities. The Army's efforts in organizing the city into relief sections, providing food, clothing, supplies of various types, medical assistance, and shelter are then examined. Because the damages and consequences of the earthquake were widespread, relief to cities other than San Francisco is also mentioned. This part is the story of the logisticians, the Signal Corps, and the medical personnel.

The final part is an assessment of public opinion and concludes with an appraisal of what history's verdict is and well should be. Contemporary sources are used to provide a valuable insight into how the populace felt about the unprecedented use of military forces in a civil disaster.

## CHAPTER I

Notes

<sup>1</sup>"The Work of the Army," New York Times, 22 April 1906, 10.  
(Editorial page.)

<sup>2</sup>See William Bronson's The Earth Shook, The Sky Burned (Garden City, N.Y., 1959).

<sup>3</sup>U.S. War Department, Annual Report of the War Department for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 1906, I (Washington, 1906), 91-253.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SETTING: SAN FRANCISCO BEFORE THE EARTHQUAKE

To fully understand and to appreciate the role that the United States Army played in the relief efforts following the earthquake, one must first gain an appreciation of what San Francisco was like in 1906, for even by today's standards it was a city of major importance. An understanding of the organization of the Army in 1906, as well as of the disposition of military forces in the Bay Area is also important because the immediate availability of these forces was a factor in the ability of their commanders to rapidly respond to the emergency. Two of those commanders stand out: Brigadier General Frederick Funston and Major General Adolphus W. Greely. Each man played a significant part in the Army's involvement and the personality of each contributed to the success of the overall effort. Some knowledge of the laws then governing the participation of the Army in civil disasters is also necessary to enable the reader to gain a fuller appreciation of the implications of the Army's involvement.

Because the focus is upon the actions of the United States Army following the earthquake only minimal attention will be given to the civilian authorities, except as pertains to the interaction between the military and civilian leadership. As the relief effort was civilian controlled, however, it is necessary to briefly discuss the primary civilian leader, Mayor Eugene E. Schmitz, and civilian-military relations in San Francisco as they were in 1906.

The city of which Schmitz was mayor lies at the northernmost end of a peninsula which is approximately fifty miles long. To its left, or west, is the Pacific Ocean; on the north is the entrance to San Francisco Bay known as the Golden Gate which separates San Francisco from the Marin Peninsula on the north. The Bay, one of the best natural harbors in the world, borders San Francisco on the east. It extends northward from the city for approximately twenty-five miles and southward for another thirty. The cities of Oakland and Berkeley lie across the Bay to the east.

The topography of the peninsula is primarily hilly, particularly along the Pacific coast, but it tapers off to the east where the land meets the Bay. Within the city limits are numerous hills and valleys, with the valley bottoms often filled with loose sand and alluvium, the result of many centuries of erosion. In some parts of the city sand dunes are to be found and those were built upon as the city developed. The city also expanded onto "made land", or fill, in many areas, including what was formerly the Bay. As we shall see, such a combination of geology and construction patterns, in close proximity to a major fault line had grave consequences when the earthquake struck.

The recorded history of San Francisco actually dates to 1776 when a Spanish mission and a military garrison were established by Juan Bautista de Anza. In those days the small settlement was called Yerba Buena. It remained small and insignificant under the Spanish and later the Mexicans, and was seized by American Navy Captain John B. Montgomery on 9 July 1846. Still only a sleepy little village, San Francisco suddenly came to life when gold was discovered in California on 24 January 1848. "The waving of the magic wand of gold...suddenly



transformed it from a little town of slightly over 800 inhabitants (in 1848) to a city of more than 34,000 (34,776) by 1852."<sup>1</sup> The city continued to grow as a result of the Nevada silver discoveries of 1873, and developed an international flavor which it still enjoys today.<sup>2</sup> As the closest large city to the gold and silver fields and as the only significant port in the region, it was natural that wealth would flow to San Francisco and the city saw the rise of newly rich men with names such as Crocker, Stanford, Mark Hopkins, and Hearst.

By 1906 San Francisco had become a city of major importance. With its outstanding harbor it became the gateway to the United States for imports from the Orient as well as the port of departure for American products bound for Alaska and the Pacific region. It became the financial center of the American West, an industrial and manufacturing city, and a cultural center rivaling New York. It was the ninth largest city in the country with annual exports of sixty-five million dollars and manufactures worth two hundred million dollars. It had a population of approximately four hundred and twenty five thousand people, according to one author.<sup>3</sup> Other population estimates range from 350,000 to 500,000, but 350,000 is probably too low in light of a 1900 census figure of 342,782. Major General Greely reported a population of 500,000 in his official report.<sup>4</sup> The exact population is not important; what is significant is that even by today's standards, San Francisco was a city of considerable size and importance.

It was also home for the largest mint in the country, one which coined more money in March 1904, than any other mint in the history of the world.<sup>5</sup> It ranked seventh in the United States in bank clearings in 1903,<sup>6</sup> was a great lumber and produce market and rivaled New York

and Liverpool as an important port. Fortunately it was also garrisoned by a sizeable number of Army troops in units which proved to be well-placed.

The Regular Army of 1906 was small by today's standards, with a strength fixed by law at 60,798 enlisted men as of 6 February 1906.<sup>7</sup> This did not include the Hospital Corps which was not counted as part of the enlisted strength of the Army, nor did it include the Porto Rico (Puerto Rico) Provisional Regiment of Infantry, or the Philippine Scouts. An increase of 943 enlisted men was authorized as of 1 July 1906. On 30 June 1906 the actual strength of the Regular Army was 3,750 officers and 55,719 enlisted men. The Hospital Corps contained another 3,196 enlisted soldiers.

Then, as now, a large percentage of the Regular Army was serving overseas. As of 15 October 1906, there were 40,563 officers and men stationed in the United States, 842 in Alaska, 12,802 in the Philippines, 30 in Puerto Rico, 5,286 in Cuba, 250 in Hawaii, and 1,772 enroute or stationed elsewhere.<sup>8</sup>

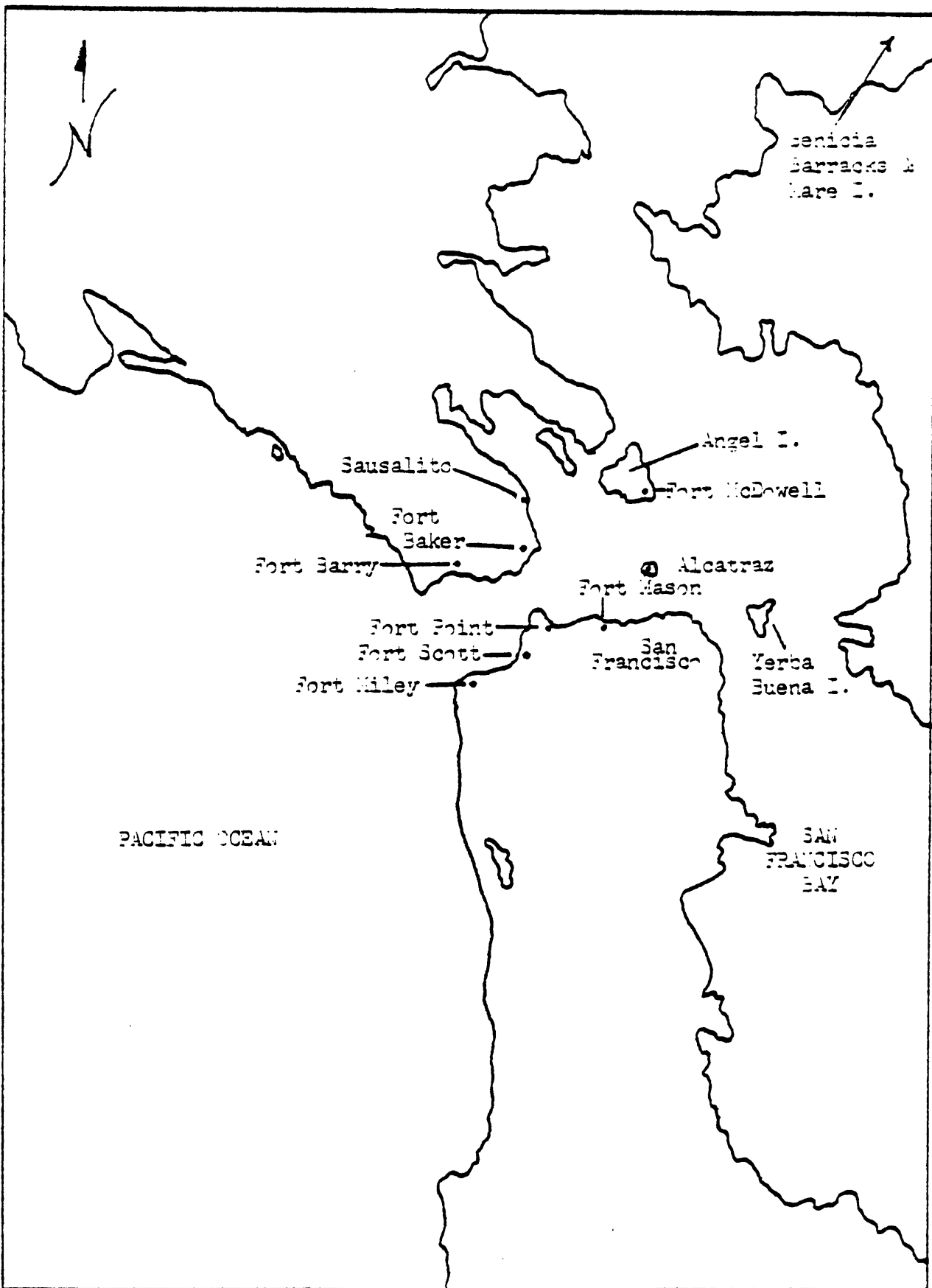
Geographically, the Army was organized within the United States into four divisions comprising a total of nine departments. Each division was commanded by a Major General. Besides the Pacific Division, there was an Atlantic Division supervising the East and the Gulf states; a Northern Division which included the Departments of the Lakes, of the Missouri, and of Dakota; and the Southwestern Division which had as its subdivisions the Departments of the Colorado and of Texas. There were also a Philippines Division and the Army of Cuban Pacification. This organizational structure reflected the times: still oriented toward our own continent, but beginning to be concerned

with those interests abroad which would assume greater importance as the nation moved further into the twentieth century.

The Pacific Division included both the Department of the Columbia and the Department of California. Both the division headquarters and that of the Department of California were located in San Francisco. Around the Bay Area could also be found a number of military installations. On the south side of the narrow Golden Gate<sup>9</sup> stood Fort Point and on the north side were Forts Baker and Barry. Along with Fort Miley, which lay to the southwest at the wider entrance to the Golden Gate, and Fort Winfield Scott on the hill behind (south of) Fort Point, these installations guarded the approach to San Francisco Bay from the sea. Both Fort Point and Fort Scott were a part of the Presidio of San Francisco - a military post first established on the site by the Spanish in 1776.

Inside the Bay, just east of the Presidio was Fort Mason, and on Angel Island located between the Marin and San Francisco peninsulas was Fort McDowell. Alcatraz Island, just north of the city, also belonged to the Army. At the north end of the Bay, approximately twenty-five miles away, was Benicia Barracks. Additionally, naval personnel were stationed at Mare Island (also at the northern end of the Bay) and on Yerba Buena Island, midway between San Francisco and Oakland.

The Army was well-situated and available for rapid response because of the location of two headquarters and a large number of installations in the Bay Area. When the earthquake struck troops at these posts responded and eventually they were joined by soldiers from throughout the Pacific Division and from across the nation. Ultimately, two regiments of cavalry, fifteen companies of coast artillery,



MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

five batteries of field artillery, five regiments of infantry, and detachments of the Signal and Hospital Corps as well as 132 additional officers were concentrated in San Francisco.<sup>10</sup>

When Brigadier General Funston ordered troops into San Francisco he violated Federal law. That law, the Posse Comitatus Amendment to the Army Appropriations Bill for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1879, provided that:

From and after passage of this act it shall not be lawful to employ any part of the Army of the United States, as a posse comitatus, or otherwise, for the purpose of executing the laws, except in such cases and under such circumstances as such employment of said force may be expressly authorized by the Constitution or by act of Congress; and any person willfully violating the provisions of this section shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor and on conviction thereof shall be punished by fine not exceeding \$10,000 or imprisonment not exceeding two years or both fine and imprisonment.<sup>11</sup>

To understand the reason behind such legislation one should recall that since colonial days Americans have been sensitive about the use of military forces to enforce civil law and about the maintenance of large standing armies. Such use of British soldiers was one of the irritants affecting many colonials in the two decades before the American Revolution. The drafters of the Declaration of Independence assailed King George III for, among other things, maintaining standing armies in the colonies during peacetime without the concurrence of the colonial legislatures. Delegates to the Constitutional Convention struggled with concepts regarding the proper role of the military in the new republic as they sought to insure that the Army not become a danger to their newly-won freedom. As early as 1792, while authorizing the militia to take part in a posse comitatus, Congress refrained from

granting this authority to the regulars. Gradually, however, the distinction between Federal and militia soldiers became blurred and both were often used as members of a posse. Such use was particularly noticeable in the sparsely settled West where a sheriff or marshal might frequently be without other resources.

During the Civil War, and particularly during Reconstruction, Federal troops came to be used more and more frequently to enforce the law, especially in the South. Soldiers apprehended lawbreakers, quelled strikes, guarded polling places during elections, and even helped to enforce laws against the making of illegal whiskey. As the public, particularly Southerners, became more and more disgruntled over such uses of the Army, their dissatisfaction eventually lead to demands within Congress for change.

The Democrats had gained strength in the House of Representatives by 1876, because of the General Amnesty Act of 1872, concern over corruption in the Republican Administration of President Grant, and widespread dissatisfaction in the South over Reconstruction and the excesses of the Radical Republicans. Anger over the use of Federal forces reached its height following the contested Presidential election of 1876 during which the use of troops in Southern states was considered by many Democrats to have contributed to the election of Republican Rutherford B. Hayes over Democrat Samuel J. Tilden. The controversy over the use of Federal forces to enforce civil law gained momentum as an issue in 1877 and was discussed in 1878 when the House considered the Army Appropriation Bill for 1879. Various Army reports were mentioned to demonstrate how widespread the problem was and the abuse of

military force were cited as one of the dangers resulting from the presence of a large standing army. It was even proposed that the size of the Army be reduced.<sup>12</sup>

Not long after passage of the Army Appropriations Bill, the Attorney General issued an opinion that the use of troops as a posse comitatus was no longer allowed and that they could only be utilized at the direction of the President.<sup>13</sup> That their initial use in San Francisco was not directed by the President will be seen in Chapter Four, for when the earthquake struck, Brigadier General Funston did not hesitate, but issued the necessary orders on his own initiative and the troops began to march. Although their commitment was later sanctioned by President Theodore Roosevelt, the initial involvement of Federal forces in civil affairs was illegal. Fortunately for San Francisco, however, Frederick Funston was not a man to worry about such things when he felt that duty had to be done.

On 18 April 1906 Funston, as the commander of the Department of California, was also serving as the acting commander of the Pacific Division in the absence of Major General Greely who was enroute to Washington, D.C., for the wedding of one of his daughters. As such, Funston was in position to play a vital role in the days immediately following the earthquake and it is appropriate to pause to consider the background of this unique officer.

Born in Ohio on 9 November 1865, but raised in Kansas, Funston was not formally trained to be a professional soldier. By the time of the earthquake, in fact, he had seen less than ten years of military service. Prior to that service he had attended the University of Kansas and worked as a journalist for a newspaper and as a ticket-taker

for the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad. Because of an interest in botany, and with the assistance of his father, Congressman Edward Hogue Funston, he gained employment in 1890 with the Department of Agriculture and took part in expeditions to the Dakotas, Montana, Death Valley, and Alaska, serving with distinction and gaining experience in the outdoors.

Following his return from Alaska, Funston lectured on his experiences and considered starting a coffee plantation in Central America, but withdrew from the idea for lack of finances. Once again employed by the railroad, he found himself in New York during the summer of 1896, where he became attracted to the cause of the Cuban insurgents who were fighting against Spain. After being accepted for service and while awaiting shipment to Cuba, Funston taught himself the fundamentals of artillery by almost committing to memory the book of instruction for a Hotchkiss twelve-pounder, breech-loading rifle which the Cubans had purchased in New York.<sup>14</sup>

Funston was already thirty-one years old when he arrived in Cuba in August 1896, but despite his lack of military training his performance in combat was exemplary. During a period of seventeen months he served as an artillery officer and rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel in a campaign in which he was wounded on three occasions and had nineteen horses shot out from under him.<sup>15</sup> He returned to the United States in January 1898, weak from his wounds and suffering from disease.

Cuba not only served as a first-rate training ground for Funston as a soldier, but the war helped him to embark upon a career which he would follow until he died. He had learned about tactics and about the



regimen of a soldier in the field. He had tested his own personal courage and not found it lacking and, importantly, he had learned valuable lessons about guerrilla warfare, lessons which would serve him and his nation well in the Philippine Islands.

Following his recovery, Funston, finding himself in need of money, took advantage of his Cuban adventures and set out on the lecture circuit. This was a short-lived venture, however, because the U.S.S. Maine exploded in Havana harbor on 15 February 1898 and in April 1898 the United States declared war on Spain. At the outbreak of the war President McKinley issued a call to the various states for volunteers and Kansas was asked to raise three regiments. Kansas Governor John W. Leedy, a Populist, had two dislikes, according to Funston, and they were the Regular Army and the National Guard.<sup>16</sup> Leedy elected to ignore the existing National Guard organizations and to raise the three regiments from scratch, although individual Guardsmen were allowed to enlist as privates. Funston was offered and accepted command of the 20th Kansas Volunteer Infantry which was soon posted to San Francisco where the end of the war found it in training. Instead of being disbanded, however, the regiment departed for the Philippines on 27 October 1898, two days after Funston married Eda Blankhart of Oakland.

Upon arrival in Manila, the 20th Kansas was assigned to the 2d Division, commanded by Major General Arthur MacArthur, father of Douglas MacArthur. Trouble with Filipino insurgents was anticipated and following a period of garrison duty, war broke out between the Americans and the Filipinos in February 1899. In the battles which followed, Funston put to good use the lessons which he had learned in

Cuba. His performance as a combat leader who led by personal example was especially notable. His aggressiveness and personal daring as a regimental commander is perhaps best demonstrated by his performance during the battle of Calumpit on 27 April 1899. Facing an army of 4,000 insurgents entrenched on the opposite side of the deep and fast-flowing Rio Grande de Pampanga, Funston organized a river crossing. Two soldiers swam the river and anchored a line on the opposing shore. Then, using a raft which was capable of supporting only eight men at a time, Funston and seven others led the crossing. When a total of only forty-five soldiers had crossed, Funston launched an attack which routed the enemy. As a result of this action he was promoted to Brigadier General of Volunteers on 2 May 1899 and he and the two swimmers were later awarded Medals of Honor. Seven days later Funston was again wounded.<sup>17</sup>

Following completion of the campaign Funston and his regiment were ordered home to be mustered out of service and they departed Manila in September 1899. Shortly after his arrival in San Francisco, however, he learned that he was to be retained as a Brigadier General of United States Volunteers and he returned to the Philippines in December 1899. This tour resulted in an event which added to his fame and which assured his retention in the Army as a Regular officer - the capture of Emilio Aguinaldo, the Filipino insurgent leader.

The war had entered a new phase by the time Funston returned to the Philippines. It had become a guerrilla war with American forces garrisoning the islands with small detachments dispersed over a wide area. The emphasis was on counter-guerrilla operations and during this period Funston continued to exhibit the aggressiveness and personal

courage which was becoming a trademark for him. Although a brigade commander, he nevertheless was frequently in the field with elements of company or platoon size, and often could be found at or near the front of troops engaging the enemy. His relative youth no doubt contributed to his zeal for this type of activity, not often expected of a general officer. His actions were also indicative of his personality, for despite his small size (he was 5'4", stocky and well-built) he more than compensated by being an aggressive, decisive, often unrestrained leader who appeared loath to ask soldiers to do what he would not do himself.

As the insurgency declined in intensity, Major General MacArthur notified Funston that the War Department had issued orders for him to return home to be mustered out. Funston, however, had recently received information as to the whereabouts of Emilio Aguinaldo and had developed a dangerous and daring plan to capture him. This plan called for a patrol to be led by a former Filipino insurgent who, unknown to Aguinaldo, had defected to the American side. Funston and four other officers were to play the role of American captives being guarded by insurgents who were, in reality, loyal Macabebe tribesmen serving as scouts for the U.S. Army. Although he believed his military career to be at an end, but with MacArthur's approval, Funston and his party were landed in northern Luzon by the U.S.S. Vicksburg. Acting as alleged insurgent reinforcements and their captives, the group made its way on foot for approximately 110 miles to Aguinaldo's headquarters where they were welcomed. Shortly thereafter, Aguinaldo was taken captive along with two of his officers and moved to a rendezvous point from which the entire party was evacuated by the U.S.S. Vicksburg and returned to Manila.<sup>18</sup>

The success of the mission was a direct result of the daring, courage and personal leadership of Frederick Funston and led to negotiations which officially ended the insurgency. It also led to a recommendation by Major General MacArthur that Funston be appointed as a Brigadier General in the Regular Army, which he was, by order of President McKinley, on 1 April 1901 at the age of thirty-six.



BRIGADIER GENERAL FREDERICK FUNSTON

Following his return to the United States, Funston served in a number of command positions and in April 1906 was commander of the Department of California. It was from this position that he assumed duties as acting commander of the Pacific Division on 16 April 1906

when Major General Greely departed San Francisco on leave. By chance, therefore, Funston, a younger, more aggressive, and less regulation-oriented officer was in a position in which these traits could be put to very good use when the earthquake struck two days later.<sup>19</sup>

Compliments of Brigadier General Funston's abilities are not criticisms of those of his superior. Major General Adolphus W. Greely was a distinguished soldier in his own right. Already sixty-two years old, by April 1906 he had served on active duty since 1861 and had proven his personal courage and leadership during both the Civil War and afterwards in a variety of unique and challenging assignments. An able administrator, he had also demonstrated his organizational and managerial abilities as the Chief Signal Officer from 1887 to 1906. Although he lacked a college degree, he was a self-taught electrician, meteorologist, scientist, explorer, a founder and trustee of the National Geographic Society, and an author who would produce nearly 100 books and articles before he died. As a seasoned administrator his skills would prove valuable during the critical period of relief and recovery that followed the earthquake.

Adolphus Greely was born in Newburyport, Massachusetts, on 27 March 1844. In 1861, at the age of seventeen, he enlisted as a private in the 19th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. He served in a number of major engagements including the battles of Antietam and Fredericksburg, was wounded three times, and by the end of the war was a twenty-one year old brevet Major of Volunteers. From 1865 to 1867 he served on occupation duty in New Orleans - a white officer with colored troops, as they were then called. This was a type of duty calling for restraint and decorum. In 1867 Greely was appointed a Second Lieutenant

in the 36th United States Infantry and a period of western service followed during which he served in Wyoming and Utah. That same year he was detailed to the Signal Corps and served through the 1870's primarily in Signal assignments. During this time he supervised the installation of telegraph lines in Texas, the Indian Territory (Oklahoma), New Mexico, Arizona, California, the Dakotas, North Carolina, and Virginia. He gained a reputation as something of a troubleshooter for the Signal Corps.

In 1870 Greely was assigned to Washington to take part in the organization of the United States Weather Bureau. During 1872-1873 he gathered data for the River and Flood Service, and he soon became recognized as an expert meteorologist.<sup>20</sup> As a result of a new interest in climatology Greely, then a First Lieutenant, volunteered for and was selected to lead a United States expedition to the Arctic to study weather and climate.<sup>21</sup> Officially designated as the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition, the purpose of the project was to establish a polar station on the shores of Lady Franklin Bay, near Greenland, and there to make observations of the tides, the weather, plant and animal life, and to explore the surrounding area.

Begun in July 1881, the expedition tested the courage, restraint, wisdom, and leadership of its commander in the harshest manner. The base camp was established and occupied from August 1881 to August 1882, but when scheduled relief ships failed to arrive, Greely was forced to abandon the station and move the party southward by launch and on foot for a distance of 500 miles. Following this fifty-one day trip the group established winter quarters in late September 1883. By the time

that relief arrived on 23 June 1884, the original party of twenty-five members had been reduced to seven and one of these died before reaching home.

In 1886 Greely was promoted to Captain and in 1887 to Brigadier General as the Chief Signal Officer of the Army. He was the first volunteer private soldier of the Civil War to achieve that rank. He served as Chief Signal Officer until his promotion to Major General and his assignment to command of the Pacific Division in March 1906. In the intervening period he demonstrated his administrative abilities/and oversaw the expansion of telegraph lines in Alaska, Cuba, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico, as well as some construction in China. An innovative officer, he supported experiments by Samuel P. Langley to construct a military flying machine. Greely has been called the moving force in adapting the developing technology of the late nineteenth century to military purposes. Under his direction the Signal Corps introduced the use of wireless telegraphy, the automobile, the airplane, and many other modern devices.<sup>22</sup>

By 1906, Greely was a mature, competent, and able administrator. He had been tested in a variety of unique and difficult assignments and had proven himself to be resourceful, innovative, and resilient. His duties as Chief Signal Officer had brought him into contact with a wide range of foreign and American civilian leaders and this experience had enhanced his ability to deal with civilian leaders at the local, state, and Federal levels during the months that followed the earthquake. Perhaps more than any other general officer then on active duty, his background had prepared him for the duties to be encountered in the aftermath of the earthquake and fire.<sup>23</sup>



ADOLPHUS W. GREELY AS CHIEF  
SIGNAL OFFICER, UNITED STATES ARMY

One of the civilians with whom Generals Funston and Greely had to deal was Eugene E. Schmitz, the Mayor of San Francisco. Schmitz, a member of the Union Labor Party and a former orchestra leader at a San Francisco theater, had been mayor since 1902. He was actually the frontman and surrogate for a corrupt lawyer named Abraham Ruef and together the two supervised a thoroughly crooked administration.<sup>24</sup> Those desiring to do business with the city, whether that included contracting, renewing a license, or having a new one issued, hired Ruef as their attorney. The resulting "legal fees" were then shared by Ruef



with Schmitz, with dishonest members of the city's Board of Supervisors, and with anyone else entitled to part of the graft. Kickbacks as high as \$200,000 were paid by corporations and magnates desiring to do business. Because the Democratic and Republican parties were divided, Schmitz was re-elected in 1903 and 1905, and by 1905 nearly every member of the Board of Supervisors was in the pay of Ruef.<sup>25</sup>

The differences between the civilian and the military leadership in the city, therefore, could not have been more pronounced, but any criticisms which the two generals must have had does not appear in their official reports or in Greely's autobiography. On the contrary, it actually appears that Schmitz earnestly attempted to meet his municipal responsibilities in the relief effort which followed the earthquake. Greely, in fact, commended the mayor in his official report:

It might not be improper to state that in my prolonged and intimate relations with his honor the Mayor I was strongly impressed by his fund of common sense, his appreciation of the situation, his regard for the public interests, and his freedom from acts of political or personal bias. In his strenuous and unremitting labors he seemed to have constantly at heart the interests of the community. Neither word nor act of discrimination emanated from him against or in favor of any race, sect, color, or nationality.<sup>26</sup>

It appears, therefore, that the relations between the mayor and the two principal Army commanders were correct. Throughout the relief effort, in fact, Greely sought to emphasize that the Army troops were to assist and support the municipal authorities. His report indicates that such support was extended in a spirit of cooperation and accepted in a spirit of gratitude.<sup>27</sup> We will now examine the occurrence which caused the military and civilian authorities to work together.

Chapter II  
Notes

<sup>1</sup>Oliver P. Chitwood, Rembert W. Patrick, Frank L. Owsley, and H. C. Nixon, The American People: A History, 2 vols. (Princeton, N.J., 1962), I:471-472.

<sup>2</sup>The population of San Francisco in 1900, for example, demonstrated this international flavor. Out of a population of 342,782, only 66% or 225,897 were born in the United States. The remaining 34% or 116,885, were from other countries. The percentages were as follows: Germany and Austria - 10.8%; Ireland - 4.7%; England and Scotland - 3.5%; China - 3.1%; Sweden, Norway, and Denmark - 2.8%; Italy - 2.2%; Canada - 1.5%; France - 1.4%; Switzerland - 0.6%; Japan - 0.5%; Russia - 0.4%; Mexico - 0.4%; Australia - 0.3% and other countries - 1.8%. Source: Charles J. O'Conner, et al., San Francisco Relief Survey (New York, 1913), 75. (Hereafter cited as SFRS.)

<sup>3</sup>Frank W. Aitken and Edward Hilton, A History of the Earthquake and Fire in San Francisco (San Francisco, 1906), 9.

<sup>4</sup>U.S. War Department, Annual Report of the War Department for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 1906, I (Washington, 1906), 100. (Hereafter cited as ARWD.)

<sup>5</sup>San Francisco, 1904-1905 (San Francisco [1904-05] ), 40.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 42.

<sup>7</sup>ARWD, 1906, I. The following strength figures were extracted from the Report of the Military Secretary, ARWD, 1906, I, pp. 563 and 565.

As would be expected, most officers were in the Infantry. When, on 15 October 1906, the actual officer strength of the Regular Army was 3,709, 1,482 of these were Infantrymen. Another 168 were Engineers, 744 were Cavalrymen, and 634 were in the Artillery. Another 659 served in the Staff Corps or with departments and twenty-two were General Officers.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., I, 566.

<sup>9</sup>The bridge of the same name was not constructed until the 1930's.

<sup>10</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 548.

<sup>11</sup>Clarence I. Meeks, III, "Illegal Law Enforcement: Aiding Civil Authorities in Violation of The Posse Comitatus Act," Military Law Review, 70, (Fall 1975) (Department of the Army Pamphlet No. 27-100-70), 92. A posse comitatus is a group of persons called, usually in an emergency, by a sheriff or other law enforcement authority

for the purpose of preserving public law or peace. The Meeks article serves as a source for much of my discussion of the historical background of the passage of the posse comitatus legislation in 1878. The issue of American concern over the presence of standing armies since colonial times was discussed during the debate over passage of the Army Appropriations Bill for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1879. See, U.S. Congress, House, Debate on the Army Appropriations Bill for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 1879. 45th Cong., 2d sess., 20 May 1879. Congressional Record, 7, 3579-3589.

<sup>12</sup>This was in spite of the fact that by act of Congress on August 15, 1876 the Army was reduced to a maximum of 25,000 men, hardly a large standing army by the standards of the (then) recent Civil War. Annual Report of the Secretary of War on the Operations of the Department for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1877, I. (Washington, 1877), iii.

<sup>13</sup>Clarence T. Meeks, "Illegal Law Enforcement", Military Law Review, 70 (Fall 1975) 92-93.

<sup>14</sup>Frederick Funston, Memories of Two Wars (New York, 1911), 6.

<sup>15</sup>John B.B. Trussell, Jr., "The Man Destiny Just Missed," Military Review, 53 (June 1973), 60.

<sup>16</sup>Funston, 150.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 274-292.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 384-426.

<sup>19</sup>Subsequent to the earthquake Funston served in a variety of assignments to include command of the First Expeditionary Brigade in Cuba in 1906 and again as commander of the Department of California from October 1906 to August 1908. From 1908 until 1910 he was the Commandant of the Army Service Schools at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, forerunner of the present Command and General Staff College. He then served in the Philippines again as the commander of the Department of Luzon until 1913, followed by a brief tour as commander of the Department of Hawaii. He moved to Texas in 1914 as commander of the Second Division and commanded the Army forces dispatched to Vera Cruz, Mexico that same year. He was promoted to Major General in November 1914 and in February 1915 was placed in command of the Southern Department, headquartered at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas. As border troubles with Mexico increased, he commanded over 150,000 Regular and National Guard troops (including the author's grandfather) who were policing the border from Brownsville, Texas, to Yuma, Arizona. It was during this period that the Punitive Expedition under Brigadier General John J. Pershing was dispatched to Mexico in 1916. On 17 February 1917, at the age of fifty-one, Funston died of a heart attack in San Antonio. He is buried at the Presidio of San Francisco.

Funston's death deprived the Army of an experienced and courageous officer who, in those days before our entry into World War I, had commanded more troops than any other American officer then on active duty. Despite his reputation for aggressiveness, he had also proved himself in a difficult assignment in Vera Cruz which called for patience and restraint. What role he would have played in the war is speculative, of course, but it is likely that it would have been an important one. That Funston, instead of Pershing might have commanded the American Expeditionary Force in France is a distinct possibility.

On the night of 19 February 1917 when the telegram announcing Funston's death arrived in Washington, Major Douglas MacArthur had the night watch for the General Staff. Knowing that Secretary of War Newton D. Baker should be immediately informed, MacArthur went to the Secretary's home where he found the latter entertaining President Woodrow Wilson and the Army Chief of Staff, General Hugh L. Scott. After MacArthur had reported the news, the President asked Secretary Baker who would command in Europe. Instead of answering, Baker asked for MacArthur's opinion. According to Baker, MacArthur suggested that either Pershing or Lieutenant Colonel Peyton March should be selected. Frank E. Vandiver, Black Jack: The Life and Times of John J. Pershing, 2 vols., (College Station, Texas, 1977), I:672, MacArthur told essentially the same story, but stated that he recommended only Pershing. Douglas MacArthur, Reminiscences, (New York, 1964), 46-47. The point is that Pershing appears to have been selected to command the AEF only after death deprived the Army of Frederick Funston.

<sup>20</sup>Roger J. Spiller, ed., Dictionary of American Military Biography. "Greely, Adolphus Washington," by Charles R. Schrader (New York, to be published).

<sup>21</sup>Years later in his memoirs, Greely referred to his service as the expedition commander as the most notable phase of his public career. "It was no adventurous pole-seeking voyage, as it is generally believed, but a single unit in an elaborate system of international scientific research in which eleven nations and fifty scientific observatories worked in concert. For America it marked a forward movement toward fellowship with other countries. Indeed it was the first instance in which the United States, acting under Congressional and Executive authority, practically entered the family of nations, an entrance neither for war nor for commerce, but for increase of human knowledge." Adolphus W. Greely, Reminiscences of Adventure and Service (New York, 1927), 120.

<sup>22</sup>Roger J. Spiller, ed., Dictionary of American Military Biography, "Greely, Adolphus Washington," by Charles R. Shrader (New York, to be published).

<sup>23</sup>Major General Greely retired in 1908, but continued to lead an active life, writing, and devoting his attention to public service. He represented the United States at the coronation of King George V of Great Britain in 1911. He continued as a trustee of the National Geographic Society until his death and was an active member in various

civic and patriotic organizations. He was awarded a special Congressional Medal of Honor on 27 March 1935, his ninety-first birthday and died on 20 October 1935. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

<sup>24</sup>Ruef's story is an interesting one. He was a graduate of the University of California's Hastings Law School and was admitted to the bar in 1886. Apparently an idealist with dreams of political reform, he associated with two other young men named John H. Wigmore and Franklin K. Lane to study civic problems. Wigmore later became Dean of the Law School at Northwestern University and author of Wigmore on Evidence, a book widely known to lawyers. Lane became Secretary of the Interior under Woodrow Wilson. Walton Bean in Boss Ruef's San Francisco (Berkeley: 1967), 2, identifies Wigmore and Lane as lifelong crusaders for better government. Ruef, however, gradually lost his idealism and was drawn into machine politics.

<sup>25</sup>Bruce Bliven, "The Boozing Boss and the Musical Mayor," American Heritage Magazine, 11, No. 1 (December 1959), 10. Within a year after the earthquake, seventeen of the eighteen supervisors confessed to taking bribes. Franklin Hichborn, The System: As Uncovered by the San Francisco Graft Prosecution (San Francisco, 1915), 62.

<sup>26</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 105. The reformers had been assembling a case against the Ruef-Schmitz Machine before the earthquake and it slowed them down only a little. In November 1906 a series of trials lasting almost two years began which finally resulted in prison sentences for both men, however, Schmitz's conviction was overturned. Eventually, the voters elected him to the Board of Supervisors on several occasions.

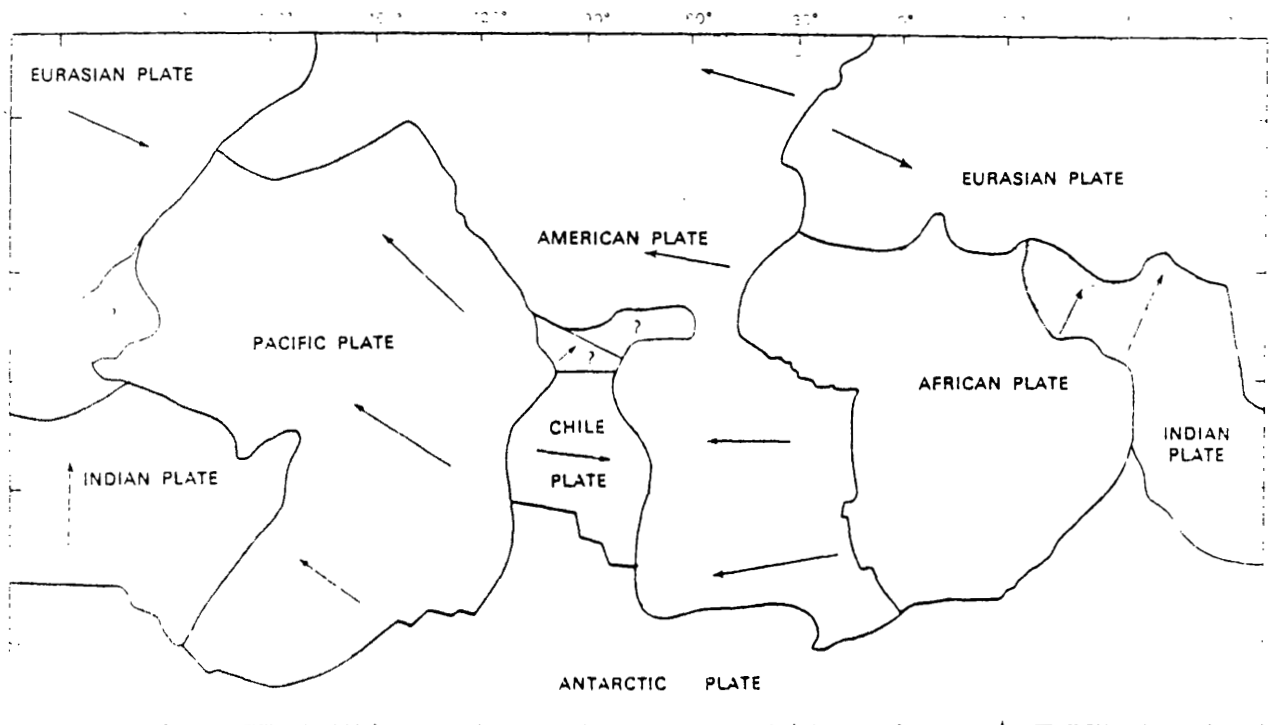
<sup>27</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 101, 103-105.

## CHAPTER III

### THE EARTHQUAKE: CAUSE AND EFFECT

Many theories have been advanced regarding the causes of earthquakes. Today, a theory known as plate tectonics offers the most plausible and accepted explanation of this natural phenomenon. The premise of this theory is that the earth consists of a number of thick rock plates floating upon a semi-molten mantle. These plates are constantly in motion, frequently in different directions. Where one plate is in contact with another friction may develop because of conflicting pressures. This friction may retard movement for a period of time, but eventually pent-up force causes the two plates in contact to move violently past each other until the stress is released and the cycle begins anew. This violent movement of the earth is an earthquake.

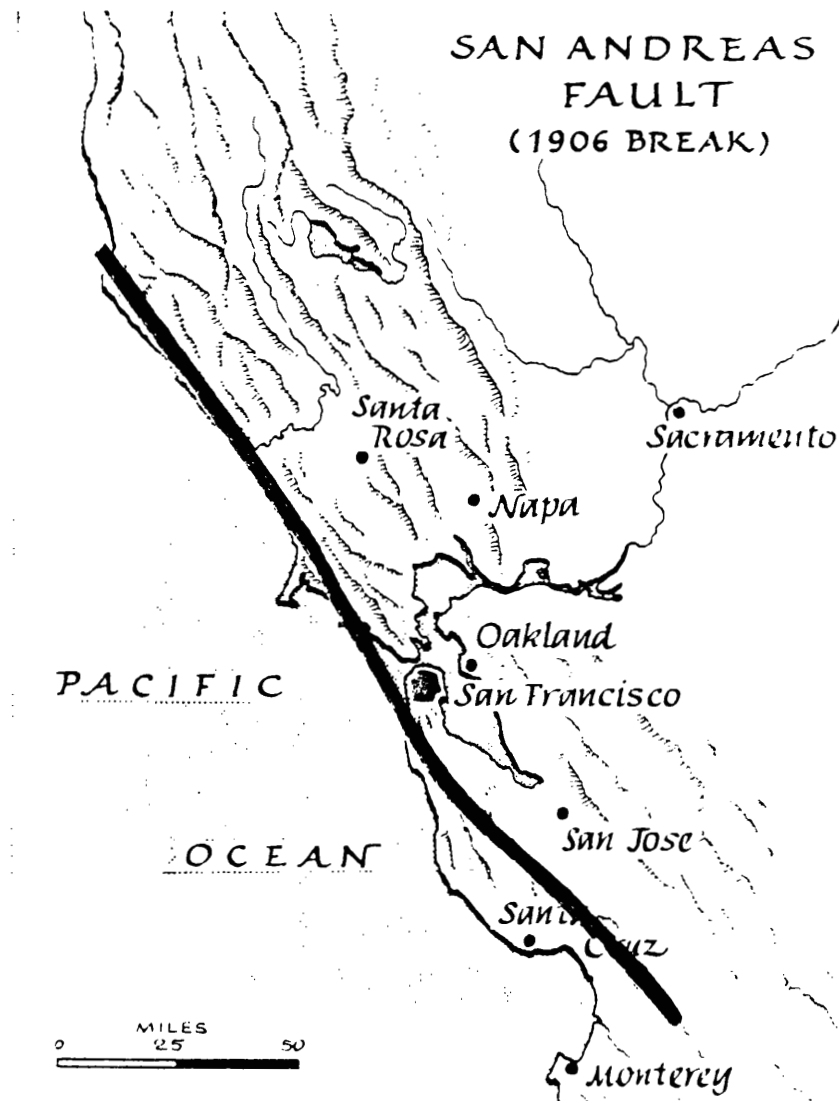
The vast majority of earthquakes in the United States (excluding Alaska and Hawaii) occur in the West, most especially in California and Nevada, and it is in California that one finds the famous San Andreas Fault. This fault extends for approximately 600 miles through California from Point Arena, 110 miles northwest of San Francisco, to the Salton Sea, 140 miles southwest of Los Angeles, and is adjacent to two large plates which are moving past each other. The portion of California to the west of the fault is part of the Pacific Plate which is moving to the northwest. The portion to the east is part of the westward moving North American plate.<sup>1</sup>



WORLD-WIDE DISTRIBUTION OF TECTONIC PLATES

Scientists have determined as a result of measurements along the San Andreas Fault that the Pacific plate is moving northward at an average rate of two inches per year which means that Los Angeles and San Francisco should be neighbors in another ten million years or so. If such movement continues for the next fifty million years the land to the west of the fault could move to the Aleutians.<sup>2</sup>

In reporting the size of an earthquake it is customary to define it in terms of intensity and magnitude. Intensity pertains to the violence of motion which is observed in the area affected. The scale used to measure intensity is the Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale of 1931.



TRACE OF THE 1906 EARTHQUAKE

Intensity is reported in Roman numerals from I to XII. An earthquake is also measured by its magnitude, or the amount of ground motion at a fixed distance from the epicenter which is a place on the earth's surface that is directly above the point of origin of the earthquake.<sup>3</sup> Magnitude is stated in terms of the Gutenberg-Richter Scale which is based on the amount of energy believed to be released by an earthquake. The largest known earthquakes are rated at about 8.75.<sup>4</sup>



The earthquake of 1906 has been rated at XI on the Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale.<sup>5</sup> In an earthquake of this intensity "few, if any (masonry) structures remain standing. Bridges (are) destroyed. Broad fissures (appear in the) ground. Underground pipelines (are) completely out of service. (The) earth slumps and (the) land slips in soft ground. Rails (are) bent greatly".<sup>6</sup> The U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey has rated the San Francisco earthquake as having a magnitude of 8.3 on the Gutenberg-Richter Scale.<sup>7</sup>

To be able to grasp an idea of the amount of power unleashed on 18 April 1906, perhaps it is appropriate to describe the similar major earthquake which scientists believe will sooner or later strike the San Francisco area.

In the fifties scientists speculated that the quake would produce enough energy to power the entire U.S. Sixth Fleet at full strength for five hundred years. In the mid-sixties it was compared to the explosive force of ten thousand atomic bombs. A more meaningful comparison might be: If the entire energy force were concentrated on the one-square mile business section of the city, the whole area would be lifted six thousand feet into the air.<sup>8</sup>

While such comparisons are imprecise, they do serve to transmit a sense of the destructive force of a major earthquake such as that which struck San Francisco.

Another indication of the immensity of the 1906 earthquake is the fact that it was felt over a very large area. While the epicenter was just northwest of San Francisco, shocks were felt throughout most of California as well as in parts of Oregon and Nevada. The area covered extended northward to Coos Bay, Oregon; eastward to Winnemucca, Nevada; and southward to Los Angeles; in all, a straight line distance from north to south of about 730 miles.

It is about 300 miles from San Francisco to Winnemucca, but the total east-west distance is difficult to determine because of the ocean. Approximately 175,000 square miles of land area were affected and probably about 200,000 additional square miles of ocean area.<sup>9</sup>

San Francisco, the largest city in the area, suffered the most severe effects of the 1906 earthquake. While cities such as Santa Rosa, fifty miles to the north, and San Jose, fifty miles to the south, also suffered, it was in San Francisco that the damage and the death toll were the greatest and it was there that the Army became most involved.

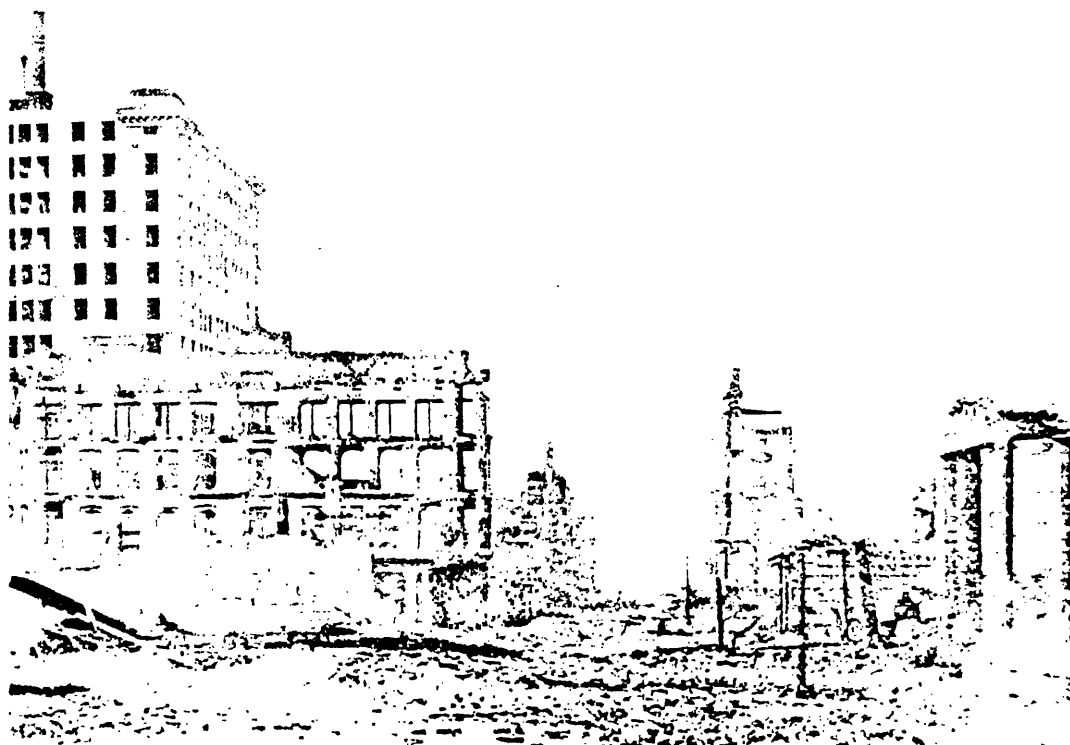
The earthquake struck at 0512, Pacific time,<sup>10</sup> on Wednesday, 18 April 1906, "ripping south at over seven thousand miles an hour."<sup>11</sup> The first shock lasted for about a minute and by 0700 thirty minor shocks had been recorded. A zone of destruction had been created which was about fifty miles wide and 150 to 200 miles in length above and below San Francisco.<sup>12</sup>

The property destruction in San Francisco was massive, although not uniform throughout owing to the variety of the terrain. It was greatest where structures were built on fill and less on the hilltops. Throughout most of the city ceiling and wall plaster was cracked and chimneys were toppled. Some buildings were entirely reduced to rubble. The damage was intensified in areas built on fill. Here street pavements were cracked and arched and houses of normal brick and wood construction were destroyed; sewer lines and water mains were broken; and streetcar tracks were twisted.<sup>13</sup> Cracks or rifts also appeared in the ground and landslides occurred in various places.

Many buildings which survived the earthquake fell victim to the flames which followed. Fires broke out almost immediately, due to ruptured gas mains, toppled chimneys, and short-circuited electric wires. The fires burned for three days and two nights, spread by the wind and in some cases by attempts to dynamite fire lanes. Hundreds of waterlines were ruptured by the earthquake and this hampered fire fighting. By the time that the fires were finally extinguished a 4.7 square mile area had been burned; only thirteen of the 521 blocks in that area had been saved.<sup>14</sup> The damages caused by the fire were so much more extensive than those caused by the earthquake itself, that afterwards people often made references to the 1906 Fire as opposed to the 1906 Earthquake. One must keep in mind, however, that the earthquake was the direct cause of the fire. On 27 April a staff correspondent of the New York Times wrote: "It is all simply indescribable. One comparison that suggest itself is with Pompeii as it is now, but a hundred times greater than the unburned section of that city and showing a destruction for (sic) more complete."<sup>15</sup>

The same day, Secretary of Commerce and Labor Victor H. Metcalf, who was in San Francisco as the representative of President Theodore Roosevelt, telegraphed the following report to Washington, D.C.:

As regards industrial and commercial losses...the conditions are appalling...Not only have the business and industrial houses and establishments of half a million people, disappeared, leaving them destitute financially and their means of livelihood temporarily gone, but the complicated system of transportation indispensable to the daily comfort and interests of half a million of people has been almost totally destroyed...



PHOTOGRAPH SHOWING DESTRUCTION  
ON PINE STREET IN THE FINANCIAL  
DISTRICT

Practically every municipal building is destroyed, forcing the city officials into scanty quarters, necessarily situated in localities difficult of access owing to distances and lack of transportation. Three hundred thousand people were rendered homeless.<sup>16</sup>

On 30 July 1906, Major General Greely submitted his official report in which he provided one of the best descriptions of the destruction. He wrote:

On April 18 this was a city of 500,000 inhabitants, the commercial emporium of the Pacific coast, a great industrial and manufacturing center, adorned with magnificent buildings, equipped with extensive local transportation, provided with the most modern sanitary appliances, and having an abundant water supply. On April 21 these triumphs of human effort, this center of civilization, had become a scene of indescribable desolation, more than 200,000 residents having fled from the burnt district alone, leaving several hundred dead under its smoldering ashes. The entire community of 450,000 deprived of all modern conveniences and necessities, had, in forty-eight hours, not only been relegated to conditions of primitive life, but were also hampered by ruins and debris. Its entire business districts and adjacent territory had been ravaged by fire. The burnt area covered 3,400 acres, as against 2,100 in Chicago and 50 in Boston. Of the 261 miles of electric and cable railways not a mile remained in operation. While probably 1,500 teams were uninjured, yet, as a whole, they had been withdrawn with the refugees to the outlying districts. Practically all travel had to be on foot, the few automobiles having been impressed by the authorities. The intricate masses of iron, brick, and debris were supplemented in the unburned area by fallen buildings and chimneys, which made all travel circuitous and extremely difficult. The city telephone system was interrupted, every telegraph office and station had been destroyed. All the banks, deposit vaults, and trust buildings were in ruins. Not a hotel of note or importance was left standing. The great apartment houses had vanished. Of the thousands of wholesale and large retail establishments scarce half a dozen were saved, and these in remote districts. Even buildings spared by the fire were damaged as to chimneys, so that all food of the entire city was cooked over campfires in the open streets.

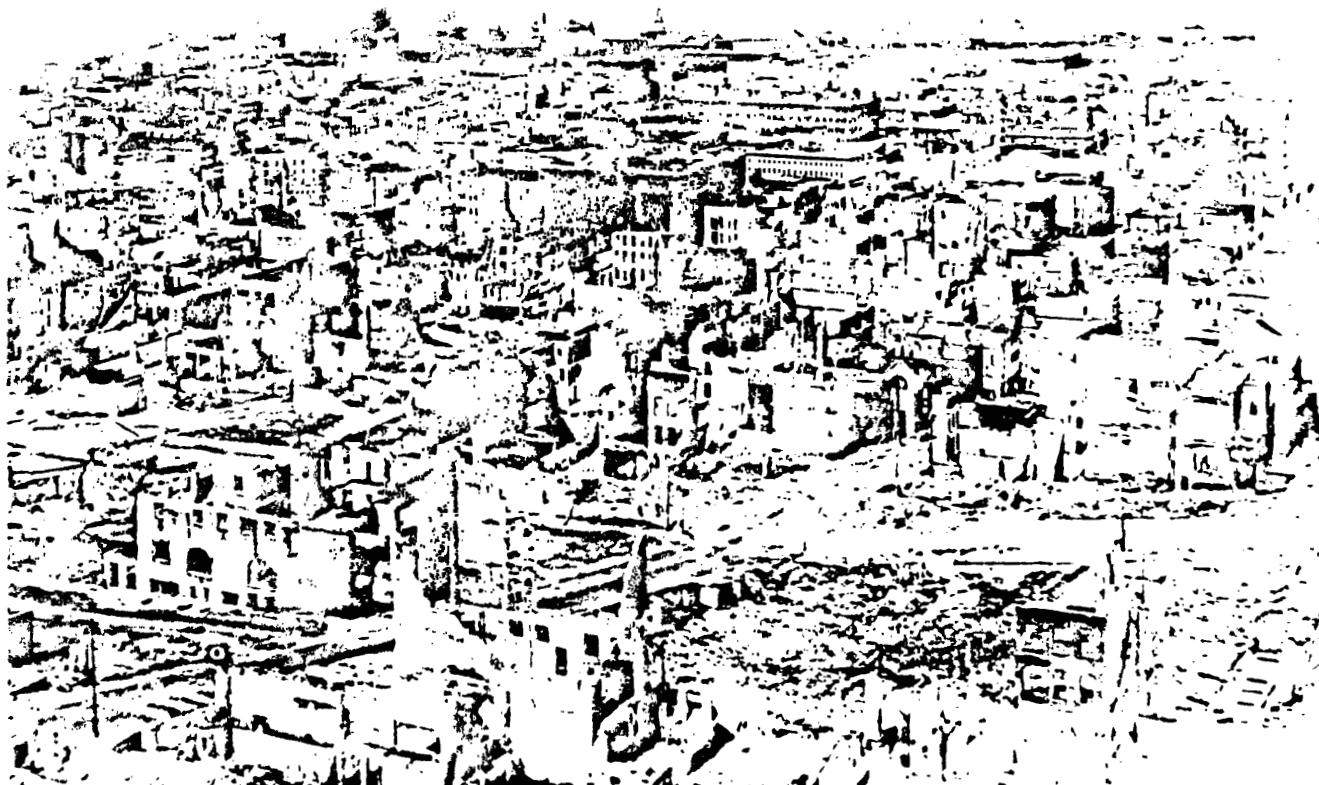
Two hundred and twenty-five thousand people were not only homeless, losing all real and personal property, but also were deprived of their means of present sustenance and future livelihood. Food, water, shelter, clothing, medicines, and sewerage were all lacking. Failing even for drinking purposes, water had to be brought long distances. Every large bakery was destroyed or interrupted. While milk and country produce were plentiful in the suburbs, local

transportation was entirely interrupted so that even people of great wealth could obtain food only by charity or public relief. In short, all those things which are deemed essential to the support, comfort, and decency of a well-ordered life were destroyed or wanting.<sup>17</sup>

The total monetary losses arising from the earthquake and fire are uncertain because there are so many different ways of determining them. Aside from the problem of identifying every loss, one may take either original value or depreciated value, or may consider only the amount of insurance claims paid. The San Francisco Relief Survey reported that about \$200 million in insurance claims were paid out, but estimated the loss of real and personal property at \$500 million.<sup>18</sup> According to one author, the best qualified estimates are probably between \$350 and \$500 million.<sup>19</sup> Losses from lack of employment or lost business opportunities are impossible to calculate. Suffice it to say, that the monetary costs were tremendous as were the human costs.

The exact number of deaths that can be attributed to the earthquake and fire is elusive. One source reported a figure of 452 for San Francisco.<sup>20</sup> The Coast and Geodetic Survey reported a total of 700 deaths, but that included other cities.<sup>21</sup> The figures prepared for Major General Greely remain the most authoritative and were repeated by the authors of the San Francisco Relief Survey. Greely reported the following:

San Francisco, 304 known [deaths]; 194 unknown (largely bodies recovered from the ruins in the burned district); in addition 415 were seriously injured. In Santa Rosa there were 64 deaths and 51 seriously injured; in San Jose, 21 deaths and 19 seriously injured; and at Agnews Asylum, near San Jose, 81 deaths.<sup>22</sup>



A VIEW OF THE DESTRUCTION AFTER  
THE EARTHQUAKE AND FIRE

Except for the ships and the Bay in the background this photograph could easily pass as one of some bomb-damaged city in Europe after World War Two.

The total death toll in San Francisco proper would thus be 498, with 166 deaths elsewhere for a total of 664.<sup>23</sup> The amount of mental and physical anguish, like the total monetary cost, remains incalculable.

The earthquake reduced San Francisco to a state of chaos, totally disrupted vital services, destroyed a significant portion of the city,

and caused fires which began to spread, further endangering the population. Adequate fire protection was impossible because of the disruption in water distribution, the blocking of streets by rubble, the immediate loss of adequate means of communications, and the widespread dispersion and large number of fires. Medical support and police services also suffered for some of the same reasons. Organized action by municipal authorities was impossible because of the damage and destruction to government buildings, the loss of telephone services, and the disruption of transportation. All of these factors rendered the city incapable of immediately responding to the crisis in a forceful and effective manner. There was only one force, immediately available, which was well-organized and well-led and capable of rapid response. That force was the United States Army.



## CHAPTER III

Notes

<sup>1</sup>"Forecast: Earthquake," TIME Magazine, 1 September 1975, 37.

<sup>2</sup>National Geographic Society, Our Continent: A Natural History of North America (Washington, 1976), 373.

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Department of Commerce, Environmental Science Services Administration, Coast and Geodetic Survey, Earthquake History of the United States, Part II: Stronger Earthquakes of California and Nevada, (Publication 41-1, revised through 1963) (Washington, 1966), 7. (Hereafter cited as Earthquake History of the U.S.)

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 8.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 19.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 19.

<sup>8</sup>Gordon Thomas and Max Morgan Witts, The San Francisco Earthquake (New York, 1971), 12.

<sup>9</sup>Report of the State Earthquake Investigation Commission, 2 vols., by Andrew C. Larson, Chairman (Washington, 1908), II:2.

<sup>10</sup>Various authorities report different times for the start of the earthquake. I have used the time stated in Earthquake History of the United States, II, 19.

<sup>11</sup>Thomas and Witts, The San Francisco Earthquake, 15.

<sup>12</sup>B.K. Gilbert, et al., The San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of April 18, 1906 and Their Effects on Structures and Structural Materials, U.S., Department of the Interior, United States Geological Survey, (Bulletin No. 324, Series R, Structural Materials, 1) (Washington, 1907), 16.

<sup>13</sup>Earthquake History of the United States, II, 19.

<sup>14</sup>Karl V. Steinbrugge, Earthquake Hazard in the San Francisco Bay Area: A Continuing Problem in Public Policy (Berkeley, California, 1968), 45. According to Steinbrugge, one study concluded that the fire was responsible for eighty percent of the total losses in San Francisco. This should not diminish the significance of the earthquake, however, as it was the root cause of the fire. According to the authors of the San Francisco Relief Survey, 4, there were 28,188 buildings destroyed in this 4.7 square mile area. Its 1900 population was reported as 185,000, so probably 200,000 of San Francisco's refugees came from this area.

<sup>15</sup>"View From the Water of Earthquake's Work," New York Times, 28 April 1906, 2.

<sup>16</sup>"Losses are Appalling, Metcalf Telegraphs," New York Times, 28 April 1906, 2.

<sup>17</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 100.

<sup>18</sup>Charles J. O'Connor, et al., San Francisco Relief Survey (New York, 1913), 5.

<sup>19</sup>William Bronson, The Earth Shook, The Sky Burned (Garden City, N.Y., 1959), 108.

<sup>20</sup>Andrew F. Rolle, California: A History (New York, 1963), 450.

<sup>21</sup>Earthquake History of the United States, II, 19.

<sup>22</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 101.

<sup>23</sup>According to a Time Magazine article in September 1975, an earthquake of 8.3 on the Richter Scale could now (1975) be expected to kill 10,000 people and injure 300,000 others - 40,000 seriously enough to require hospitalization. "Forecast: Earthquake," Time Magazine, 1 September 1975, 40.

#### CHAPTER IV THE ARMY MOVES IN

The story of the Army's involvement following the earthquake and fire divides naturally between the initial efforts to fight the fire and perform security duties and the subsequent relief efforts. The story begins with the earthquake itself and with the abrupt awakening of Brigadier General Funston at 0516 on 18 April 1906.<sup>1</sup> Because of the intensity and duration of the shock, he realized that an earthquake of great magnitude had struck. The general dressed hastily and left his home at 1310 Washington Street, located in one of the higher parts of the city. His realization that a major catastrophe had occurred was heightened when he saw that the street car lines were not functioning and that many columns of smoke were rising in various parts of the city.

Funston headed off on foot toward the business section of the city and along the way he observed the fruitless attempts of the fire-fighters to control many of the fires because of a lack of water caused by broken water mains. He quickly became convinced that a great conflagration would occur and that the fire department would be unable to control it. Because of the wide area already on fire he also determined that the police department would not be able to adequately patrol the city, prevent looting, and maintain fire lines.

On his own, therefore, the general determined to order in Federal troops to assist the fire and police departments, as well as to secure Federal buildings. In doing so he would directly violate the posse

comitatus law, for as we have seen, authority to make such a decision belonged to the President. Given Funston's reputation as a decisive, aggressive officer, however, it was a decision which one would expect him to make. An article in the New York Times on 8 May 1906 quoted remarks by General Funston to an unnamed friend in the War Department, concerning his violation of the law. According to the article, Funston was aware that he was breaking the law when he ordered the troops into the city, but he felt that the Constitution and the laws had not been framed to deal with such a calamity.<sup>2</sup>

The responsibilities of command in the military are such that a leader is often called upon to make hard decisions under difficult and often life-or-death circumstances. If he makes a wrong decision he may later be called upon to accept the consequences of his actions. Good leaders know this, but often must take such risks because the results of inaction or indecisiveness may be as bad as or worse than a wrong decision made at a critical moment. There is little doubt that Frederick Funston was aware of the potentially grave consequences of his action, but he was accustomed to making decisions after several years of experience in important leadership positions, including several years in combat. While the deployment of Federal troops was illegal, it was the right action as circumstances would subsequently demonstrate, and Funston would be supported retroactively by the President. One cannot help suspecting, however, that Funston would have acted in the same manner even if punishment had been certain, for he was that type of leader.

The streets were filling with frightened people when General Funston encountered a police officer. Funston stated that he asked the

man how best to communicate with the mayor and with the chief of police and was told that the telephone system had been disrupted by the earthquake. The patrolman stated, however, that he expected both men to be at the Hall of Justice. Funston, thereupon, asked the officer to hurry to that location and to inform Chief of Police Jeremiah Dinan that all available troops were being ordered out and that they would be placed at his disposal.<sup>3</sup>

Having taken action to notify the appropriate municipal authorities, Funston set out to mobilize his forces. Since the telephone system was inoperative he attempted to flag down several automobiles, but to no avail, at which time he "indulged in the pious hope that they be burned out."<sup>4</sup> The general was thus forced to run and walk for about a mile to the Quartermaster's stable located on Pine Street, between Leavenworth and Hyde, where he ordered his carriage driver to saddle a horse and to deliver a note to the Presidio commander, Colonel Charles Morris, ordering him to assemble his troops and to report with them to the chief of police at the Hall of Justice. On the way to the Presidio, the rider was also to stop at Fort Mason and to provide the same instructions to Captain Meriwether L. Walker, Corps of Engineers, commanding Companies C and D, 1st Battalion of Engineers.<sup>5</sup> Funston returned home, making observations along the way, gave instructions to his family to pack and move to the Presidio, and then set out on foot for the Phelan Building, which was headquarters for his department and which was located in the city at the corner of Market and Grant.<sup>6</sup>

Enroute to the Phelan Building, Funston no doubt reflected upon what assets he had available and what use he would make of them. He had at his disposal approximately 1,700 men who were stationed at the

military posts on or near San Francisco Bay. These included ten companies of Coast Artillery; the 1st, 9th, and 24th Batteries of Field Artillery; the entire 22d Infantry Regiment; Troops I, K, and M, 14th Cavalry, and Company B, Hospital Corps.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, there were the two companies of Engineers at Fort Mason.

When he arrived at his headquarters officers from both the Department of California and the Pacific Division as well as clerical personnel were already on duty. Some were preparing records for their removal if this became necessary.

Funston then took steps to alert the rest of his command and he instructed Captain L. D. Wildman, Chief Signal Officer of the Department, to make contact with the commanding officer of Fort Miley and to order out those troops. Wildman was also to deliver to the master of the quartermaster steamer McDowell, orders for Colonel Alfred Reynolds, 22d Infantry, the commander of Fort McDowell on Angel Island.<sup>8</sup> Reynolds was to load his troops onto the boat, land at the end of Market Street, and then report to General Funston at the Phelan Building.

When Funston's mounted messenger arrived at Fort Mason at about 0645 he found Captain Walker asleep. Walker had awakened when the earthquake struck, but when he found that the damage to his quarters was very small, he decided that the earthquake must not have been a severe one and he returned to bed. He wasted no time after receiving his orders, however, and by 0715 five officers and 150 enlisted men, each in field gear and possessing twenty rounds of ball ammunition, were departing Fort Mason enroute to the Hall of Justice.<sup>9</sup> At about 0745 Captain Walker reported to Mayor Schmitz who "directed (him) to

protect public and private property, and to go to the extent of taking life if necessary."<sup>10</sup>

The arrival of these troops met with approval from the many people on the streets, according to General Funston.<sup>11</sup> Companies C and D were sent to patrol the banking district and Market Street to prevent looting. Their area of responsibility included the City Hall where \$7,000,000 of city funds were stored and they remained at these posts until 1800, 18 April when they were withdrawn to patrol Van Ness Avenue and an area to the West.<sup>12</sup>

By about 0730 mounted troops from the Presidio were observed moving up Van Ness Avenue enroute to the City Hall and by 0800 these soldiers began to arrive.<sup>13</sup> They composed the 10th, 29th, 38th, 66th, 67th, 70th, and 105th Companies of Coast Artillery, Troops I and K, 14th Cavalry, and the 1st, 9th, and 24th Field Batteries, all commanded by Colonel Charles Morris.<sup>14</sup> They were sent to guard the mint and the post office, and to assist the police in maintaining firelines and in patrolling the streets to prevent looting.

As for Captain Wildman, he was able to reach the Presidio by automobile and to telephone General Funston's orders to the commander of Fort Miley, Major C. H. Hunter, who soon departed with the 25th and 64th Companies of Coast Artillery. These troops had to march the five miles to the Phelan Building. They arrived at 1130 at which time a detachment of the 25th Company was sent to the United States Mint for guard duty and the rest of the unit marched to Ingleside to guard the county jail. The 64th Company was used in patrol duty.<sup>15</sup>

Captain Wildman also dispatched General Funston's note to Colonel Reynolds at Fort McDowell. Colonel Reynolds received his instructions

at about 0815. He assembled those forces immediately available, which consisted of the headquarters as well as the 1st Battalion, 22d Infantry, and set out for San Francisco, where he arrived at about 1000. These units were initially held in reserve before being utilized in patrol duty and in assisting the firemen. One company was detached to the custom house. Additionally, a contingent of the United States Marines commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Lincoln Karmany arrived from Mare Island and went to work performing patrol duty independently. They reported to General Funston on the 19th and were thereafter utilized by him.<sup>16</sup>

Sometime during the day, General Funston was able to telegraph the following to Washington (emphasis added):

OAKLAND PIER, CALIF., April 18

MILITARY SECRETARY, Washington

We are doing all possible to aid residents of San Francisco in present terrible calamity. Many thousands homeless. I shall do everything in my power to render assistance, and to trust to War Department to authorize any action I may need to take. Army casualties will be reported later. All important papers saved. We need tents and rations for 20,000 people.

FUNSTON<sup>17</sup>

This telegram was received in Washington at 0250 on 19 April and at 0400 Secretary of War Taft replied. (Emphasis again added.)



WASHINGTON, D.C., April 19, 1906

GENERAL FUNSTON, San Francisco, Cal:

Your dispatch calling for tents and rations for 20,000 people received. Have directed sending of 200,000 rations from Vancouver Barracks, nearest available point. Will give orders concerning tents immediately, and advise you within an hour. Do you need more troops? Of course, do everything possible to assist in keeping order, in saving life and property, and in relieving hunger by use of troops, material, and supplies under your orders. House passed enabling resolution to-day and Senate will to-morrow. All railway and telegraphic facilities surrounding San Francisco reported badly damaged and demoralized. Officers will accompany supplies where necessary, in order to insure as prompt forwarding and delivery as possible, with orders to keep in touch with you when practicable.

TAFT, Secretary of War<sup>18</sup>

The primary concerns of the military authorities on 18 April were assisting the police in patrolling the city and the fire department in attempting to halt the fire. It was during the morning of the 18th that Mayor Schmitz issued his first proclamation after the earthquake, probably after consultation with members of the "Citizens Committee of Fifty" which he had quickly appointed.

## PROCLAMATION

By the Mayor

The Federal troops, the members of the Regular Police Force, and all Special Police Officers have been authorized to kill any and all persons found engaged in looting or in the commission of any other crime.

I have directed all the Gas and Electric Lighting Companies not to turn on Gas or Electricity until

I order them to do so; you may therefore expect the city to remain in darkness for an indefinite time.

I request all citizens to remain at home from darkness until daylight of every night until order is restored.

I Warn all citizens of the danger of fire from damaged or destroyed chimneys, broken or leaking gas pipes or fixtures, or any like cause.

E. E. SCHMITZ, Mayor  
Dated, April 18, 1906<sup>19</sup>

This proclamation and the presence of armed troops helped to foster the erroneous conclusion on the part of many that martial law had been declared. This was never the case, however. Although the military played a vital and prominent role in enforcing law and order, it did so in a spirit of subordination to the civil authorities.<sup>20</sup>

By mid-morning on the 18th it was obvious that the fire danger was increasing and Acting Fire Chief Daugherty sent a message to the Presidio asking that the Army provide all available explosives, together with a detail to use them.<sup>21</sup> Because the earthquake had broken so many water mains, the department was helpless against the fire. Colonel Morris ordered the Post Ordnance Officer, Captain Le Vert Coleman, Artillery Corps, to provide the necessary explosives.<sup>22</sup> Coleman did as ordered and forth-eight barrels of powder were sent to the mayor in field battery caissons under the control of First Lieutenant Raymond W. Briggs, Artillery Corps. These caissons could not carry enough explosives, however, so two large wagons were found and loaded with more powder and about 300 pounds of dynamite procured from the civilian employees of the Engineer Department.<sup>23</sup>

Captain Coleman reported to Colonel Morris on O'Farrell Street with the two large, loaded wagons and was ordered to report to the mayor at the Hall of Justice. There he found Lieutenant Briggs, the mayor, and General Funston, plus a large supply of dynamite provided by the California Powder Works. General Funston and the mayor placed Captain Coleman in charge of handling all of the explosives.<sup>24</sup> As the fire continued to spread throughout the day, Coleman, Briggs, and party worked with the fire department to destroy buildings. During all that day, however, and until the afternoon of the 19th authority was given by city officials to only destroy those buildings in immediate contact with others already on fire. As a result, although fires were often halted at points, they consistently outflanked the firefighters and the battle had to begin again at some new location.<sup>25</sup>

During the evening of 18 April the mayor, the chief of police, and General Funston agreed that the city should be divided into districts in order to more efficiently conduct operations and so all that part of the city west of Van Ness Avenue was assigned to Regular troops. Colonel Morris was placed in command of this district. However, throughout the night many soldiers continued to support the fire and police departments in those areas in close proximity to the fire.<sup>26</sup> Essentially their tasks were as they had been during the day: guarding Federal facilities, helping the police to secure firelines, fighting fires, and patrolling streets. By this time many soldiers were also beginning to take part in relief assistance.

By the morning of the 19th the fire had eaten away at the heart of the city and had consumed the main portion of the wholesale and retail sections of town. It had burned much of the southern portion of

the city and (on the 18th) had destroyed the Army's Commissary Depot and the Quartermaster Depot with some \$2,000,000 in quartermaster stores.<sup>27</sup>

On the same day General Funston relocated the headquarters of the Pacific Division and that of the Department of California to Fort Mason and the staffs were intermingled. Also on the 19th additional troops arrived. These included Companies E and G, 22d Infantry, from Alcatraz Island; Companies K and M, 22d Infantry from the depot of recruits and casuals on Angel Island; and the 32d, 61st, and 68th Companies, Coast Artillery, from Fort Baker.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, orders were sent by telegraph to the commander of Vancouver Barracks to bring his entire garrison to San Francisco.<sup>29</sup> The United States Navy's Pacific Squadron also arrived on the 19th and arrangements were made for them to land at Fort Mason on the 20th.<sup>30</sup>

The story of the Navy's arrival is a tribute to the initiative of the commander of the Pacific Squadron, Admiral Caspar F. Goodrich. Goodrich was cruising twenty miles off San Diego on the morning of 18 April when the following wireless message was received from some unknown source:

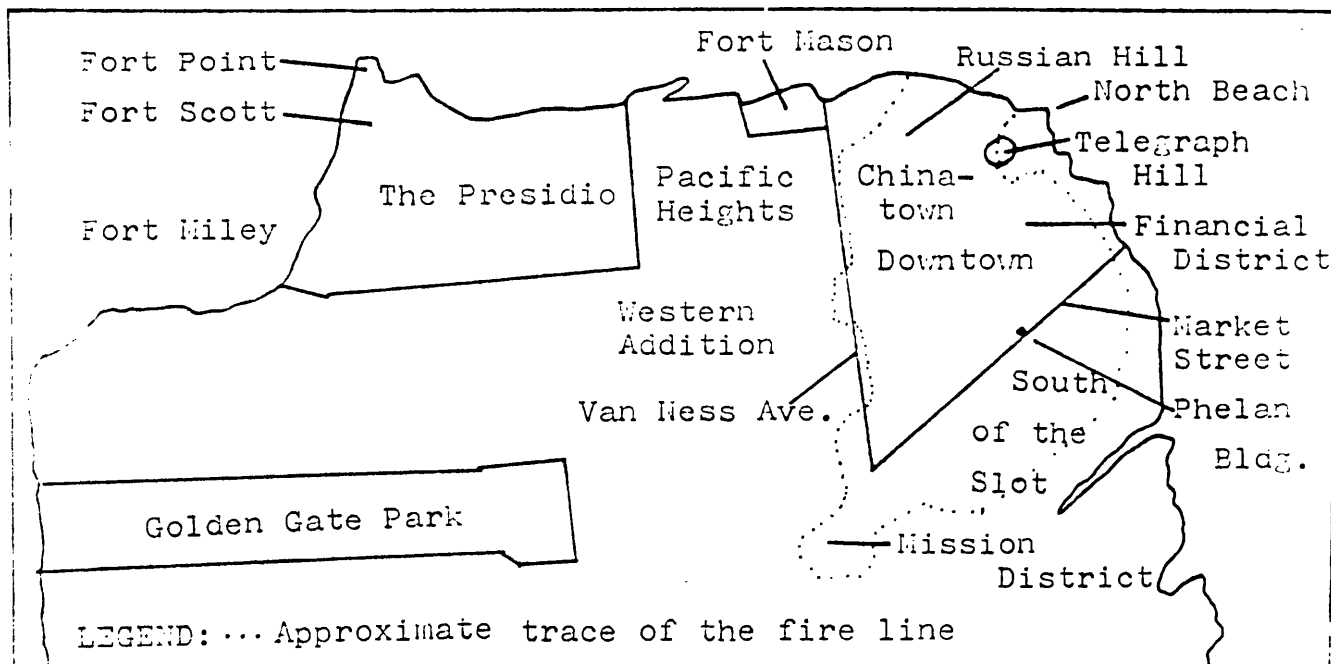
Earthquake at 5:24 AM, San Francisco. Nearly demolished city. Call Building is down, and Palace Hotel, both telegraph offices, Wells Fargo Building. All water pipes burst, city fire department helpless. City is in flames.<sup>31</sup>

Goodrich had no way of knowing if the message was accurate, but he gave the command to steam at full speed for San Francisco.

By the night of 19 April the fire situation had become more serious and the flames threatened to jump Van Ness Avenue, a boulevard

which could be considered to divide the city from east to west because of its width. Van Ness had been selected by the fire department as the location for a last ditch effort. The fire managed to cross Van Ness and began to move slowly westward, but the dynamite party under Captain Coleman was able to clear an area ahead of the flames and so to check its advance. In this effort, Colonel Morris was consulted because the area involved was in his district and on each occasion the general authority for demolitions as laid down by the Mayor was followed, according to Captain Coleman.<sup>32</sup> General Funston stated that in his opinion if it had not been for the work done there by Captain Coleman's party, the entire Western Addition of the city (which lay west of Van Ness Avenue) would have been destroyed.<sup>33</sup>

Funston's comment emphasizes one of the great contributions of the Army. San Francisco was then about seven miles wide from east to west (from the Ferry Building to the Cliff House) and it was about six miles from Fort Mason on the north to the southern city limits.<sup>34</sup> By the time that the fires burned themselves out the size of the burned district was about four miles from north to south and two and a half miles from east to west. A failure to stop the fire in the vicinity of Van Ness could have resulted in it moving unchecked to the ocean.



PRINCIPAL DISTRICTS ENDANGERED OR  
DESTROYED BY THE FIRE

While there were many who second-guessed the use of explosives by the military, and while there were undoubtedly instances in which fires were spread by burning materials hurled by an explosion, nevertheless, as Captain Coleman documents in his report, the use of explosives was undertaken only in accordance with guidance established by municipal authorities.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, Coleman, as an Artillery Officer and the Presidio Ordnance Officer, was no doubt proficient in the use of explosives as was his assistant, Lieutenant Briggs.

The salvation of the western part of San Francisco compensated for any mistake which may have been made by the demolition party which worked almost continuously from 18 April until 23 April, either fighting the fire or demolishing walls which were safety hazards. Finally,

it should be recalled that the Federal troops were not the only ones to use explosives. Firemen and National Guardsmen did as well.<sup>36</sup>

Captain Coleman also reported:

At the request of the city authorities, represented by the Chief of Police, the black powder, together with some giant powder (granular dynamite with active base, unsuited to use on account of its liability to ignite combustible articles in buildings where it might be used), was temporarily stored in the Fairmont Hotel inclosure for the use of the police and fire departments, who at that time contemplated using it as a last resort. This was about 6 PM the 18th. As I was opposed to the use of this kind of explosive on account of its great liability to ignite buildings demolished by it, I desired to remove it from the city, but the police desired it, and I therefore turned it over to them.<sup>37</sup>

Captain Coleman also stated that it was soon learned that dynamite produced the best results, so, except for a small amount of gun cotton (cellulose nitrate), no other explosive was used by the Army.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to the Van Ness area, demolitions could be heard elsewhere on 19 April and continuing into the 20th, particularly in the North Beach area and in the vicinity of Russian Hill as soldiers, firemen, and citizens continued to try to establish fire breaks. This was particularly true at the northern end of Van Ness because it was felt that the northwestern portion of the city including Fort Mason was endangered by the fire on the slopes of Russian Hill. The naval personnel previously mentioned were landed on the 20th. Led by Commander Charles J. Badger, USN, and numbering approximately 100 officers and men, they were used to demolish out-buildings at Fort Mason because of the threat to the post and for the next few days they were also used on guard duties and in fighting the fire along the waterfront.<sup>39</sup>

The fire in the North Beach area was fought partially by the 22d Infantry. At about 1400 on the 20th the flames forced this unit to the boats and they had to be evacuated to the Fort Mason dock.<sup>40</sup> Ultimately, most of the North Beach area was destroyed. The fire in the Russian Hill area had a frontage of about a half-mile. It occupied the attention of fire crews all day on the 20th and water from the bay at Fort Mason was pumped to fight it while crews also used backfiring and explosives to finally bring it under control.<sup>41</sup> General Funston's concern for this particular fire was expressed in the following telegram to Washington:

HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA  
Fort Mason, San Francisco, Cal, April 20, 1906

THE MILITARY SECRETARY, Washington, D.C.:

At this hour, 8:30 P.M., a hard and probably successful fight is being made to save western part of city. Fort Mason where army headquarters have been established, may go, but we will know in an hour. Supplies arriving and are being distributed to homeless people camped in parks, military reservations, and vacant spaces. Troops, police, and firemen almost exhausted by three days' terrible work. Conduct of people in general has been admirable, though in some cases looters have been shot. Admiral Goodrich has landed all available men from fleet and placed under my orders. Seventy cavalry, under Major Benson, guarding ruins of banks, where there are many millions in vaults. Impossible as yet to learn of individuals for whom you inquired. Most casualties were in poorer districts, south of Market street. Not many killed in better portions of city.

FUNSTON, Commanding<sup>42</sup>

By the 21st the Western Addition was out of danger, but the fire in the Russian Hill area turned eastward and traveled toward the waterfront and a very great effort was expended on fighting this new









danger. Sailors, the Army Transport Tug Slocum, and the Army Tug McDowell were used to assist in fighting this fire.<sup>43</sup> Also by the 21st the National Guard had arrived<sup>44</sup> as had the headquarters and two battalions of the 22d Infantry from the Presidio of Monterey, California.<sup>45</sup> Besides the Army, now deployed in San Francisco were members of the Navy, the Marine Corps, the California National Guard, and approximately 500 police, as well as some armed members of a citizens' committee.<sup>46</sup>

Previously these various forces had been committed to the city where circumstances required, and they were thus intermingled so that no coherent scheme emerged. The authorities determined to bring some order out of this situation and a conference was held on the 21st at Fort Mason between Mayor Schmitz, Brigadier General Funston, Brigadier General Koster of the California National Guard, and Chief of Police Dinan.<sup>47</sup> The participants at this meeting agreed to divide the city into three areas - one under control of the police, one under control of the National Guard, and one under the control of the Federal troops, which included the naval forces. That area designated as being the responsibility of the Federal forces included more than half the population of San Francisco and all the banking and commercial houses with their vaults. The Post Office was also guarded by the troops although it was outside the actual boundaries of the Federal district.<sup>48</sup>

General Funston proceeded to issue General Orders Number Twelve, dated 22 April 1906 (See Appendix 1) in which he divided the area under Federal control into six districts.<sup>49</sup> These orders specified the area of responsibility, the location of the headquarters, appointed the

# SAN FRANCISCO FIRE

-  Starting point of major fires
  -  Course of fires
  -  First day
  -  Second day
  -  Third and fourth days
  -  Area of fire
- Scale  
0 500 1000 2000 3000 4000  
Feet

- 1 Post Office
- 2 Emporium
- 3 Call Building
- 4 Palace Hotel
- 5 Flood Building
- 6 St. Francis Hotel
- 7 Union Square
- 8 Mills Building
- 9 Merchant's Exchange
- 10 Fairmont Hotel
- 11 Portsmouth Square
- 12 Hall of Justice
- 13 Monkey Block
- 14 Appraisers Building
- 15 "House of the Flag"
- 16 Lafayette Square
- 17 City Hall
- 18 Ferry Building
- 19 Mint
- 20 Old St. Mary's
- 21 Mission Dolores



MAP OF THE BURNED AREA IN SAN FRANCISCO

commanding officers, and specified the troops assigned to each district. The orders also established a provost guard (soldiers detailed to perform military police duties) as there was not at that time a Military Police Corps in the Army. The provost guard was composed of two troops of the 14th Cavalry, commanded by Major H. C. Benson. The Provost Guard had the mobility to be able to rapidly respond to emergencies. The location for the headquarters of this force was designated at Fort Mason.

The authorities had found it necessary to confiscate some privately owned vehicles, but General Orders Number Twelve prohibited the seizure of vehicles by anyone unless that person possessed written authorization signed by Mayor Schmitz or General Funston. It also established the period between sunset and 2200 as the only time that lights could be used and it laid down stringent requirements for making fires. While oil stoves were allowed, stoves, grates, or furnaces which used chimneys could only be operated if a certificate had been issued by an authorized inspector attesting to the good condition of the chimney. The order cautioned the soldiers to be temperate in their actions in dealing with the citizenry and it asked for the assistance of the population in conserving rather than hoarding food supplies, tentage, and blankets. It also sought to impress upon them the absolute necessity of maintaining sanitation. It is clear that authorities were worried about disease. Additionally, it was specified that "all persons except suspicious characters would be permitted to pass sentinels without interruption provided they are orderly and do not destroy or otherwise molest or appropriate property not their own."<sup>50</sup>

While martial law was never declared, the instructions cited above, when considered with the previously quoted proclamation of Mayor Schmitz on 18 April, obviously tasked the military with some significant duties and it is appropriate, therefore, to pause and to discuss the performance of those tasks.

As was shown at the outset, even though General Funston's decision to order in Federal troops was an arbitrary one, he immediately placed them at the disposal of the municipal authorities. This was especially true in the case of the dynamite party, which responded to a request by the acting fire chief and which utilized explosives in every case by authority derived from the mayor through his duly authorized representative or from the mayor himself.<sup>51</sup> Funston emphasized that he was working with civilian authorities in a telegram to Washington on 19 April which read in part: "Troops have been aiding police patrolling and maintaining order. Martial law has not been declared. Working in conjunction with civil authorities."<sup>52</sup> Additionally, the official report submitted by Major General Greely makes it clear that the Army was in San Francisco to assist the municipal authorities and that harmonious relations existed between the two.<sup>53</sup> It is clear from the official report, from articles in journals of the day,<sup>54</sup> and from the commendations which the military received from the city and state governments, that the Army's performance was acceptable at that time and that the military did not "take control" of San Francisco.

In enforcing fire lines and in attempting to clear areas endangered by the fire, soldiers no doubt ordered many unwilling citizens away from their homes when they wanted to remain to fight the fire or to save items of personal property. Undoubtedly, this couldn't be

helped, given the number of soldiers involved, the requirement for discipline and the importance of saving lives over property, but hard feelings resulted nevertheless.<sup>55</sup>

Given the uncertainty and fear which resulted from the earthquake and fire, it was natural that rumors would abound. Some of these stories dealt with the rest of the country: "Chicago is under water...Seattle and Portland wiped out by tidal wave...Los Angeles completely destroyed by quake."<sup>56</sup> Some of the rumors, however, dealt with punishment meted out to looters by Federal troops and such stories found their way into the newspapers. A story in the San Francisco Examiner on 21 April 1906 is illustrative:

#### THUGS ARE KILLED BY SOLDIERS

Thugs attempting to take advantage of the stricken city and ply their trade among the homeless thousands that throng the public squares and parks meet with swift and terrible justice. Nine thieves were shot to death yesterday by soldiers, while one was seriously wounded and lodged in the guardhouse in the Presidio.

Lieutenant McAllister of the Thirtieth Company, Coast Artillery, was killed on upper Market Street yesterday noon in a battle with six thieves, four of whom were immediately shot down by the troops. The sixth man escaped.

At 10 o'clock a.m. a Coast Artilleryman and an infantry private shot three men caught looting. They were instantly killed.

A negro was slain by a soldier in Jefferson Square this morning. The man attempted to steal an earring from a woman.<sup>57</sup>

Another article in the San Francisco Examiner on the next day reported the shooting of twenty looters. An additional man was reported to have been wounded when he sought to evade arrest. Still another man caught looting was reported to have been immediately shot

dead by a soldier without warning and he was left where he lay with a placard pinned to his body as an example to others.<sup>58</sup>

Other stories may be found in the San Francisco Examiner for 23 April. An article entitled "T. P. Riordan Shot Dead," told the story of the shooting of a man by a soldier who had allegedly ordered him to throw away a bottle of whiskey.<sup>59</sup> Directly below this article was another which related how two men were shot by soldiers at the Presidio. One was allegedly prowling about in the vicinity of General Funston's quarters.<sup>60</sup> Still another story related the details of a gunfight which a Japanese male started with several soldiers and which resulted in his death.<sup>61</sup> It is interesting to note that although many stories attributed shootings to the soldiers, they were still favorable to the Army.

That such stories were not always true may be due to the calamitous situation which prevailed, to the widespread uncertainty and fear which quite naturally gave way to rumors, and, perhaps, to less objectivity and accuracy on the part of journalists who were laboring under extreme difficulty to get newspapers to the population. Many stories later turned out to be fictitious and without merit as was attested by the San Francisco Examiner on 28 April 1906 in an editorial which praised the Army and which was entitled, "What San Francisco Owe the Regulars." This article read in part:

There have been many rumors of wanton slaughter by the troops. These tales, when run down, turn out to be nothing more than the hysterical statements of irresponsible people. It is perfectly true that some men were shot by the soldiers, but they were men who needed shooting. The citizens have been in far more danger at the hands of their self-appointed guards and vigilance committees than they ever were from the troops.<sup>62</sup>

In a 1976 article in the California Historical Quarterly entitled "The California National Guard in the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906," James J. Hudson discussed the stories of shootings attributed to National Guardsmen. He reported that despite the circulation of wild stories to the contrary, only three cases of death by shooting were found by the San Francisco Coroner's Office.<sup>63</sup> In the previously cited case of the man named Riordan, the soldier mentioned was determined to have been a Guardsman and the National Guard version of the shooting was different. The Judge Advocate's investigation found the shooting to have been justified and the soldier was freed after a trial in civil court.<sup>64</sup>

Major General Greely's report contains the official and most authoritative data on shootings by soldiers. Only nine deaths were found to have been caused by violence. The report read in part:

...during such a prolonged and desperate condition of affairs there were but 9 deaths by violence. All killed were men, and 4 of the cases have been the subject of investigation under the civil law. Of these 9 victims, 2 were killed by members of the National Guard of California, 1 was shot by members of a so-called citizens' vigilance committee, 1 by a police officer for looting, and 1 through the combined action of a special police officer and a marine. The remaining 4 deaths of unknown parties occurred at places not occupied by the Regular Army. No complaint has reached these headquarters that, among the tens of thousands of persons whom it became the duty of the soldiers of the Regular Establishment to restrict in personal movements during the progress of the fire, any person was violently treated or seriously injured.<sup>65</sup>

There were apparently countless occasions in which individual soldiers were called upon to make decisions concerning situations not covered by orders. In that regard, two writers of that day praised the

military when they reported that soldiers helped to close bars and liquor stores and to pour their stock into the streets. They also reported that troops kept some greedy store owners from raising prices and that they opened other stores to confiscate and distribute food. They also helped some store owners to distribute goods and they assisted others in controlling shoppers who were attempting to hoard supplies.<sup>66</sup>

The remarks concerning the destruction of liquor are true. After the earthquake, claims for about \$30,000 were submitted against the Army and the matter was forwarded to Congress by Secretary of War Taft on 21 December 1906.<sup>67</sup> Major General Greely explained the Army's role in the following manner:

As regards the destruction of liquor, proceedings were taken under the authority of the Mayor of San Francisco. Upon application from the Commanding Officer of a district, General Funston sanctioned the promulgation of an order for the destruction of liquor, believing, as he informed me, that the case in point referred to open saloons or to liquor in the hands of persons in the streets. In nearly every instance proceedings under this order were conducted without violence and at places where saloons were selling liquor openly. Unfortunately in a few cases, the unjustifiable action was taken of breaking open saloons and destroying their contents. This excess of zeal in the interests of public order and under such disturbed and dangerous conditions should not be judged with undue severity.<sup>68</sup>

The district commander referred to was Colonel Charles Morris. When he sought destruction authority he had in mind all liquors within his district, although General Funston apparently did not realize this. In accordance with Colonel Morris' orders, 131 separate parcels of liquor amounting to approximately \$30,000 dollars in value were seized and destroyed.<sup>69</sup> For this reason, Secretary Taft recommended



that the claims be allowed.<sup>70</sup> Major Carroll A. Devol wrote at the time that "it would have been absolutely impossible to have kept adequate order among the great mass of refugees, some of whom were desperate and some of whom were lawless characters if they could have obtained liquor."<sup>71</sup> The Greely report also verified that other private property, such as food and transportation - particularly automobiles - were impressed in cases where there was believed to be an urgent public need.<sup>72</sup>

Another way in which the Army assisted the civilian authorities was in the confinement of prisoners. When the jails were destroyed by fire, 176 civilian prisoners were brought to the military prison located on Alcatraz where they remained in temporary confinement until removed by local authorities on 28 April.<sup>73</sup>

On 22 April additional troops, consisting of the headquarters and ten companies of the 14th Infantry, arrived from Vancouver Barracks, to be joined by the 17th and 18th Field Artillery Batteries on the next day.<sup>74</sup> Also on the 22nd, Major General Greely returned to the Bay Area, but because he was unable to reach Fort Mason, he spent the night on the Fish Commission steamer Albatross. During this time he was briefed on the situation as it existed, with particular emphasis being placed on the orders in force, the arrangement of forces, and the cooperation which existed in regard to the assistance which had already been provided.<sup>75</sup>

The next morning he assumed command from General Funston, who by that time had worked fifty consecutive hours without sleep and was in a state of near physical and mental collapse. Many of his officers and men were in a similar condition, according to Greely.<sup>76</sup>

One of the first issues facing Major General Greely was the posse comitatus violation, for he recognized that the Army was performing nonmilitary duties. As a result, his orders and instructions were issued in a spirit of complete subordination to civilian control. He insured that the early military restrictions on civilian movements were removed. This included abolition of the military pass system. Greely sought to impress upon his troops that they were acting as a posse comitatus and that civil orders issued by the mayor should be obeyed. He forbade his soldiers to impress laborers, destroy property, or confiscate property.<sup>77</sup> Apparently, General Greely was not concerned that Federal troops were acting as a posse comitatus because the President and the Secretary of War had backed up General Funston's action, but he wanted to make absolutely sure that the Army acted in support of civil authority and not on its own.

Perhaps to emphasize the need for close coordination and harmony between civil and military authorities, on 23 April the mayor's office was moved to Fort Mason, so that both the military and the civil officials could work in close proximity with each other in coordinating the myriad of responsibilities associated with the relief. Between the two, policy was co-ordinated so that military orders were supreme in military matters to include the guarding of Federal buildings and property. In regards to all other matters, it was established that the civil authorities were supreme and that the Army was there to assist them. The military was allowed to arrest civilians, but they were to be turned over to municipal authorities. It was further agreed that the commanding general and the mayor would both sign proclamations that affected the public.<sup>78</sup>

The return of Major General Greely coincided with the end of the fire and what had been the first phase of Army operations. Although relief efforts had begun on the first day, General Funston's primary concerns had been with assisting the municipal authorities with saving the city from the fire and with the maintenance of public order. Hereafter the emphasis shifted full-force to helping to relieve the problems caused by the earthquake and fire. Greely's arrival, therefore, appropriately closes out the first phase of the story and ushers in a discussion of the relief effort.

## Chapter IV

Notes

<sup>1</sup>The time of 0516 is at variance with the official time of 0512 reported in Chapter III. An obvious explanation is that the General's watch was incorrect. Brigadier General Funston's official account is found with Major General Greely's special report in ARWD, 1906, I, 91-97. He also wrote an article for the public, detailing his activities. See Frederick Funston, "How the Army Worked to Save San Francisco," Cosmopolitan, July 1906, 239-248. There is only a limited amount of information found in General Funston's report as Department of California commander. See ARWD, 1906, III, 179-191.

<sup>2</sup>"Men Who Were Heroes in San Francisco Fire," New York Times, 8 May 1906, 2.

<sup>3</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 91-92.

<sup>4</sup>Funston, "How the Army Worked to Save San Francisco," Cosmopolitan, 240-242.

<sup>5</sup>Captain Walker's official report may be found in ARWD, 1906, I, 220-223.

<sup>6</sup>The Funston home was subsequently destroyed by fire.

<sup>7</sup>Funston, "How the Army Worked to Save San Francisco," Cosmopolitan, July 1906, 239.

<sup>8</sup>The details regarding transmission of the message to Fort McDowell are as reported in ARWD, 1906, I, 92. In his article for Cosmopolitan, however, General Funston stated that verbal orders were transmitted to Colonel Reynolds via the Army-tug Slocum. Colonel Reynolds also indentified the Slocum. See Henry E. Noyes, "An Earthquake Chronicle," Journal of the Military Service Institution of the United States, 39 (1906), 106. (Hereafter abbreviated as JMSI.) The contradiction is unimportant.

<sup>9</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 220.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid, I, 92.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., I, 220-221. At noon on 19 April the engineers were withdrawn. Therefore, they were used primarily in connection with the relief effort.

<sup>13</sup>Noyes, "An Earthquake Chronicle," JMSI, 39 (1906), 104.

<sup>14</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 92. An interesting, but perhaps questionable, account of how Colonel Morris was notified of General Funston's requirements is that of Gordon Thomas and Max Morgan Witts, The San Francisco Earthquake (New York: 1971), 91-92. They report that General Funston directed his carriage driver to mount Funston's saddle horse to carry messages to Captain Walker and Colonel Morris. They then identify the rider as a Lieutenant Long. They state that Long aroused Captain Walker at Fort Mason and that by 0700 he (Long)

had reached the Presidio quarters of Colonel Charles Morris and was knocking hard on his front door. It was finally opened by Morris himself. Long handed him Funston's orders: "By the time he had finished, the old gentleman was beside himself with rage." Morris controlled his temper long enough to say: "Go back and tell that newspaperman (Funston) that he had better look up his army regulations, and there he will find that nobody but the President of the United States in person can order regular troops into any city!"

With that he slammed the front door shut. Lieutenant Long decided that the time had now come for him, too, to break Army regulations. He ordered the Presidio's bugler to sound the call to arms. In minutes the garrison had assembled. Before "anyone could interfere," Long gave the command, "Fours left!" and the soldiers marched toward San Francisco.

Left unexplained is how the carriage driver of General Funston's report became an Army lieutenant. (Captain Walker wrote that he was met at his door by a civilian who communicated Funston's instructions. See ARWD, 1906, I, 220.) Also left unexplained is how Lieutenant Long was able to assemble the Presidio garrison without any interference from its commander or the other officers. Furthermore, on page 92, Thomas and Witts incorrectly identify these troops as including the 22d Infantry Regiment, which was actually commanded by Colonel Reynolds on Angel Island. They do not explain how Colonel Morris arrived in the city although General Greely's report indicates that Morris played a prominent role in San Francisco on 18 April.

The Thomas and Witts book is generally critical of General Funston. Unfortunately, while the authors make ample use of quotation marks, they do not footnote.

<sup>15</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 92.

<sup>16</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 95.

<sup>17</sup>U.S. Congress, House, Message from the President of the United States (Relief for San Francisco), H. Doc. 714, 59th Cong., 1st sess., 1906, 5. (Hereafter cited as U.S. Congress, H. Doc. 714, page).

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Funston, "How the Army Worked to Save San Francisco," Cosmopolitan, July 1906, 246. Frank W. Aitken and Edward Hilton stated in 1906 that when the Mayor's proclamation was sent to a printing plant to be printed there was no power, so soldiers stationed at the doors impressed passing citizens in relays until 5,000 copies had been run off. A History of the Earthquake and Fire in San Francisco (San Francisco: 1906), 99-100.

<sup>20</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 101, 103-104. See also Carroll A. Devol, "The Army in the San Francisco Disaster," Journal of the United States Infantry Association, 4 (July 1907), 61. (Hereafter cited as Infantry Journal.)

<sup>21</sup>Fire Chief Dennis T. Sullivan of San Francisco was fatally injured during the earthquake and died a short time later.

<sup>22</sup>Captain Coleman's official report of the operations of the dynamite party under his charge is found in ARWD, 1906, I, 223-235. Obviously because of the sensitivity regarding the destruction of private property by the Army, his report is a well-documented one, "citing the authority given for the demolitions, which was in every case derived from the Mayor of San Francisco, through his duly authorized representative, or from the Mayor in person." (Page 223). In his report he divides the dynamiting into two separate and distinct phases. Phase One was involved with attempting to halt the fire and extended from about 0900 on 18 April until about 1500 on 21 April. Phase Two was concerned with the destruction of those walls left standing along thoroughfares and which were deemed by civil authorities to constitute a safety hazard.

Critics of the use of explosives often focus on the Army without realizing that they were used by many others, including the National Guard, the Police and Fire Departments, and by civilian volunteers helping to fight the fire.

<sup>23</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 93.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., I, 224.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., I, 93-94.

<sup>27</sup>Devol, "The Army in the San Francisco Disaster," Infantry Journal, 4 (July 1907), 63.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 61; ARWD, 1906 I, 94.

<sup>29</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 94.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., I, 94-95.

<sup>31</sup>Aitken and Hilton, 150. During the 1870's and 1880's Goodrich gained a reputation as one of the Navy's intellectuals. He was president of the Naval War College and was elected and served as president of the U.S. Naval Institute from 1905-1909. His Pacific Squadron flagship, the Chicago, was the last ship commanded by naval historian and philosopher Alfred Thayer Mahan.

<sup>32</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 225.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 95. The land front of the fire line extended for 9.34 miles and faced 527 buildings of which 506 were wood. Approximately twenty percent of the frontage was on wide streets; the rest was on ordinary streets. See Charles J. O'Conner et al., San Francisco Relief Survey, (New York, 1913), 5. The twenty percent was primarily along Van Ness Avenue. It was a very important percentage, however, because it lay in the principal direction of landward movement for a while.

<sup>34</sup>Devol, "The Army in the San Francisco Disaster," Infantry Journal, 4 (July 1907), 59.

<sup>35</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 223-235.

<sup>36</sup>James J. Hudson, "The California National Guard in the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906," California Historical Quarterly 55 (Summer 1976) 138, 142.

<sup>37</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 224-225.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., I, 224.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., I, 95.

<sup>40</sup>Noyes, "An Earthquake Chronicle," JMSI, 39 (1906), 107.

<sup>41</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 95.

<sup>42</sup>U.S. Congress, H. Doc. 714, 10. General Greely's report in ARWD, 1906, I, does not specify where the casualties occurred nor does the San Francisco Relief Survey.

<sup>43</sup>Devol, "The Army in the San Francisco Disaster," Infantry Journal, 4 (July 1907), 66.

<sup>44</sup>Actually, members of the California National Guard first went into action on 18 April. The last units were not relieved from active service until 31 May 1906. As the focus of this paper is on the Regular Army, attention is paid to the National Guard only where deemed appropriate in relation to the Federal forces. Readers interested in learning more about the Guard's role should consult the previously cited California Historical Quarterly article by James J. Hudson. It presents in a balanced manner the controversy which arose between Mayor Schmitz and California Governor Pardee over the use of the Guard, as well as the criticisms made against that organization.

<sup>45</sup>Devol, "The Army in the San Francisco Disaster," Infantry Journal, 4 (July 1907), 62.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., 66.

<sup>47</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 95.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>See also ARWD, 1906, I, 141-143. General Orders Number Twelve were amended on 24 April 1906 by General Orders Number Thirteen. (See ARWD, 1906, I, 143-144.) These orders specified the retention of certain responsibilities by the division headquarters, constituted the Division Reserve, and modified the area covered by the Sixth District. General Orders Number Twelve were also printed for the information of the public in the San Francisco Examiner on 23 April 1906 on page 3.

<sup>50</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 143.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., I, 223.

<sup>52</sup>U.S. Congress, H. Doc. 714, 7.

<sup>53</sup>See, for example, ARWD, 1906, I, 92, 93, 101, 103-105, 107.

<sup>54</sup>See, for example, Devol, "The Army in the San Francisco Disaster," Infantry Journal, 4 (July 1907) and Noyes, "An Earthquake Chronicle," JSMI, 39 (1906).

<sup>55</sup>William Bronson discusses this issue in The Earth Shook, The Sky Burned (Garden City, N.Y.: 1959), 74.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 51. "Other reports told of animals swallowed up by cracks in the earth, looters wantonly shot in their tracks by the Federal Troops, miscreants hanged in public squares and ghouls found cutting the fingers and ears off corpses for the rings and earrings attached. During the days of the fire there was absolutely no way to confirm or deny such stories."

<sup>57</sup>"Thugs Are Killed By Soldiers," San Francisco Examiner, 21 April 1906, 2.

<sup>58</sup>"Kill 20 Looters In Hour," San Francisco Examiner, 22 April 1906, 3.

<sup>59</sup>"T. P. Riordan Shot Dead," San Francisco Examiner, 23 April 1906, 1.

<sup>60</sup>"Killed by Presidio Soldiers," San Francisco Examiner, 23 April 1906, 1.



61 "JAP Does Battle With Soldiers," San Francisco Examiner, 23 April 1906, 2.

62 "What San Francisco Owes the Regulars," San Francisco Examiner, 28 April 1906, 16. (Editorial page)

63 Hudson, "The California National Guard in the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906," California Historical Quarterly, 55 (Summer 1976), 146.

64 Ibid.

65 ARWD, 1906, I, 98.

66 Aitken and Hilton, 92.

67 U.S. Congress, House, Claims for Liquors Destroyed by Federal Authority, H. Doc. 376, 59th Cong., 2d sess., 1906, 1.

68 ARWD, 1906, I, 98-99.

69 U.S. Congress, H. Doc. 376, 4.

70 Ibid., 2.

71 Devol, "The Army in the San Francisco Disaster," Infantry Journal, 4 (July 1907), 86.

72 ARWD, 1906, I, 98.

73 Ibid., I, 188.

74 Devol, "The Army in the San Francisco Disaster," Infantry Journal, 4 (July 1907), 62.

75 ARWD, 1906, I, 99.

76 Ibid., I, 99-100.

77 Ibid., I, 101.

78 Devol, "The Army in the San Francisco Disaster," Infantry Journal, 4 (July 1907), 67.

## CHAPTER V

### THE RELIEF EFFORT

Although the greatest concern for the first few days was with keeping the fire from totally destroying San Francisco, authorities were soon faced with the awesome task of finding food, clothing, and shelter for more than 325,000 people while also providing medical assistance to the sick and injured.<sup>1</sup> There existed no organization to attend to such problems and one had to be created.

Relief assistance began almost immediately on 18 April. In the first few days assistance was relatively unstructured, was haphazardly administered amidst chaotic conditions, and was provided by many well-meaning groups, albeit in an uncoordinated manner. Individuals and organizations from all over the United States responded with money, supplies, and offers of assistance, but there was no systematic determination of exactly what was needed or in what quantity it was required. Some of this aid was sent to municipal authorities and some was sent to private groups. Eventually an organizational structure developed to coordinate the relief effort and it evolved from an ad hoc form in April 1906 to an incorporated status in July, shortly after the Army withdrew.

The ways in which the Army provided assistance are many and varied; some are of great interest in their own right, such as the manner in which relief supplies were distributed or the control of

refugee camps by Army officers - "benevolent despots" as one author referred to them.<sup>2</sup> The needs of the people in the first days before a viable relief organization was established were met in a variety of ways. Shelter was often a make-do arrangement and photographs of the day show a variety of lean-tos and other rudimentary structures built from whatever materials were at hand. From the very start the Army provided all the tents at its disposal, but in the interests of time they were haphazardly placed with little thought being given to systematically locating them as would later be the case under the camp system.

Food was the most immediate need. In many cases authorities broke into grocery stores and issued food to the population on the spot - a "first come, first served" type of arrangement.<sup>3</sup> Whatever was available from almost any source was issued while supplies lasted, but this was hardly a way of guaranteeing a balanced diet. Concern for nutritional balance would come later with organization. Those bakeries which were operational ran at full capacity. Many of the people who were fed in the first few days no doubt received only bread - and perhaps coffee if it was available. As food supplies began to arrive from outlying areas and from across the country they were unloaded from "boat to dock, docks to teams and from teams into the hands of the people."<sup>4</sup> In the absence of an organized system of publicly known relief stations not everyone was fed.

People across California and the United States were quick to respond with food and other supplies, but in the initial days after the earthquake the exact contents of shipments were not always known and shipments were not necessarily coordinated with requirements except in

a gross way. Bread, for example, was a welcome commodity and was sent by many, including the citizens of Ogden, Utah, where the people ate no bread for days and, instead, sent their supplies to San Francisco.<sup>5</sup> There was too much bread and flour, however, and too many potatoes in relation to other types of food needed. So strict were the provisions against indoor cooking fires that all the potatoes could not have been cooked, even had the supply been less. Many were sold by relief authorities and the money spent where it could do the most good. This was also the case with surplus flour which had to be sold for lack of storage space, but often not without complaints from donors. The relief committee in Minneapolis, for example, wanted the refugees to receive its flour, not flour which would be purchased later with money raised from the sale of Minneapolis flour.<sup>6</sup>

Clothing was another problem and in the early days needs were met in the same way as those for food. When a heavy rain fell on 23 April, ponchos were passed out by the Army. Quite properly, the emphasis was on meeting the immediate needs of as many people as possible. But again, other than for those who happened to be close to the issue point, there was little chance for an equitable distribution, nor was there an opportunity for a proper accounting of such property as was issued.

Transportation was another area of concern. Teams were scarce in the city and the streetcar system had been interrupted. Transportation was vital if relief supplies were to be moved, but in the days before the Army took charge it was uncoordinated and resulted in a waste of relief funds. When Captain Peter Murray took over the civilian system of relief transportation on 2 May, he discovered that no less than 557

hired teams were engaged in transportation. Within forty-eight hours he was able to organize transportation requirements and assets so as to lay off 418 teams at a savings of \$3,519 per day.<sup>7</sup> This also resulted in more teams being available elsewhere.

The control of the expenditure of funds was no less disorganized. On 27 April there were no government funds under the control of General Greely, but the depot quartermaster, the medical supply officer, and the chief signal officer had money which could be spent without any requirement for authorization by the General. They were spending money, and other officers were incurring obligations in the turmoil of the times. In each case, officers were acting under the assumption that such expenditures would later be authorized and obligations paid.<sup>8</sup> The situation required action and they undoubtedly did what they felt was in the public interest, but there was no centralization of control.

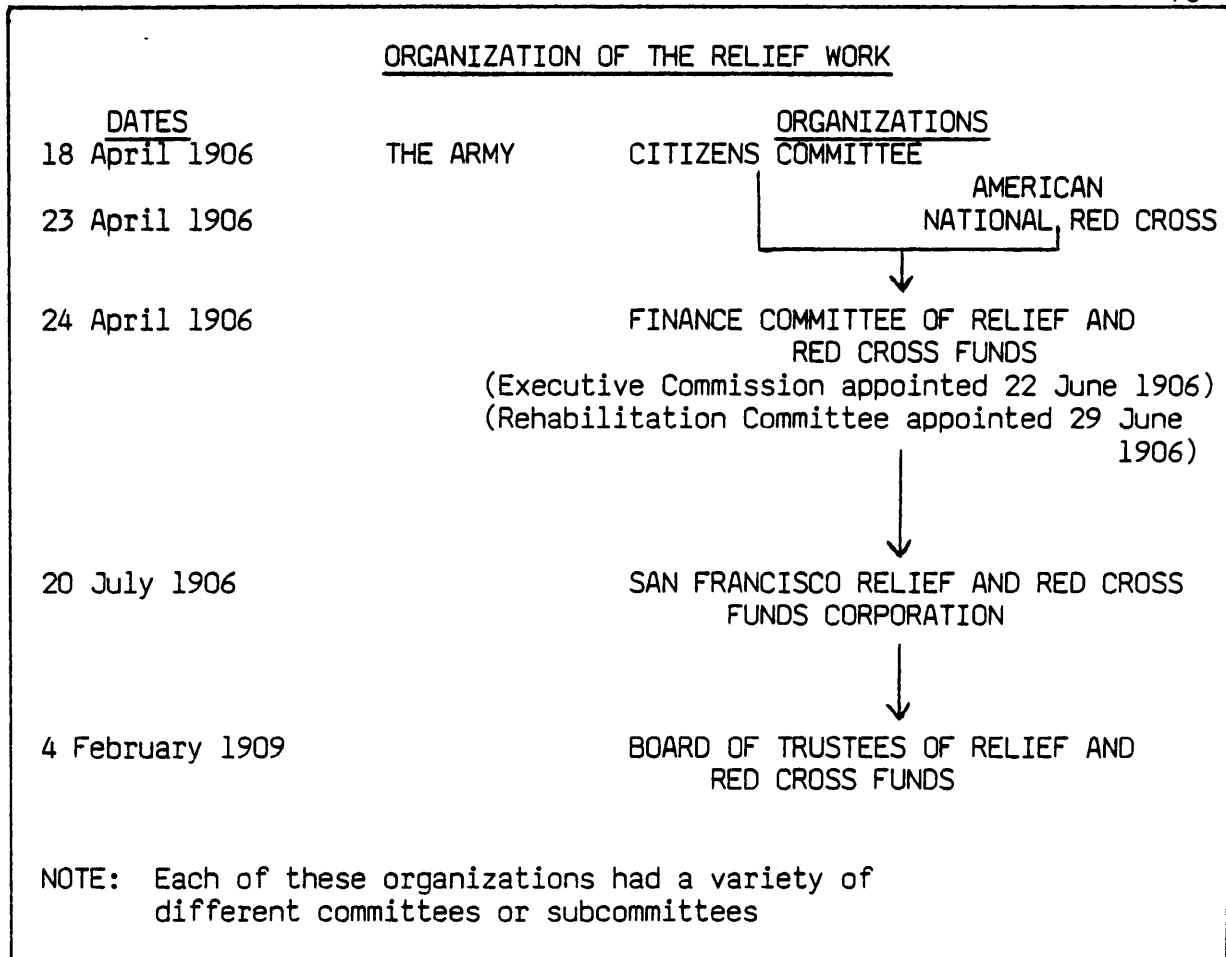
Expenditures by civilians were no less uncoordinated with a variety of independent groups making disbursements in an uncoordinated manner. Such a situation would have been difficult to control in any disaster, but properly centralized direction was clearly needed to provide for the common good. As with the other subjects mentioned - shelter, food distribution, coordination of supply requirements with donors, clothing, and transportation - such centralized direction could only come about if efforts were made to organize the relief effort in order to establish a framework by which the problems caused by the earthquake and fire could be solved.

Upon the return of Major General Greely to San Francisco, duties were divided between him and Brigadier General Funston. As commander

of the Department of California, Funston was able to concentrate on military matters pertaining to the forces assigned or attached to his command. Greely, on the other hand, exercised general control as Division Commander and direct supervision of the Army's relief operations.<sup>9</sup>

Other than stopping the spread of the fire, Greely felt that the most important task was "the formation and administration of an.... adequate system of relief...."<sup>10</sup> Gradually in the first few days the Army and General Greely assumed more and more relief responsibilities, but as part of an overall relief effort, not in a vacuum. Army authorities and soldiers cooperated with civilians and in his earliest conferences with Mayor Schmitz, Greely let it be known that the military force was to be strictly subordinate to the civil authorities.<sup>11</sup> Formal Army participation in the relief effort was related to the civil organizational structure and this framework had its beginning on the very day that the earthquake struck.

At 0645 on 18 April 1906, as the fires were spreading in San Francisco, Mayor Schmitz and a group of the leading citizens met at the Hall of Justice. As the extent of damages became more and more apparent it became obvious that the existing city agencies were simply not equipped to cope with the disaster. Not only were city facilities destroyed or damaged, and many city employees personally affected, but the catastrophe was of such magnitude as to require special efforts.



#### THE SUCCESSION OF ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED WITH RELIEF

Eugene Schmitz was a corrupt politician, viewed by many as merely the spokesman for political boss Abraham Ruef. This had certainly been true before April 1906, but the period of time following the earthquake proved to be the mayor's finest hour - one in which he demonstrated "a degree of executive ability and of genius for improvisation much greater than he or anyone else had known that he possessed."<sup>12</sup> The mayor quickly assumed control of the municipal government and issued his proclamations to shoot looters and to close places selling liquor. He also named a Citizens' Committee, popularly called the "Committee of

Fifty." He ignored the corrupt members on the city's Board of Supervisors and, instead, appointed some of San Francisco's most prominent citizens, including former Mayor James D. Phelan, a reformer, and the man who Schmitz had succeeded in 1901; sugar magnate Rudolph Spreckels; and Francis J. Heney, an able young attorney and former special United States prosecutor.<sup>13</sup> Prior to the earthquake, these three and others had worked for the ultimate prosecution of Ruef and Schmitz, and it is to Schmitz's credit that he included them in the organization. His mentor, Abe Ruef, was relegated to a position of minor importance.

Schmitz was elected chairman at the first meeting of the Citizens' Committee and was authorized to issue orders for food and other supplies. The Finance Committee was also appointed at this meeting and former mayor Phelan was elected as its chairman. The mayor avoided using much of his relief authority and, instead, left the work to the Finance Committee which played the central role in directing the relief.<sup>14</sup> At subsequent meetings four other committees were formed: A Committee of Supervising, a Purchasing Committee, an Auditing Committee, and a Committee on Hospitals.<sup>15</sup>

By noon on 19 April, the Committee had been forced to move the location of its meetings five times because of the advancing flames. Nevertheless, it continued to hold daily conferences for over two weeks. At these times the function of the Committee as a whole was merely to exchange information and to hear from the Finance Committee regarding contributions received and methods of relief expenditures. With little being done by any other than those assigned to the Finance Committee, Mayor Schmitz determined to abolish the Committee of Fifty.<sup>16</sup>



In the meantime Schmitz had continued to meet with Army officials from time to time regarding various subjects. On the evening of 18 April, the mayor, Chief of Police Dinan, and Brigadier General Funston met and divided the city into sections. Subsequently, at a conference at Fort Mason on 21 April, attended by these three men as well as by Brigadier General Koster of the California National Guard, the city was re-divided into three areas - one under the control of the Federal troops, one under the control of the police, and one under the National Guard. As a result of this meeting, General Funston issued General Orders Number Twelve (see Appendix One) on 22 April, which further divided the area under Federal control into six districts. Subsequently, two more districts were added by General Orders Number Nineteen on 2 May 1906, thereby extending military control to all of San Francisco.<sup>17</sup> On 8 May, boundaries were once again changed and there was a general redistricting of the city into six military districts.<sup>18</sup>

At first glance it would appear that these changes in districts were the result of poor planning, but this was not the case. Their formation was more a result of the changes in population patterns as people became more settled after perhaps drifting during the first few days. Redistricting was necessary to accommodate these population shifts.



The purpose of the military district organization was to facilitate the maintenance of order. The military districts should be differentiated from the seven civil sections which were established by General Orders Eighteen on 29 April as a means of assisting in the distribution of relief supplies.<sup>19</sup> These seven sections generally coincided with the six military districts of 8 May except that District Six included two civil sections.<sup>20</sup>

On 23 April the mayor's office was moved to Fort Mason and on the same day Mayor Schmitz asked General Greely to take over supervision of the emergency volunteer system which was beyond the capability of the civilian committee to properly control.<sup>21</sup> Greely declined for he felt that such involvement by the military was not legal. He did promise, however, to "personally and officially assume any and all responsibilities if (Schmitz) could convince (Greely) that such a course was a civic duty imperatively demanded to prevent public suffering."<sup>22</sup>

On 23 April, Dr. Edward T. Devine arrived in San Francisco. He was an experienced relief administrator from New York and represented the President of the American Red Cross, Secretary of War William Howard Taft. On 24 April Devine was present at Fort Mason at a meeting with Generals Greely and Funston, the mayor, Mr. Phelan, General Koster, and others. The relief situation was thoroughly (and according to the San Francisco Relief Survey, "heatedly"<sup>23</sup>) discussed. According to Greely, the civilians and General Koster unanimously advised him that the conditions were so desperate that the Army had to take over distribution of relief supplies as a public duty.<sup>24</sup> By putting the Army in charge of the entire system of relief supplies, not only was it hoped that more efficiency would result, but that there would be less

of a demand on the relief funds. Greely consented to assume the responsibility within forty-eight hours, but declined to do so immediately because he then lacked sufficient troops.

Greely's agreement was based, in part, on the fact that on 23 April, he had asked authorities in Washington, D.C. for 2500 more troops, after being initially advised by General Funston and others that a force of 5000 additional men was needed.<sup>25</sup> In his official report, General Greely stated that he had asked for these troops with an idea of making the relief force entirely military.<sup>26</sup> This would suggest, therefore, that even before the mayor restated his request on 24 April, General Greely was coming to see the wisdom in it.

It is unclear from General Greely's report as to exactly when he officially assumed his relief duties. At the meeting of 24 April he agreed to do so by noon on Thursday, 26 April,<sup>27</sup> but his report mentions both 27 April<sup>28</sup> and 29 April<sup>29</sup> as the dates. The confusion undoubtedly resulted from the fact that the Army was becoming more and more involved with relief activities as each day passed. In reality, General Funston had been concerned with relief measures as early as 18 April.

Probably 29 April is the correct date for official purposes as it coincides with the issuance of General Orders Number Eighteen.<sup>30</sup> This document is an important one, for not only did it establish the seven civil relief sections which would be recognized by the Army and the Red Cross and other official relief organizations, but in addition, it specified certain administrative responsibilities. Major (soon to be Lieutenant Colonel) Lee Febiger, Infantry, was placed in charge of the seven civil relief sections which would distribute relief supplies

to the people. The order further stated that as soon as possible an Army officer would be assigned to each section.

Major Carrol A. Devol, Quartermaster Corps, was assigned the responsibility for the temporary storage and transportation of all incoming supplies. The consolidation of these two vital areas was appropriate because of their close relationship to each other. Major Charles R. Krauthoff, Subsistence Department, was tasked with providing food supplies to the relief sections. This included separating supplies into rations of a balanced diet. Provisions were also made to appoint an officer who would take charge of supplies other than food. Additionally, the Department Surgeon, Lieutenant Colonel George H. Torney, was placed in charge of all sanitary work and Colonel W. H. Heuer, Corps of Engineer, was charged with all duties relating to engineering problems in regard to water supply, sanitation, and other matters.

The meeting of 24 April also resulted in the joining of the Red Cross with the Finance Committee under the title of the Finance Committee of Relief and Red Cross Funds. The San Francisco relief effort was thus officially united with the primary national relief organization and as a result, \$400,000 was soon provided to the new committee by the American Red Cross.<sup>31</sup>

The Red Cross became more and more involved as the nation's relief representative and on 5 May, began to assemble a staff of rehabilitation workers in a relief bureau which became better organized on 18 May. On 4 May, Dr. Devine had submitted a report to the Finance Committee of Relief and Red Cross Funds (of which he was a member). Circumstances had proceeded to the point that various people were

beginning to give consideration to the provision of permanent relief and Devine made seven specific recommendations. By the end of May, no steps had been taken to implement his recommendations, all but one of which had been approved, and he again suggested action while also recommending that a permanent committee on rehabilitation might be needed.<sup>32</sup> The specific contents of Devine's report are unimportant to the present discussion. What is important is that thought was being given to permanent relief and rehabilitation which was a civilian responsibility. The soldiers were utilized to provide temporary assistance; as the emphasis shifted the Army slowly withdrew. Permanent relief and rehabilitation also brought changes in the organizational structure.

Dr. Devine wrote another letter on the subject to the Committee chairman on 4 June. At the same time Mayor Schmitz was giving consideration to having the Board of Supervisors appoint a committee on relief and rehabilitation. Given the corrupt reputation of the Board, however, such action was undesirable. On 15 June General Greely also wrote to the finance chairman. He concurred with some of Dr. Devine's recommendations and further suggested that the Finance Committee appoint an executive commission which would be prepared by 1 July, to take over those responsibilities then being carried out by the Army. It was Greely's intention to withdraw his forces as soon as this could practicably be done.

The San Francisco Relief Survey reports, but does not explain, that the attitude of mayor Schmitz during this time was one of serious interference.<sup>33</sup> Left unstated is the obvious fact to one familiar with the Mayor's background and character that the Finance Committee

members must have been greatly concerned about the possibility that Schmitz and the Supervisors might become involved in the relief and rehabilitation effort to the possible detriment of the public. Because they knew that the Army would soon be withdrawn from control of the relief work, they wisely agreed to establish the executive commission suggested by General Greely. It was to be composed of three members, one of whom would represent the Mayor; another, the American National Red Cross; and the third, the Finance Committee of Relief and Red Cross Funds. This commission was appointed on 22 June. Dr. Devine, who was in the East, was designated the Red Cross representative, but unfortunately the Mayor appointed a political friend, and the Finance Committee narrowly elected another politician. Although neither of these latter two men appears to have used his position for personal gain, neither were they competent to administer a program of relief and rehabilitation.<sup>34</sup>

From the start, therefore, members of the Finance Committee were suspicious of the Executive Commission and refused to define the limits of its responsibilities. Even those members who had voted for the Finance Committee representative soon realized their mistake in electing an inexperienced person and the Committee soon restricted the Commission's powers.<sup>35</sup>

As Chairman of the Executive Commission, Dr. Devine submitted a plan for relief and rehabilitation which the Finance Committee generally approved except that the Committee decided that control of the rehabilitation work should continue for the moment as the responsibility of Dr. Devine in his capacity as the Red Cross representative rather than as the head of the Executive Commission. In late June, as

a result of a suggestion by Dr. Devine, Mr. Phelan appointed a Rehabilitation Committee to continue the work of the Red Cross Rehabilitation Bureau. Thus, the suspect Executive Commission with its two inexperienced political appointees, was effectively without a job.

In July, still another organizational modification took place, albeit a more lasting one. The need to provide permanent shelter with the fall and winter months approaching required a corporation which could legally acquire land and loan money. Consequently, on 20 July the San Francisco Relief and Red Cross Funds Corporation was formed with ex-mayor Phelan as President. Incorporated for a period of five years, its membership was identical to that of the Finance Committee for Relief and Red Cross Funds, except that the mayor and the governor were appointed as ex-officio members and directors of the corporation. Soon thereafter, five departments were established: Department A - Finance and Publicity; Department B - Bills and Demands; Department C - Camps and Warehouses; Department D - Relief and Rehabilitation; and Department E - Lands and Buildings.<sup>36</sup> On 31 July, the now moribund Executive Commission voted itself out of existence.

With incorporation, the relief effort had come a long distance in organization from the initial ad hoc aid groups concerned with providing the immediate requirements needed to sustain life, to a legally responsible corporation interested in permanent relief and rehabilitation. The history of its performance is beyond the scope of this discussion, however, for incorporation of this body completes the picture of the organizational development necessary for a discussion of the Army's roles.



In any military operation, the ability of a commander or his subordinates to rapidly respond to changing requirements and circumstances is dependent upon timely and accurate information. Simply establishing a proper organizational or command structure can help to insure this flow of information for, if anything, officers are taught to keep their superiors informed. In San Francisco the establishment of military districts and civil relief sections contributed to an exchange of information which was facilitated by the rapid and timely employment of the Signal Corps.

By 1000 on 18 April, Captain Leonard D. Wildman and his signalers had established a telegraph line between the Presidio and one of the fire lines in the city. At this time San Francisco was entirely dependent upon the military for rapid internal communications. There was only one postal telegraph line to the outside world and by mid-afternoon, this line was inoperative. San Francisco's position on a peninsula naturally isolated her on three sides; the loss of communications made this isolation almost complete.

Throughout the days of the fire, General Funston was able to communicate with his commanders at the various Bay Area forts and with the Southern Pacific Railroad Company's office at the ferry terminal because of the efforts of the Signal Corpsmen. Communications with the Southern Pacific were vital because after its line was restored to service at 0830 on 19 April, and until noon the next day, the Southern Pacific provided the only telegraph line to anywhere outside San Francisco.<sup>37</sup> Additional lines were opened on Friday, 20 April, through the combined efforts of the Signal Corps, Western Union, and the Postal Company. Communications outside San Francisco were vital in

order to inform the rest of the country of the status of the city and its people and to marshal the resources necessary to relieve San Francisco. The message of President Roosevelt to Congress, sent on 21 April, contains only two telegrams transmitted from General Funston on 18 April, but eight more for the next day and five more the for next.<sup>38</sup> These were important messages which informed authorities in Washington of the nature of the disaster and which requested relief assistance and additional soldiers. Prior to the restoration of telegraph service, in order to instruct the commander of the Presidio of Monterey to send two battalions of Infantry and all available Cavalry, Frederick Funston had to rely on the Navy: a torpedo-destroyer carried the message.<sup>39</sup>

Internal communications within the city were equally important and until 10 May, the entire burned district was serviced solely by military telegraph lines. Ultimately, the Army serviced the Federal buildings, the offices of the Mayor and of the Governor, railroad freight offices and depots, military district headquarters, and other key locations through a system of forty-two telegraph offices and seventy-nine telephone offices.<sup>40</sup> Both General Greely and General Funston spoke highly of Captain Wildman and the contributions of the Signal Corps.<sup>41</sup> They immeasurably assisted military and civilian relief workers with keeping abreast of events, with expediting the transmission of orders and requests for assistance, and in marshaling outside support for the stricken city.

General Greely also expedited the flow of information to him in a way that modern military commanders might do well to consider if placed in a similar situation. Because he could not be everywhere at once,

but because he needed current and accurate information upon which to base decisions, Greely wisely increased his span of control through the use of his Inspector-General.

Normally referred to as an "IG", an inspector general is an officer charged with examining matters pertaining to the mission, state of morale and discipline, economy, and efficiency of the unit, and with reporting that information to his commander. He is one who serves as the commander's "eyes and ears" and he occupies a position of special trust and confidence - one which requires an officer with judgement, integrity, intelligence, and loyalty. It is an honored position which traces its roots back to Valley Forge and 1778 when George Washington appointed Major General Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben an Inspector-General of the Continental Army.

On 22 April, Lieutenant Colonel John A. Lundeen, Inspector-General, organized a system to provide General Greely with the type of information which he needed, information not only about the Army units involved in and around San Francisco, but about the status of the relief effort and the needs of the population as well. Besides Lundeen, one colonel, five other lieutenant colonels, and three majors were chosen - each a man of experience, discretion, and sufficient rank. Five of the officers were senior to Lundeen, but worked harmoniously with him in the interest of the great need at hand.

Temporarily the Inspector-General ignored normal duties, such as the inspection of posts, because of the emergency nature of the operation in which the Army was involved. Each inspector was assigned a district and his routine was to ride throughout that district every day inspecting camps, relief stations, the quarters of refugees, and any

other facilities that he felt it necessary to examine. As General Greely's representatives, the Inspectors-General were empowered to examine sanitary conditions and the efficiency of the distribution of food and other supplies, and any other matter which might affect the public order, and to make on-the-spot corrections where necessary to correct abuses or to relieve extreme destitution. A purist might raise the point that these officers were intruding into districts and areas commanded or administered by others, and that is correct. Officers do not feel comfortable with such a situation, for they are taught from the day of their commissioning that a commander is the one who is responsible; staff officers do not command. The argument that the situation in San Francisco was unique does not provide ample justification, for soldier's operate in many unique situations, the most unique of which is combat. Greely, a wise and experienced soldier clearly recognized the potential for conflict and, therefore, emphasized discretion as one of the attributes required of his inspectors.

Each day at 1700 the Inspectors-General attended a conference with General Greely. They reported their findings and decisions were made as necessary to correct problem areas and improve relief assistance. Various other members of Greely's staff also attended these conferences as did General Funston. Thus, men such as Major Devol, Major Krauthoff, the surgeon, and others, had up-to-date information and could be simultaneously appraised of the commander's decisions.

An example of the type of public service which these officers performed occurred on 13 May when a special survey by the Inspectors-General and thirty additional officers was conducted to determine if any case of destitution had been overlooked. The authors of the San

Francisco Relief Survey credit a compassionate General Greely with ordering this special effort, for he was well acquainted with cold and hunger as a result of his tour of duty in the Arctic.<sup>42</sup> Great pains were taken to determine if anyone possessed an urgent, unfilled need for food, clothing, or shelter. Fortunately, only two cases were reported.

One of the lessons learned most quickly was the absolute need to centralize the control of funds. General Greely's lack of approval authority has already been mentioned along with the fact that individual officers had independent access to funds. The nature of the emergency required that such funds be spent and they were, at a rapid pace, but in the rush of events improper accounting was common. Other officers without access to funds and expenditure authority were, nevertheless, obligating the government as they authorized purchases. While such flexibility in a crisis is commendable and a trait of which officers are often proud, it is not often practiced without causing problems after the fact.

By joint resolutions approved on 19, 21, and 24 April Congress authorized the expenditure of two and a half million dollars for the procurement of food and other supplies for the refugees and to defray any extra costs which the Army might incur in transporting soldiers or to meet other expenditures resulting from the relief effort.<sup>43</sup> Quite early, however, General Greely was advised that the congressional appropriation probably had already been overdrawn. By 4 May, it was impossible to determine the status of expenditures which, of course, included the monetary value of supplies and equipment issued, the amount of debts incurred, and the total of monies disbursed. On that day Greely issued a General Order tightening controls on obligations

and expenditures<sup>44</sup> and on 5 May, the Secretary of War authorized the centralization of funds as well as of the supervisory control of expenditures. Such action did not totally overcome the types of practices that have been mentioned, but the abuses were largely corrected. Major Devol was given the responsibility for centralized management of funds,<sup>45</sup> a proper choice given his Quartermaster background and the nature of his relief duties in supervising the receipt, storage and distribution of supplies.

The general plan of relief was enunciated in General Orders Number Eighteen on 29 April 1906. (See Appendix Two.) As previously mentioned, this order divided the administrative duties between four divisions responsible for relief food distribution; for receipt, storage, and distribution in bulk of all stores; for providing foods supplies and filling approved requisitions; and for providing supplies other than food and for filling pertinent approved requisitions.<sup>46</sup> The first division was also responsible for supervision of the seven relief sections previously mentioned. Duties of the department surgeon and of the engineer were also specified.

Major Febiger was placed in overall charge of the organization of relief stations and the supervision of their performance.<sup>47</sup> This organization was called the Bureau of Consolidated Relief Stations and Febiger was in charge of the bureau from 29 April until 13 July when his responsibilities were taken over by the Finance Committee of Relief and Red Cross Funds.<sup>48</sup> His first duty was to determine what was being done by those people then providing relief assistance, and during the first twelve days he frequently worked from 0500 until midnight as he roamed the city by automobile, averaging more than 100 miles a

day.<sup>49</sup> During this period he observed some of the problems of the initial distribution of food and other supplies which have already been discussed. Food was often issued on a "first-come, first-serve," basis; there was no centralized organizational structure which the Army could inherit, so there was waste at some locations and not enough supplies at others. Various people were engaging a practice known as "repeating," that is to say, they were taking advantage of the lack of controls to obtain more than their fair share of refugee supplies by going from relief station to relief station, or by sending different members of their families to obtain supplies. On 2 May, of the 313,145 persons estimated to be receiving relief rations, Febiger felt that there were only about 300,000 eligibles.<sup>50</sup>

The organization of Febiger's bureau was based on the seven civil relief sections designated on 29 April. On 1 May Febiger received eleven officers to support him. He established an administrative section to assist in carrying out his headquarters tasks and he assigned officers to each relief section to coordinate the relief work in that area. One of these men was a young Signal Corps captain on temporary duty from Fort Leavenworth by the name of William Mitchell. He would become better known to millions as General Billy Mitchell, a pioneer of American military aviation and an early champion of a separate Air Force.<sup>51</sup>

Each section chief was assisted by other officers<sup>53</sup> as they became available, by volunteer workers, and by a Red Cross official who was designated as the civil chairman of the section and to whom control was ultimately passed when the Army withdrew.<sup>52</sup> Section leaders were charged with coordinating the requirements for supplies as well as with

managing their disbursement in such a way as to eliminate waste and duplicate issues as well as abuses by imposters. They were to supervise the collection of daily statistics upon which supply trends and future requirements could be based, and they were responsible for the accuracy of requisitions. Each day requisitions for supplies were prepared at station level by category such as food, clothing, or tentage, and forwarded through the section chief to the headquarters of the bureau where they were consolidated and then coordinated with those in charge of the various supply depots. Requisitions were then filled and supplies were distributed to the sections whereupon it became the responsibility of the section chiefs to insure that they were properly disbursed.

Below section level were a series of relief stations where the supplies were actually distributed. On 1 May there were 122 of these in existence, but this number was steadily and purposely decreased until only twenty-two were operational on 30 June when the bureau passed to civilian control.<sup>53</sup> Stations were numbered systematically with those in the first section being numbered from 1 to 100, those in the second section from 101 to 200, and so on. The managers or superintendents of the stations were generally civilians although a number of officers also participated.<sup>54</sup> The possibility exists that some of the officers may have been retirees. Some were undoubtedly National Guardsmen. The performance of most managers, the majority of whom were volunteers, was generally commendable, although a number had to be replaced because of unsuitability.

In the first week after the earthquake the American Red Cross began to register refugees. While this was not a military action, it



was important to the Army because officers needed accurate data upon which to base relief decisions and to control "repeating". Quite wisely the Red Cross turned to University of California finance professor, Carl C. Plehn, to head the registration bureau. This was a good choice because he had previously directed the census in the Philippine Islands. Because intelligent and competent census takers were needed, officials wisely enlisted the assistance of 200 school teachers. These people were being paid by the city until the end of the school year so there were no salary costs involved.<sup>55</sup> Both of these decisions merit praise for their obvious appropriateness and might be used as an example for other authorities faced with similar disasters in the future. While the results were not entirely acceptable if measured against the performance of a professional census bureau, nevertheless, it is doubtful if at the time the level of efficiency that was obtained could have been achieved in any other way.<sup>56</sup>

The survey was conducted between 7 and 17 May and revealed that in the seven relief sections some 19,438 families consisting of 84,703 individuals were still refugees in mid-May.<sup>57</sup> While there were no doubt omissions, still a general idea of the number of refugees and repeaters could be gained.

One of the reasons for the registration effort was to reduce the total number of people being fed - not just to reduce the number of "repeaters". This was motivated by two factors. First, it was realized that as long as it was relatively easy to obtain free food and other supplies, many refugees would be hesitant about taking any action on their own to relieve their plight. Thus, provision of free food conflicted with the goal of the authorities which was temporary relief

followed by permanent rehabilitation rather than the creation of a permanent class of destitutes. Second, food stores and restaurants were beginning to open throughout the city and yet there was only a minimal reduction in the numbers of people being fed in the food lines. As long as a free system existed for all it would be difficult for the city to return to a normal economy.

Several measures were undertaken to correct the abuses described. Food cards were issued and a system of hot food kitchens was introduced. Other restrictions were also imposed and, as soon as they were accepted, more were added. While to some living in our present day of the dole such actions may appear to have been callous, the motive, as General Greely stated, was to "stimulate individual resourcefulness, foster self-helpfulness, discourage dependence, and discountenance pauperism."<sup>58</sup>

The food card system was a relatively simple one. A single person or a head of a family was provided with a food card, good for ten days, which specified the number of rations that he or she might draw. The card contained a serial number which was also recorded at the relief station. At the end of the ten day period, a new card had to be obtained and at that time the authorities could determine if one should again be issued. There was beginning to be much work to be had in San Francisco and the card system served as a motivator for people to find jobs. That the system was not entirely effective or that the data upon which the issuance of cards was based was not entirely accurate should not detract from the fact that achievement of the relief goal was expedited by the tightening of controls.

The hot meal kitchen system was also designed to reduce the numbers of people being fed, while also utilizing supplies more efficiently. It was recognized that there would be less waste if food was prepared in bulk rather than by thousands of individuals. Additionally, many people might not want to go to relief restaurants, preferring instead to eat in their own tents or quarters. At the same time, restaurants offered a means by which those people able to pay for their food could do so. Finally, the kitchen system provided a way of insuring sanitary preparation of food - at least for those eating at these establishments.

The hot meal kitchen system worked in this way. Refugees were provided with free meal tickets good for a 10¢ meal. Those who needed more nourishment would be given an additional 5¢ ticket if approved by the Red Cross. Anyone who could afford to do so paid an average of 15¢ per meal.<sup>59</sup> A contractor agreed to prepare three good meals a day, to submit menus in advance for approval, to present claims and requisitions for supplies in a timely manner, and to provide an appropriate site for serving no more than 9,000 meals a day. The Bureau of Consolidated Relief agreed to provide reasonable amounts of surplus food supplies upon requisition and to provide a guard. Accounts were to be settled daily with the costs of the supplies issued being deducted from the amount owed to the contractor.<sup>60</sup>

The standard relief ration was established in General Orders Number Eighteen. (See Appendix Two.) It was felt that the "nutritive value should equal two-thirds of the Army ration, that amount being thought sufficient for non-workers."<sup>61</sup> To better inform the public, daily menus were printed in the newspapers.<sup>62</sup> The following menu,

which might contain substitutes if necessary, was suggested by the Bureau in its contract agreements:

BREAKFAST - Hot hash or hot mush and milk,  
Bread or hot biscuits,  
Coffee and sugar.

DINNER - Hot soup or roast beef or hash,  
One vegetable,  
Bread,  
Coffee and sugar.

SUPPER - Soup, or Irish stew,  
Bread or hot biscuits,  
Tea and sugar.<sup>63</sup>

Initially the authorities intended to close the relief stations as the kitchens became operational, but this was not entirely possible because of the need to supply many of the sick, some of the women, the young, and the elderly, including those who had a doctor's certification that a special diet was required.<sup>64</sup> Nevertheless, more and more stations were closed during May as a restrictive measure, on the assumption that only one who was truly in need would put up with the inconvenience of walking some distance.

Other restrictive measures were put into practice. A guard at each relief station asked all able-bodied men when they would be able to find work. Cards were filled out on each individual receiving relief assistance and people were asked when they would be able to support themselves. Attempts were made to resettle people in the camps and except in those camps, rations were discontinued on Sundays. Also,

coffee, tea, and sugar were withheld except in the camps. Additionally, except for the sick, refugees were required to accept their rations in person and small children could not be sent for rations.<sup>65</sup>

The various restrictions - and particularly the adoption of the hot meal kitchen system - caused a great deal of grumbling. Public meetings were held by many refugees and contractors were criticized. Nevertheless, Febiger credits the adoption of this system with assisting with the rehabilitation of the population "saving the work of relief the stigma of having by their liberal treatment pauperized a self-supporting community."<sup>66</sup> The number of people supplied with food declined from 313,117 on 1 May to 204,637 on 10 May to 50,395 on 31 May. By 16 June the figures had declined to 31,608 and on 30 June the number fed was 26,591 1/2.<sup>67</sup> Even more significant is the decrease in the number of indigents - or non-paying people - fed. The entire 313,117 of 1 May must be included because all food was passed out free on that date; on 30 June the number fed for free was only 15,714.<sup>68</sup>

Febiger felt that no other system could have achieved success as quickly and that probably ninety-five percent of those being fed for free on 30 June were truly in need.<sup>69</sup> Thus, a system had been created which had identified those who needed assistance while simultaneously weeding out ones who were self-sufficient or capable of being so, and relief funds were saved to be applied to other areas of concern where the needs were greater.

From the beginning, it had been General Greely's intention to withdraw the military as soon as the relief effort could be turned over to the civilian authorities in whole or in part. This was one of the

reasons that Red Cross officials were appointed as civilian chairmen of relief sections. As the number of stations was decreased, there was a corresponding reduction in the number of military personnel detailed to the Bureau of Consolidated Relief Stations. About 25 May many officers serving as assistants to section chiefs were withdrawn and military chiefs of sections were required to confer with the civilian chairmen on matters of policy. Slowly but surely the military began to pull back until gradually even most section chiefs were replaced. For example, Captain Mitchell, who had served as chief of the First Relief Section, was allowed to proceed to Fort Leavenworth on 1 June.<sup>70</sup> By 1 July only Febiger, two staff officers, and two chiefs of section were left. Febiger remained in control until 13 July.<sup>71</sup>

Another area with which the relief sections were concerned was the distribution of clothing.<sup>72</sup> In the initial days of the disaster it was issued in the same haphazard manner as other supplies - indiscriminantly and with no effort to ascertain need.<sup>73</sup> As with food donations, there was no knowledge of exact requirements or of what items were being shipped from around the country. Frequently, boxes of clothing were issued just as they arrived with little knowledge of their exact contents. Much clothing, of course, was of the poor quality that people often donate to charity. Many items were soiled and needed cleaning before issue. At the request of Dr. Devine, General Greely agreed to have the Army take charge of receiving, organizing, transporting, and issuing clothing with the proviso that the Red Cross would determine distribution based on need.

Organizing such a system required both personnel and facilities. Buildings were easily obtained when the Board of Education authorized

the use of any schoolhouse needed. The Crocker School at 111 Page Street was chosen and Captain J. J. Bradley, Quartermaster, 14th Infantry, took charge on 4 May on orders of Major Devol.<sup>74</sup> Employees to staff the clothing supply depot were provided in a most logical way. A member of the Finance Committee managed to locate approximately 100 ex-employees of the Emporium, a well-known San Francisco department store, and they quickly went to work sorting and sizing clothing and other items and organizing the depot into nine departments which were supervised by trained, experienced clerks. These departments were as follows:

- Department 1. Men's clothing and hats.
- Department 2. Men's furnishings and underwear.
- Department 3. Women's furnishings and underwear.
- Department 4. Boots and shoes.
- Department 5. Children's clothing and hats.
- Department 6. Children's underwear.
- Department 7. Bedding and furniture.
- Department 8. Household goods.
- Department 9. Tentage.<sup>75</sup>

Receiving and shipping departments were also established and on 9 May the Everett School on Sixteenth and Sanchez Streets was acquired. Thereafter, the used clothing was sent there and the new clothing was stocked at the Crocker School.

Distribution began on 7 May and supplies were requisitioned and issued in almost the same manner as food. Relief station managers submitted requisitions through the civilian section chairman instead of through the military chief. Once requisitions were consolidated at

Bureau level, they were transmitted to the depot where they were acted upon by Captain Bradley, before being sent to the requisition clerk and then to the appropriate departments to be filled.<sup>76</sup> Once the requisitions had been processed and filled, they were sent under guard of an armed cavalryman to the appropriate relief stations.

How well the system met the needs of the community is unclear. The depots were apparently well managed and elicited a special commendation from Dr. Devine, according to General Greely.<sup>77</sup> The San Francisco Relief Survey reports that a daily average of twelve truckloads of goods were issued by the nine departments in May and an average of eighteen in June, but this included household goods, such as linens, kitchen utensils and dishes, washtubs, and sewing machines.<sup>78</sup> General Greely reported that the amount of clothing distributed was surprisingly quite small with only 74,278 shirts, 82,923 drawers, 128,972 socks, 70,127 pairs of shoes, and 85,580 blankets being issued.<sup>79</sup> General Greely did not provide a cutoff date for his statistics and civilians continued to issue clothing until 16 May 1907, but he did suggest that perhaps 200,000 refugees met their clothing needs from other sources.<sup>80</sup>

As specified in General Orders Number Eighteen, Major Devol was in charge of all matters of storage and transportation.<sup>81</sup> The relationship between these two areas is obvious for supplies had to be received and transported to storage sites as well as to relief stations or camps when necessary. Devol's first priority, however, was to establish a system of depots and supply points. By noon on 18 April fire had destroyed all Army depot warehouses and offices in San Francisco, consuming clothing, equipment, and supplies worth



\$2,200,000.<sup>82</sup> There were, however, four warehouses still intact at the Presidio and Devol established his office there on 19 April. What supplies and clothing were there the Army began giving out almost immediately to provide assistance to refugees being accommodated in a camp established by Colonel Morris, Presidio Commander.

Devol's next priority was organizing to meet the influx of Army and civilian relief supplies known to be enroute from all over the nation. To avoid congestion and to expedite unloading of supplies, he worked with the general manager of the Southern Pacific Railroad. Their traffic plan called for supplies to arrive at three locations: the Presidio dock, the Folsom Street dock, and at Fourth and Townsend Streets where railroad cars arrived. Subsequently the Santa Fe Railroad delivered supplies to their freight yards at Spear and Harrison Streets and by float at the Folsom Street dock.<sup>83</sup> There were no bridges across the Bay in 1906 so railcars had to be put on floats and sent across by water. Supplies destined for the Presidio dock, where there was no railhead, were taken by lighter.

It was vital that Devol have advanced information on what supplies were due to arrive in San Francisco. The Quartermaster-General was asked to provide such information on military supplies and Devol also stationed one of his officers, Captain Jesse M. Baker, Quartermaster, on duty at the Oakland pier. Here Baker coordinated with Southern Pacific officials and twice each day he sent reports to Devol via a dispatch boat reserved for that purpose. This information supplemented what Devol was receiving by wire. By matching it with the known needs in various parts of the city and with information on the

congestion or lack of it at the various arrival points in San Francisco, Devol was able to advise Baker in regard to the routing of traffic. Another officer was placed at Point Richmond, also on the east side of the bay, for the same purpose. Other officers were detailed to the entry points within San Francisco and the Signal Corps established communications for them.

The system just described allowed for the coordinated receipt of supplies and it also allowed officials to acknowledge donations from the various committees and individuals around the country. As soon as yard car slips could be abstracted, relief committees were notified that their donations had arrived.<sup>84</sup> Not only was this a courtesy to which the citizens across the country were due, but as a public relations gesture it helped to preserve the public goodwill necessary for continued support. This does not mean to imply, however, that all donations or packages could be or were acknowledged. Many cars filled with relief supplies also contained packages addressed to individuals or groups; in some cases the names of addressees had been lost. Authorities did the best that they could to comply with instructions, but it was a difficult task, given the fact that several hundred thousand people had been uprooted. This sometimes caused hard feelings on the part of donors. As an example, the authors of the San Francisco Relief Survey cite the problem of eight cases of bread pans sent by a manufacturing company for the use of certain bakers, but addressed to the Relief Committee. The letter of instruction had become separated from the boxes and they were therefore distributed to refugees. Upon learning this its intended recipients had not received them, the company threatened to file a claim for loss.<sup>85</sup>

Another task that Major Devol considered to be a priority was the establishment of storage sites. Warehouse facilities were secured and even three Army transport ships were used. These ships - the Crook, Warren, and Buford -- were used to store surplus flour and meal.<sup>86</sup> Three commissary depots were also established at locations on the Presidio. Operation of the depots fell in line between the relief stations of Lieutenant Colonel Febiger and the stevedores and haulers of Major Devol. As specified in General Orders Number Eighteen, food supplies went to Major Charles R. Krauthoff, Subsistence Department.<sup>87</sup>

When fire destroyed the General Commissary Depot on 18 April Major Krauthoff, like Major Devol, was forced to move to the Presidio where a temporary depot was established the next day. On 18 April General Funston set in motion the resupply effort when he telegraphed the War Department requesting "thousands of tents and all the rations that (could) be sent."<sup>88</sup> By 0100 on 19 April Commissary-General Henry G. Sharpe had responded with his first telegram directing the purchase and shipment of rations.<sup>89</sup> During the same period Funston was directing the shipment of all available rations from posts within the Pacific Division, and by 21 April the first military rations, including soap, salt, and candles had begun to arrive.<sup>90</sup> Major Krauthoff's first duty then, had been to initiate the requests for rations; his second became to establish a depot system to receive them and to organize their receipt and distribution.

Simultaneously, his personnel were involved with issuing those rations which were available. This was a haphazard process as with the

distribution of other supplies during those initial trying days. Subsistence Department personnel and wagons under the supervision of officers were sent to warehouses and factories not destroyed by the earthquake or fire. In many cases these facilities were emptied until the buildings were destroyed by fire and the men forced to withdraw.<sup>91</sup> The foodstuffs that were obtained in this fashion were taken to wherever people were and immediately distributed.

Receiving and distributing points were established at the Presidio dock and at several docks and railyards in the city. These were temporary facilities, not depots. Here Army personnel worked alongside members of the Citizens' Committee, who determined who would receive assistance. As soon as possible the use of these temporary points was stopped. Instead, three large general relief depots were established, one of which was initially established by the Citizens' Relief Committee but was turned over to the Army on 28 April. To these three depots, supplies could be directly hauled from the freight yards and docks for organizing. This was a mandatory task if an effective issue system was to be implemented to meet the needs of the refugees because shipments frequently arrived in a mixed condition made up not only of food, but also of clothing, medicines, and household supplies.<sup>92</sup> The three depots had a daily capacity of receiving, storing and issuing 400,000 rations.<sup>93</sup>

The central advantage of the depot system was that it could provide organization to the system of food distribution as well as a balanced meal, something which had not been assured before. Provisions were made to provide fresh beef, bread, milk, and special diet items for the sick. A central meat depot was established, utilizing iced

refrigerator cars or cold-storage rooms. After being inspected either by an inspector appointed by the president of the Board of Health or one employed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, beef was issued three times a week. In May and June 1,047,307 pounds of fresh beef were purchased at a cost of \$60,957.59 and paid for from relief and Red Cross funds.<sup>94</sup> Those figures represent a cost of six cents per pound.

Bread ingredients were readily available, (actually, too much so as has already been mentioned), but bread could not be baked easily in all cases because of the interruption of electrical power in parts of the city. Much was prepared at the post bakeries of the forts in the Bay Area. Milk deliveries were handled by dairymen because of the perishability of milk. Milk and other foods were requisitioned from relief station level in the same manner described for other supplies and milk was provided direct to the relief station for women and children.

A special diet department was established at one of the relief depots to meet the needs of the sick, and an Army contract surgeon was placed in charge. Here were gathered items such as cocoa, chocolate, teas, soups, fancy canned meats, extracts, canned and evaporated fruits, preserves, jellies, canned vegetables, specially prepared foods for infants and invalids, cereals, and crackers.<sup>95</sup> Other items were purchased whenever needed and included ice, fresh meats, vegetables, oranges, lemons, eggs, butter, milk, bread, and similar fresh stores.<sup>96</sup>

Not only did Major Devol have to coordinate the arrival, receipt, and storage of supplies, but he was also responsible for transportation within the city - another vital link in the chain if supplies were to

reach the refugees. The way in which he organized the arrival of supplies so that they might be moved to the depots has already been mentioned. He was also concerned with getting them from the depots to the supply points and this was an acute area of concern because the transportation system in San Francisco had been completely disrupted. The street railway system was interrupted, and because of earthquake damage to lines, many streets were impassable for routine traffic due to debris or to large cracks in the pavement. There was also an urgent need for hired teams of wagons by the relief authorities as well as by private citizens.

At the time of the earthquake, both Major Devol as depot quartermaster and Captain G. A. Nugent, as Presidio quartermaster, had transportation responsibilities. Their requirements and resources were consolidated, therefore, and Nugent became Devol's assistant on 23 April. One of Nugent's first duties was to establish a depot corral at the Presidio. On 1 May, another was established in the city to take delivery from the three supply entry points previously mentioned. At the height of the relief effort, 228 teams of various types were used.<sup>97</sup> Transportation needs were met by government teams and by hiring civilian ones at the following union rate:

	Per day
Four-horse truck.....	\$12.00
Two-horse truck.....	\$10.00
Two-horse wagon (heavy).....	\$ 9.00
Two-horse wagon (light).....	\$ 7.00
One-horse wagon.....	\$ 5.00
Extra horses.....	\$ 1.50 <sup>98</sup>

Government teams were also used as were the animals of the 17th and 18th Mountain Batteries of Field Artillery from Vancouver Barracks. Each battery could form a pack train of forty animals and each train could transport approximately 15,000 pounds at a time resulting in a reduction of the number of civilian wagons which had to be hired.<sup>99</sup>

While the Army was busy establishing its transportation system within the relief area, on the civilian side things were not going well. Civilian relief transportation was managed by an organization under control of the Finance Committee. Both volunteers and hired teams were utilized. Supply accountability was poor and wagon loads were frequently stolen or otherwise diverted. Proper controls were not established as to the amounts which would be transported and various people took advantage of the situation to transport only a very small number of items while being paid for a full load.

Looting also took place in some parts of the city where wagon loads of supplies were concerned. It was prevalent in the Southern Pacific Railway yards, for example, where a number of cars were rifled.<sup>100</sup> Many of those taking part had the unfortunate attitude that since they were in need, they could take, without regard to the overall needs of the city or the needs of those in Oakland, Santa Rosa, San Jose and elsewhere who also required assistance. The situation was such that the Army was asked by the Finance Committee to take charge of civilian relief transportation. General Greely agreed and by 2 May responsibility for all relief transportation in San Francisco had been entrusted to Major Devol.<sup>101</sup> Devol chose Captain Peter Murray, 18th Infantry, to supervise the transportation of all supplies and he established his office on 2 May.

Murray's first efforts were directed at organizing the transportation system. Aware of the problems previously described, he discovered that 557 teams were involved in transporting supplies. By the morning of 4 May this number was reduced to 109 at a cost of \$918 per day. Thirty government teams were also utilized.<sup>102</sup> Wagons were soon escorted by armed cavalymen who were responsible for their delivery, thereby safeguarding the supplies.

Not only did Captain Murray's efforts result in a savings of relief money, but they also resulted in teams being released for use by the private sector of the community. Those which remained were engaged in moving an average of 1,154 tons a day.<sup>103</sup> There is no way of determining how significant this figure is in terms of the resources used, for no figures are provided with which to compare it. Nevertheless, General Greely felt that it was a significant feat indeed, given the hectic conditions under which they worked.<sup>104</sup>

Medical support was another area of relief assistance. It consisted both of caring for the sick and injured and of supervising sanitation in the city. The first duties were undertaken almost immediately by civilian and military medical personnel on 18 April. Luckily most of the hospitals were outside the burned area and although many suffered structural damage as a result of the earthquake, patient loads were not excessive although there were, quite naturally, increases at the outset.<sup>105</sup>

On 18 April Lieutenant-Colonel (Doctor) George H. Torney, Medical Department, was serving as commander of the Army General Hospital at the Presidio as well as chief surgeon of the Department of California.<sup>106</sup> His hospital suffered a great deal of damage with a loss



of power and water, as well as telegraphic and telephone communications. There was also some roof damage and plaster fell from the walls and ceilings. Nevertheless, officers prepared for immediate work and members of Company B, Hospital Corps, marched off to the city with other Presidio troops to fight the fires.<sup>107</sup>

By 0900 a relief party under control of a surgeon had been sent to the city to provide any assistance necessary and to notify authorities that the hospital was available for their use. The patient flow began that day with 127 being received by 2300. Another 145 refugees were admitted on the 19th so that the capacity of the hospital was reached. Many of these people had been sent from hospitals which were burning or which were threatened with fire. As a result, four barracks were vacated by Hospital Corps troops and wards were established in them.<sup>108</sup> Hospitals on the Presidio and at Fort Mason were also opened that day and began to receive patients. After 19 April the numbers of patients began to decrease. However, a tent hospital was organized on the 20th in front of the General Hospital for the purpose of performing first aid and medical screening. This is a standard medical procedure. Patients who can be treated on the spot receive such treatment and others are assisted or directed to the appropriate location.

During the period following the earthquake the health of the community generally remained good. There was a slight increase in typhoid fever and a contagious diseases hospital was established on 21 April in Harbor View Park, but for the number of people involved, hospitalization rates were surprisingly low. No doubt the mild San Francisco weather played a part. The demand for medical services was

low enough that many volunteer doctors and nurses who arrived in the city could not be utilized and were sent home. This prompted the authors of the San Francisco Relief Survey to suggest that in future emergencies a clearing house for information should be established to coordinate such needs.<sup>109</sup>

On 21 April a medical supply depot was established within the grounds of the General Hospital and twenty-six dispensaries were also soon opened to provide free medical assistance and advice throughout the city. This caused complaints from civilian doctors and druggists who were in competition with the military. With the consent of city officials, therefore, the number of dispensaries was reduced to one.<sup>110</sup> Military medical personnel did provide assistance in the military-run refugee camps which were established both on and off government property.

The supervision of sanitary procedures in San Francisco quite naturally was a subject of major concern, partly because the city water mains and the sewer system had been badly damaged by the earthquake. As with other areas of relief assistance, the city authorities again turned to the Army. On 20 April the president of the San Francisco Health Commission requested that Dr. Torney act as head of the sanitary committee to insure coordination between civil and military authorities in regard to public sanitation. General Funston gave his approval and Special Orders Number Thirty-Seven were issued designating Torney as the chief sanitary officer of the city.<sup>111</sup>

Dr. Torney immediately turned over command of the hospital to another officer. Medical officers were assigned to various sanitary districts which were continued until May and the previously mentioned

hospital for contagious diseases was established. Torney also exercised sanitary supervision over the various refugee camps being established in the city parks. He also assumed control of the refugee camps on the Presidio reservation, at Fort Mason, and in Golden Gate Park.<sup>112</sup> In the case of these camps Torney not only had sanitary supervision, but command as well, with authority delegated to assistant surgeons who ran the camps until they were turned over to line officers.<sup>113</sup>

Dr. Torney continued in charge of sanitation for the city until 13 May at which time the arrangement was ended by mutual agreement between the health commission and himself because the city was able to fully control sanitation.<sup>114</sup> There is no hint of disagreement in his report. General Greely was not so shy, however, and stated that there was a lack of cooperation caused by the fact that the Board of Health was placing great expenses and responsibilities on the Army, but only allowing the military to express opinions without any authority to enforce them.<sup>115</sup> In a 1978 article in The Pacific Historian, William Strobridge stated that cleanliness was the issue and that Dr. Torney was unable to insure coordination with the civilian authorities.<sup>116</sup>

In an article in the San Francisco Examiner on 25 April 1906, Dr. Torney was praised as the "one officer of the United States Army who is the most competent to care for the greatest problem now confronting (San Francisco's) courageous citizens."<sup>117</sup> He was also commended for immediately going to the aid of the city on 18 April in the absence of orders and was described as a most lovable man, idolized by those who had served under his command. Another article in the Examiner on 19 May quoted a Dr. George Franklin Shiels in praise of

Dr. Torney and the Medical Department, giving the Army the main credit for the handling of hygienic conditions in San Francisco.<sup>118</sup>

The provision of shelter was an immediate priority facing relief authorities, although in the early days it was unclear how many would temporarily be housed. Many people fled their homes in advance of the flames, carrying their bedding with them in anticipation of returning home after the fire danger had passed, only to learn that for some no homes were left standing. Others, of course, were rendered homeless from the moment that the earthquake struck. Still others were forced to find shelter when the demand for lodging forced rental rates up and they were evicted by profiteering landlords. Finally, many left the city, some to Oakland and other Bay Area communities where they had to be cared for, and others to various places across California and the country as well as abroad.<sup>119</sup>

Good data simply is not available on the number of people who were provided shelter by the authorities. The San Francisco Relief Survey reported that 200,000 were made homeless by the fire, but that possibly 75,000 left the San Francisco Bay Area. Two thousand of those who remained were assisted by the police in finding lodging in vacant homes.<sup>120</sup> General Greely's report cited 50,000 as the number living in camps, but this is obviously an estimation.<sup>121</sup> Greely reported that the camp population was a shifting one with a maximum number of 22,617. He estimated that not less than 25,000 refugees lived in these camps while under military control.<sup>122</sup> The last of these military camps passed from control of the Army to the Department of Camps and Warehouses on 1 August 1906.<sup>123</sup> The San Francisco Relief Survey provided no statistics as to how many refugees lived in camps in April,

but for May, June, and July the figures were 13,170; 17,274; and 17,959, respectively.<sup>124</sup> It appears, therefore, that the majority of the refugees who remained in San Francisco found their own shelter.

Army efforts to provide shelter assistance began immediately on 18 April. Three thousand tents stored at the Presidio were issued to assist Colonel Morris, Presidio commander, in establishing a refugee camp.<sup>125</sup> These were the first of 23,831 tents that were issued, according to government records.<sup>126</sup> From the start, tent cities sprang up indiscriminately on vacant lots and in parks around the city wherever people assembled. One such camp was established at the corner of Bay and Jones Streets in an area known as "Jones Dump" by three privates from Company E, 22d Infantry - Frank P. McGurty, William Ziegler, and Henry Johnson. Their actions provide a heart-warming example of the type of assistance provided by the military.

When the fire on the waterfront forced members of Colonel Alfred Reynolds' 22d Infantry to evacuate by boat on 20 April, the three privates became separated from their unit. Nearing the dumping ground they found 5,000 Italian refugees who looked to them as representatives of the United States Government to take charge.<sup>127</sup> They assumed command of the situation and stopped the individual pilferage of food stores. They organized the taking of food supplies from stores and warehouses and set up procedures to systematically issue supplies to those in need. They also opened a bakery. On the night of 21 April, after all available supplies were exhausted, one soldier took two wagons and headed out to find more food. Upon arriving at the Presidio he encountered Major Devol, and when Devol learned the story, he took the soldier to the Presidio dock where the wagons were loaded.

Devol asked Major Febiger to look into the situation on the following day. He did and reported back that the story was indeed true and that the three soldiers were running the camp quite well with unquestioned authority. Subsequently, more supplies were issued from the Presidio to include blankets and shoes. General Greely reported that the three also found fifty tents and set up a camp for 500 people with 1,500 others being sheltered in shacks next to the camp.<sup>128</sup> Both Major Devol and General Greely cited this example as one which reflected credit upon the Army and which demonstrated the type of traits inherent in American soldiers.

The need for shelter demanded a better temporary solution to the problem until permanent arrangements could be made. Twenty-one camps were established by the Army, eighteen of which were in San Francisco. Although some were begun in a fashion immediately after the earthquake, assumption of control by the Army was a gradual process. The official system of military camps was recognized in General Orders Number Twenty-nine on 13 May 1906. This document described the limits of some of the camps; designated Lieutenant Colonel R. R. Evans, 5th Infantry, as commander of permanent camps; assigned a number of officers, plus four troops of Cavalry and four companies of Infantry to his command; and appointed Lieutenant Colonel Torney as chief sanitary officer.<sup>129</sup> The areas under control of camp commanders were removed from control of military district commanders. Provisions were also made for daily sanitation inspections and for assignment of medical officers and Hospital Corps personnel to the camps. Finally, requisitioning procedures for food and clothing were discussed.

On 12 May, the day before the issuance of General Orders Twenty-nine, the San Francisco Examiner carried a front page story featuring excerpts from a proclamation issued the day before by Mayor Schmitz. Schmitz cited the poor sanitary conditions in which people existed in various small camps around the city, in vacant lots, on hillsides, and in other places, and contrasted these conditions with the situation existing in the camps being run by the Army. He requested that all persons living in tents separated from the large camps move to those camps.<sup>130</sup>

Each camp was run by an Army officer with a staff of people to assist him. These included medical and clerical personnel, as well as laborers. A Red Cross agent was also stationed in each camp. These agents registered occupants, looked into cases of fraud or imposture, issued clothing, and evaluated special needs of the applicants. They served in an understudy role in contemplation of the day when the military would turn over control of the camps to civil authorities.<sup>131</sup> The division engineer was available for assistance to camp commanders on questions of camp design, sanitation systems, and the flooring of tents which took place in July and August.<sup>132</sup> According to Major Devol, lumber was obtained when a steam schooner was found loaded with it. The property was confiscated by the Depot Quartermaster and turned over to the Corps of Engineers.<sup>133</sup>

The rules of the camps were quite simple. They included decency, order, and cleanliness. Residents were expected to obey the orders of camp commanders in regards to these three requirements and violators were ejected from the camps. If ejected, one could not be readmitted to any military camp. Only twenty-three ejections were recorded in the

San Francisco Relief Survey for May through July, before the Army turned over control of the camps to the Department of Camps and Warehouses on 1 August 1906.<sup>134</sup>

The treatment of the Japanese and Chinese deserves consideration, for the attitudes of many Californians towards these people in 1906 were not unlike attitudes expressed in various places in the United States toward other minority groups throughout our history.

Large Japanese immigration was a source of friction to many Californians and other Americans. It began in 1900 and reached a total of 70,000 people in six years. There was competition with farmers and in the cities between the thrifty Japanese and those who had been in California longer. In 1906 separate school systems were established for the Japanese in San Francisco, but President Roosevelt intervened and forced the school board to reconsider.<sup>135</sup>

Despite such hostility the people of Japan were quite generous in providing relief assistance to earthquake victims. William Bronson states in The Earth Shook, The Sky Burned, that the Japanese Red Cross and Government contributed more than half of the total of foreign contributions, or \$244,960.10 out of \$474,211.03.<sup>136</sup> The Japanese asked for little assistance and on 20 April they formed independent relief associations in Oakland and San Francisco which were combined the same day to become the Japanese Relief Association.<sup>137</sup>

The San Francisco Relief Survey stated that the Japanese almost entirely took care of approximately 10,000 of their countrymen who were destitute.<sup>138</sup> In May 1906 only thirty-one Japanese heads of families were identified as among refugees being assisted in the civil sections and on 6 July no more than 100 Japanese were being cared for by the



civil authorities.<sup>139</sup> Not a single Japanese was included in the 30,000 people who applied for rehabilitation. Again, their countrymen provided the assistance.<sup>140</sup> Bronson reported that no other group was so quick to seek and find work after the earthquake, a testimony to the outstanding qualities of a thrifty and industrious group of Americans.<sup>141</sup> The Army was, therefore, not involved with this group of people. It was a different story in the case of the Chinese.

As with the Japanese, there was hostility and prejudice toward the Chinese in San Francisco. The loss of Chinatown to the fire was even viewed as a blessing by many who looked upon it as a ghetto filled with opium dens where slave girls were bought and traded. It was even thought that in the aftermath of the fire, Chinatown could be built elsewhere. Boss Ruef was one who was in favor of such a move, but it could not be legally accomplished. Bronson reported that there was no hesitation on the part of the Chinese about rebuilding on the old sites and that when they did, authentic Chinese architecture appeared, many the original buildings having been built by Yankees.<sup>142</sup>

At the very outset, different camps were set up for Chinese refugees because of hostility - one in San Francisco, and another in Oakland. General Greely reported that neither the civilian authorities nor the Army discriminated against the Chinese in providing relief assistance, however, the numbers who received support were quite low.<sup>143</sup> The San Francisco Relief Survey reported that perhaps 10,000 Chinese were made homeless by the earthquake and fire, but only twenty heads of families are identified as among refugees in civil sections in May 1906.<sup>144</sup>

The Chinese camp in San Francisco was established by the Army at Fort Scott on the Presidio reservation and the one in Oakland was established at Lake Merritt, the latter under a Chinese superintendent.<sup>145</sup> General Greely reported that the Chinese camp in Oakland was probably the best camp in that city, because of excellent sanitation, food, and shelter. He also stated that the Chinese minister to the United States visited both camps and expressed to him his appreciation with the manner in which the Chinese were treated.<sup>146</sup> The fire had a beneficial affect on relations between the Chinese and other Americans. Other than the Japanese, no other group sought work as rapidly. They were eager to get off the relief roles and their devotion to their employers after the earthquake played an important part in changing attitudes.<sup>147</sup>

The city of San Francisco itself, was the hardest hit by the earthquake in terms of the amount of damage, loss of life, and suffering. It also experienced the terrible fire. Nevertheless, other cities in the region also fell victim to the earthquake. Santa Rosa was particularly hard hit and San Jose was only slightly less so, but in each city local committees managed the relief effort. Federal troops were requested by San Jose to serve as guards, but the request was cancelled before it could be filled. Sausalito, to the north of San Francisco in Marin County, was also damaged. The original number of refugees there was estimated as 10,000, but that number was reduced to about 500 by the end of June.<sup>148</sup> Food assistance was provided to the relief committee and as soon as possible an Army officer was sent over to take care of the refugees. Shelter was provided for as many people as possible in buildings throughout the area and eventually a camp was established in the vicinity of San Rafael.

The city of Berkeley suffered almost no damage, and while perhaps as many as a thousand refugees congregated there, they were taken care of by local authorities. Berkeley was supplied by relief officials from San Francisco and the Army considered sending officers to assist in the relief effort, but none could be spared. The association with Berkeley was mainly a supply arrangement; in two other cities much more was needed.

Like Berkeley, the cities of Oakland and Alameda to its south were also spared destruction. Here military assistance was greater, however, because in the early days perhaps 50,000 to 75,000 refugees congregated. Large amounts of relief supplies were provided to Oakland, but the Army could initially spare no soldiers from the work in San Francisco. From 1 to 8 May, therefore, the relief effort was headed by General Charles A. Woodruff, a retired officer. General Greely had great praise for the way that this officer brought organization to the relief effort in Oakland, Alameda, and Berkeley.<sup>149</sup>

As soon as an officer became available, one was sent to relieve General Woodruff. This officer was Major James B. Erwin, 9th Cavalry, who was also supplied with five troops of the 1st Cavalry. In an article in the San Francisco Examiner on 7 May, Major Erwin was identified as being from Fort Leavenworth, and the troopers as being from San Antonio, Texas.<sup>150</sup> San Antonio was and is the site of Fort Sam Houston.

Major Erwin took charge on 8 May. He based his operations on the plans formulated in San Francisco, and worked with the civilian relief authorities in Oakland. Unlike their counterparts in San Francisco in the early days, they appear to have been quite efficient. Erwin

reported that they had reduced the number of refugees to about 30,000 by 8 May and that they even found jobs for 10,373 people - quite an accomplishment.<sup>151</sup>

Upon arrival Major Erwin took steps to systemize relief methods and to reduce the number of camps from about fifty to something more manageable. Refugees were concentrated into two camps, one at Adams Point and the previously mentioned one at Lake Merritt for the Chinese. The Adams Point camp was well run, according to General Greely, and when it was closed in June, its 578 remaining occupants were transferred to San Francisco.<sup>152</sup>

A discussion of the relief effort cannot be concluded without a brief mention of expenditures. On 12 July 1906, Lieutenant Colonel John P. Wisser, Artillery Corps, and acting Inspector-General, reported the results of an inspection that he had conducted of the money accounts pertaining to the relief funds that Congress had appropriated and which had been disbursed by Major Devol, Major Krauthoff, Captain Wildman, Lieutenant Colonel Brechemin of the Medical Department, and Captain Wren, constructing quarter-master. He reported that the accuracy of the vouchers had been verified and were found to be legal in every case.<sup>153</sup>

Although certain individuals remained for longer periods of time in connection with specific duties, the Army pulled out of San Francisco on 2 July 1906, after two and a half months of fire fighting and relief duties. Some 406 officers and 5,463 enlisted men had at times been involved, ably assisted by sailors, Marines, and National Guardsmen working side by side with civil authorities and volunteers.<sup>154</sup> They had performed tasks beyond the scope of their regular duties as

well as functions for which they possessed unique training. The latter was the key to the success of the relief effort for logisticians, signalers, medics and others were able to perform routine tasks under non-routine conditions in such a way as to obtain coordinated objectives, but then that is what armies and soldiers are expected to do. Throughout the entire ordeal, they worked for the good of the community, subservient to civilian authority in the American military tradition. There was no declaration of martial law.

General Greely expressed his appreciation in General Orders Number Forty-two on 2 July 1906.<sup>155</sup> He commended the personal behavior of the troops and the performances of the Services represented and he concluded that the quality of the services performed represented an adequate reflection of the admirable attributes of the American Army. He also mentioned the praise that the military had received from civilian authorities and from the public.

## Chapter V

Notes

<sup>1</sup>This figure is the best estimate, but only that. More people were undoubtedly affected, but not all required total assistance. Many moved in with friends or relatives; others had their homes and clothing, but were dependent upon the authorities for food because of the disruption to the normal food distribution system. Figures became more precise as the relief effort became more organized. From time to time various statistics will be provided. Those compiled from Army sources, and particularly ones prepared by trained logisticians, are probably the most accurate. In general, however, the authors of the San Francisco Relief Survey, (New York, 1913), iv, suggest that a word of caution is necessary with regard to relief statistics. Many were compiled from forms which were designed to assist in carrying out the relief effort rather than to serve as a source for future research. Quite often these forms were filled out in haste, often by people with no experience in work of this sort and frequently by members of various organizations.

<sup>2</sup>William Bronson, The Earth Shook, The Sky Burned, (Garden City, N.Y., 1959), 124.

<sup>3</sup>This procedure was not necessarily as wanton as one might at first think. In some cases these stores lay in the path of the fire and stocks would have been burned if they had not been confiscated.

<sup>4</sup>Devol, "The Army in the San Francisco Disaster," Infantry Journal, 4 (July 1907), 69.

<sup>5</sup>Bronson, 99.

<sup>6</sup>SFRS, 102.

<sup>7</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 113.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., I, 110-111.

<sup>9</sup>Devol, "The Army in the San Francisco Disaster," Infantry Journal, 4 (July 1907), 71. See also ARWD 1906, I, 144, for General Orders Number Fourteen, dated 26 April 1906, which specified the duties of the two commanders with regards to the assistance then being rendered.

<sup>10</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 107.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., I, 103-104.

<sup>12</sup>Walton Bean, Boss Ruef's San Francisco, (Berkeley, California, 1967), 120. In the months which followed, Schmitz is said to have stated frequently that his life began on 18 April 1906. Even the San Francisco Bulletin, edited by Fremont Older, one of the reformers plotting against Schmitz, refrained from criticizing the mayor for several weeks. (Page 122). As noted in Chapter II, General Greely also complimented the mayor in his official report. ARWD, 1906, I, 105.

<sup>13</sup>The earthquake and fire abruptly affected the daily lives of rich and prominent men such as Spreckels. A correspondent for the Los Angeles Times reported that a baby daughter was born to Mrs. Spreckels on the sidewalk in front of their mansion behind some screens which had been set up. "On a similar sidewalk in the next block that same night a lost cat who had no home brought forth a litter of kittens." (Quoted by Bean in Boss Ruef's San Francisco, 123.)

<sup>14</sup>SFRS, 9.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., xxv.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 10. In Boss Ruef's San Francisco, Bean suggests that the reasons for Schmitz's decision may have been political. On 3 May he abolished the Committee of Fifty and replaced it with the Committee of Forty for the Reconstruction of San Francisco. This new organization did not include several members of the old committee - Francis J. Heney among them. Abraham Ruef was made a key member of the committee on organization which determined the membership of the various sub-committees. As such, he was soon the chairman of several of these. Subsequently, Ruef was accused of using these positions in an attempt to increase his personal fortune. (See pages 123-127.) Neither General Greely in his official report nor the San Francisco Relief Survey mention the Committee of Forty as being involved in the actual provision of relief support to the population.

<sup>17</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 149-150.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., I, 154-156. Instructions for this general redistricting are contained in General Orders Number Twenty-five. (See Appendix Three of this thesis.)

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., I, 146-149. Instructions for the organizing and contents of these seven relief sections are contained in General Orders Number Eighteen. (See Appendix Two of this thesis.)

<sup>20</sup>SFRS, 12. See also General Orders Twenty-five at Appendix Three.

<sup>21</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 108.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>SFRS, 11.

<sup>24</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 108.

<sup>25</sup>Following correspondence with the War Department, 1500 additional troops and forty-five officers were sent to San Francisco. Devol, "The Army in the San Francisco Disaster", Infantry Journal, 4 (July 1907), 71. These soldiers were in addition to those which General Funston had already obtained from throughout the Department of California.

<sup>26</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 106. This request temporarily contributed to a degree of misunderstanding between General Greely and California Governor George C. Pardee. Governor Pardee had mobilized the National Guard without any request for assistance from Mayor Schmitz and on 23 April and the Citizens' Committee requested that the Guard be withdrawn because the relief work had become systemized and the dangers had passed. It has been shown, however, that this was hardly the case. The Governor ignored this request and the last Guard units were not relieved from active service until 31 May 1906. James J. Hudson in an article entitled "The California National Guard in the San Francisco Earthquake and Fire of 1906," California Historical Quarterly 55 (Summer 1976), 137-149, suggests that there were political reasons for the Mayor's call for withdrawal. Pardee had long opposed the Ruef-Schmitz organization and certain members of the Citizens' Committee were politically at odds with the Governor. One of these, M. H. DeYoung, controlled the San Francisco Chronicle which was exceptionally critical of the Guard, according to Hudson. Greely reported that he and Pardee met at Fort Mason on 27 April and that the supposed differences were amiably cleared up. The difficulty had partly been the result of serious delays of telegrams which each had sent to the other. ARWD, 1906, I, 102.

<sup>27</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 108.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., I, 110.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., I, 106.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., I, 146-149. See also Appendix Two.

<sup>31</sup>SFRS, 11.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., 15-16. Dr. Devine's recommendations included the following: (1) The opening of cheap restaurants; (2) support of permanent private hospitals; (3) provision for the care of convalescent patients, the aged, and the infirm; (4) special relief in the form of tools, implements, household furniture, sewing machines, and the like; (5) a committee to administer the special relief fund; (6) a date to be fixed after which applications for aid would no longer be accepted; and (7) the setting aside of no more than \$100,000 for use by the committee in hiring people for jobs which might not be provided by the private sector or by the city. The first six of these recommendations were accepted and the seventh was rejected.



<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 19.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 18-19.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 19-20.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 25-26. On 4 February 1909, the Board of Trustees of Relief and Red Cross Funds replaced the corporation, the work of which had largely been accomplished.

<sup>37</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 116.

<sup>38</sup>U.S. Congress, House, Message From the President of the United States, H.R. Doc. 714, 59th Cong., 1st sess., 1906. Contact between the authorities in San Francisco and those in the outside world was vital. The same congressional document includes a large number of telegrams sent to various depots and posts by the Quartermaster-General, the Commissary-General, and the Surgeon-General. On 19 April alone, Quartermaster-General C. R. Humphrey sent out over thirty telegrams ordering that supplies be sent to San Francisco.

<sup>39</sup>Frank W. Aitken and Edward Hilton, A History of the Earthquake and Fire in San Francisco, (San Francisco, 1906), 150-151. See also H.R. Doc. 714, 59th Cong., 1st sess., 8.

<sup>40</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 117.

<sup>41</sup>See, for example, ARWD, 1906, I, 97 and 117. General Funston mentioned the many officers who assisted him, but singled out Captain Wildman for special praise.

<sup>42</sup>SFRS, 40.

<sup>43</sup>U.S. War Department, General Orders and Circulars, War Department, 1906 (Washington, 1907). See General Orders Number Eighty, Eighty-two, and One hundred-thirty five.

<sup>44</sup>General Orders Twenty-two, dated 4 May 1906. See ARWD, 1906, I, 151. Among other things this order prohibited any officer after 6 May from making expenditures or incurring indebtedness chargeable against Congressional relief appropriations unless specifically directed to do so by General Greely.

<sup>45</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 111.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., I, 109.

<sup>47</sup>By 19 July, when he signed his official report, Febiger had been promoted to lieutenant colonel. This explains why the records refer to him by different ranks.

<sup>48</sup>The primary source for information on the conduct of the Bureau of Consolidated Relief Stations is Lieutenant Colonel Febiger's report found in ARWD, 1906, I, 235-253.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., I, 236.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., I, 237. On page 250, however, the number of people fed on 2 May is listed as 313,117. That is the same number listed for the day before as well, and is, therefore, questionable, given the large number of refugees concerned. Perhaps the figures from early May should best be accepted as good estimates and only that.

<sup>51</sup>In 1906 Mitchell was serving at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas as an assistant instructor at the Signal School and as commander of the post Signal Company, then involved in the testing of new signal equipment and techniques. General Greely, the former Chief Signal Officer, considered it the best signal company in the Army. Mitchell was a protegee (and later a biographer) of Greely and the general had assisted him in securing the Leavenworth assignment.

Following his period of temporary duty in San Francisco, Mitchell returned to Fort Leavenworth where, in 1907, he entered the Army's School of the Line (now the Command and General Staff College). He was the first Signal Corps officer to be so selected. Alfred F. Hurley, Billy Mitchell: Crusader for Air Power (Bloomington, Ind., 1975), 10-12. With Mitchell in San Francisco were twenty-eight soldiers from Company A, Signal Corps, Fort Leavenworth. They were relieved from further duty on 1 June 1906 and ordered to return to their home station. ARWD, 1906, I, 161.

<sup>52</sup>For a listing of officers assigned to the relief sections see General Circular Number Eight, dated 6 May 1906. ARWD, 1906, I, 246-247.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., I, 238.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., I, 251-253.

<sup>55</sup>SFRS, 44-45.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 45.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid. On 16 May 99,262 people were fed. ARWD, 1906, I, 250.

<sup>58</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 126.

<sup>59</sup>SFRS, 52.

<sup>60</sup>ARWD, 1906, I. A sample of the contractual agreement between the Bureau of Consolidated Relief and the food contractors is found at 247-249.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., I, 126.

<sup>62</sup>See for example, "Bill of Fare at the Refugee Camps," San Francisco Examiner, 13 May 1906, 3.

<sup>63</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 248.

<sup>64</sup>16 May is the first day for which free meal ticket statistics are available. ARWD, 1906, I, 250.

<sup>65</sup>A list of restrictions is found in ARWD, 1906, I, 126-127.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., I, 243.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., I, 251. No explanation is given for the 1/2 figure.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., I, 243.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., I, 161.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., I, 244.

<sup>72</sup>Information on the organization of the clothing issue system is contained in ARWD, 1906, I, 114-115 and 193-199. At the last citation is the report of Captain John J. Bradley who was the officer in charge. Other sources include SFRS, 55-58, and Devol, "The Army in the San Francisco Disaster," Infantry Journal, 4 (July 1907), 76-77.

<sup>73</sup>During the initial three days after the earthquake the Army issued 13,000 ponchos, 58,000 shoes, and 24,000 dark blue shirts. Devol, "The Army in the San Francisco Disaster," Infantry Journal, 4 (July 1907), 76. Some of the shoes were old and had been returned from the Philippines for turn-in. General Greely's report lists the number of pairs of shoes issued by the Army as 41,173. ARWD, 1906, I, 115.

<sup>74</sup>Captain Bradley's report may be found in ARWD, 1906, I, 193-199.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., I, 195.

<sup>76</sup>Just as the Army slowly withdrew from control of the civil relief sections with regard to food, so too with clothing. Section 4, paragraph IV of General Orders Number Eighteen authorized the involvement of Major Febiger and the officers in charge of the civil sections. This authority was revoked on 7 May in paragraph 4 of General Orders Number Twenty-four. See ARWD, 1906, I, 147 and 153.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., I, 115.

<sup>78</sup>SFRS, 56.

<sup>79</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 115.

<sup>80</sup>SFRS, 57.

<sup>81</sup>Later Quartermaster-General, United States Army. His report may be found at ARWD, 1906, I, 182-193.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., I, 182.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., I, 183.

<sup>84</sup>Devol, "The Army in the San Francisco Disaster," Infantry Journal, 4 (July 1907), 73, 75.

<sup>85</sup>SFRS, 32-33.

<sup>86</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 186.

<sup>87</sup>Major Krauthoff's report may be found in ARWD, 1906, I, 199-214. It is the key source for information concerning the provision of rations to the refugees. Among other things his report provides tabular data on the types and amounts of food issued.

<sup>88</sup>U.S. Congress, House, Message From the President of the United States, H.R. Doc. 714, 59th Cong., 1st sess., 1906, 5.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 25.

<sup>90</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 201.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., I, 202.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., I, 203.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., I, 204.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., I, 206.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., I, 208.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., I, 184-185

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., I, 185.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., I, 133.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., I, 113.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., I, 185.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., I, 185-186.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., I, 114.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid.

<sup>105</sup>SFRS, 91-92.

<sup>106</sup>Dr. Torney later served as Surgeon-General of the United States Army. SFRS, 90. The Army General Hospital in San Francisco is now known as Letterman Army Hospital, named for a Civil War U.S. Army surgeon. Perhaps it would have been more appropriate if Torney's name had been selected, given his participation in San Francisco's medical history.

<sup>107</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 215.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid.

<sup>109</sup>SFRS. 92.

<sup>110</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 118.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., I, 216.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., I, 118.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., I, 216.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid., I, 218.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., I, 118.

<sup>116</sup>William Strobridge, "Soldiers in the Streets, 1906," The Pacific Historian 22 (Spring 1978), 6.

<sup>117</sup>"Praise for Sanitary Work," San Francisco Examiner, 25 April 1906, 2. This article also discussed Dr. Torney's Spanish-American War service as well as his duties from then until 1906. The Army General Hospital in San Francisco was apparently at least the third hospital that he had commanded including one at Hot Springs, Arkansas and another in Manila.

<sup>118</sup>"Health Conditions of City Marvelous," San Francisco Examiner, 19 May 1906, 2.

<sup>119</sup>On 25 April, a committee of transportation was organized and from 26 April until 10 May, the railroads offered free and reduced rate tickets. The San Francisco Relief Survey reported that the Southern Pacific Railroad provided free transportation for 300,684 people from 18 to 26 April. 226,000 of these traveled to various points around the Bay; 67,000 to other places in California; and 7,684 to other states. The figure of 300,684 is quite obviously an estimation given the apparent rounding off of its first two components. From 26 April to 10 May, 2,684 people were provided transportation by the committee to all points in California, the U.S. and abroad. Between 26 April and 30 June 1908, the figure was 4,876. Transportation data is helpful in demonstrating that the number of people made homeless was large, but only that. As mentioned above, the evenness of two figures leads one to suspect that they were rounded off. Additionally, as previously mentioned, many people transported to points around the Bay Area still

needed shelter - particularly in Oakland where perhaps 75,000 gathered. Not given - and probably unknown - is the number of people who paid for their own transportation outside San Francisco. Finally, it must be realized that many who were transported had received shelter from the authorities prior to their movement; many who moved doubtless returned at some time and required assistance. The provision of free transportation to refugees, therefore, is interesting by itself as an area of relief assistance, but can only assist in demonstrating the magnitude of the problem of providing shelter. SFRS, 58-69.

120Ibid., 69.

121ARWD, 1906, I, 120.

122Ibid., I, 122.

123SFRS, 82.

124Ibid., 81.

125ARWD, 1906, I, 182.

126Ibid., I, 192. See Appendix Six.

127Devol, "The Army in the San Francisco Disaster," Infantry Journal, 4 (July 1907), 85. General Greely gives a figure of 3,000 refugees at Jones' Dump. ARWD, 1906, I, 140. The story is also mentioned in Colonel Reynolds' article in Noyes, "An Earthquake Chronicle," JMSI, 39 (1906), 107.

128ARWD, 1906, I, 140.

129Ibid., I, 158. The term "permanent camps" is misleading. It merely implies that conditions there were more organized than the conditions under which many people had been living. See also Appendix Four.

130"Mayor Schmitz Issues a Proclamation Ordering Concentration of Tent Dwellers," San Francisco Examiner, 12 May 1906, 1.

131ARWD, 1906, I, 121-122.

132SFRS, 79.

133Devol, "The Army in the San Francisco Disaster," Infantry Journal, 4 (July 1907), 82. Regretably, General Greely's official report does not contain one by Colonel Heuer, Corps of Engineers. Captain Meriwether L. Walker, Corps of Engineers, submitted a short report which may be found at ARWD, 1906, I, 220-223. It will be recalled that Captain Walker was the officer at Fort Mason who was awakened by General Funston's messenger on 18 April and who led Companies C and D, Corps of Engineers, into the city. His report mentioned only briefly that engineer troops were involved in sanitary

work in connection with the camps, in the construction of camps and the flooring of tents, in the demolition of ruined buildings, and in providing assistance in administering the camps.

<sup>134</sup>SFRS, 80.

<sup>135</sup>Rembert W. Patrick et al., The American People: A History, 2 vols. (Princeton, N.J., 1962), II:245. Many in the United States were concerned about Japanese immigration. Historian Alfred Thayer Mahan, for example, felt that quotas should be established to keep the Japanese from taking over the West Coast. Patrick and associates report that the Japanese agreed to limit emigration, but did not enforce the limits very well. Hostility between the two countries was one of the reasons that Roosevelt later chose to send the fleet on a world-wide cruise.

<sup>136</sup>Bronson, 102.

<sup>137</sup>SFRS, 94.

<sup>138</sup>*Ibid.*, I, 94.

<sup>139</sup>*Ibid.*, I, 76.

<sup>140</sup>*Ibid.*, I, 94-95.

<sup>141</sup>Bronson, 177.

<sup>142</sup>*Ibid.*, 171.

<sup>143</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 132.

<sup>144</sup>SFRS, 75-76.

<sup>145</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 132, 138.

<sup>146</sup>*Ibid.*, I, 132.

<sup>147</sup>Bronson, 177.

<sup>148</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 138-139.

<sup>149</sup>*Ibid.*, I, 136.

<sup>150</sup>"Army Is to Fight Off Famine," San Francisco Examiner, 7 May 1906, 5.

<sup>151</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 137.

<sup>152</sup>*Ibid.*, I, 138.

<sup>153</sup>*Ibid.*, I, 165. Lieutenant Colonel Wisser's report may be found at pp. 165-182.

<sup>154</sup>Ibid., I, 610.

<sup>155</sup>Ibid., I, 163. See also Appendix Five.



CHAPTER VI  
AN ASSESSMENT

The quality of the Army's contributions in and around San Francisco following the earthquake can best be assessed by observing what people said and wrote at the time because they were the ones who were affected. The overwhelming opinion of the public and of the civil authorities about the quality of the Army's performance in the aftermath of the earthquake was favorable in 1906 and history has sustained that verdict. The picture chosen to serve as the frontispiece for this thesis, for example, is from a set of ten of The American Soldier series paintings chosen by the Army's Center of Military History to illustrate peacetime contributions and its title is a reflection of the historical view.

Although there has been an acceptance of the Army's role, criticism has been leveled at some of its actions. Three such areas stand out and each has been addressed in the preceding chapters. They concern the use of dynamite to destroy buildings in fighting the fire; the inflexibility of soldiers in forcing the evacuation of businesses and homes in advance of the flames; and the use of violence to enforce orders on the population. Of these three subjects the use of dynamite to check the fires was the one which caused the most controversy.

It is difficult for contemporary Americans to assess the virtues and defects of the use of dynamite without returning to the records and chronicles of 1906. It is true that abuses did occur with the use of explosives and that their use by inexperienced men did spread fires on

many occasions. It is also true, however, that not all of those using explosives were soldiers. As pointed out in Chapter Four, Captain Coleman and Lieutenant Briggs were both Artillery officers and the first was post ordnance officer for the Presidio. It is logical to believe that such a dangerous task (as well as the lives of a detail of enlisted men) would only have been entrusted to officers of proven ability.

Coleman's report stated that the Army used only the explosives which he deemed to be the safest - dynamite and gun cotton (cellulose nitrate). Granular dynamite (called giant powder) was not used by the Army because of its "liability to ignite combustible articles in buildings where it might be used."<sup>1</sup> It was, however, used by others in the city against Coleman's advice. It was also pointed out that the destruction of bulidings was only undertaken after a request to do so by the mayor and then only in accordance with guidelines laid down by him or his representatives. Until the afternoon of 19 April permission was only given to demolish buildings in immediate contact with the flames and time and again this prevented the establishment of adequate firebreaks.<sup>2</sup>

Very few people find it easy to accept the logic of dynamiting a building which is not burning; after all, the winds might shift and the building might be spared. After the afternoon of 19 April, however, that is precisely what authorities did as they changed their tactics and sought to establish firebreaks far enough in advance of the flames to be adequately prepared when the fire arrived. This discriminant destruction of buildings at and around Van Ness Avenue eventually halted the westward movement of the fire and undoubtedly saved much of the remainder of the city from obliteration.

Soldiers were also criticized for their refusal to allow individual citizens to remain near the fire to try to save their homes or businesses. In some cases orders were so strictly enforced that volunteers to fight the fires were turned back even in those areas where there were no firemen.<sup>3</sup> Such actions are hard to defend. Like anyone else, soldiers are not immune from stupidity and, regrettably, some are often as inflexible as other humans. It is not automatically the rule, however, for the display of flexibility and initiative in emergency situations are traits often ascribed to American soldiers. They are traits which have frequently distinguished Americans from their enemies. Still, critics must recognize that trained, disciplined soldiers were carrying out orders which were instituted to save lives rather than property. The death toll resulting from the earthquake and fire was amazingly low in San Francisco - only 489 as reported by General Greely.<sup>4</sup> One can only speculate as to how high the total would have climbed if soldiers had allowed countless people to remain inside their homes and businesses to save a few remaining items of property or to fight the flames. As many firemen will acknowledge, such actions are two prominent causes of deaths in connection with fires. Property may be replaced - lives cannot be.

The question of whether or not the Army used excessive force was addressed in Chapter Four. General Greely's statistics on the number of deaths attributable to violence are the most authoritative ones and were accepted by the authors of the San Francisco Relief Survey.<sup>5</sup> These statistics, as well as the data on overall earthquake casualties, were developed after detailed research by General Greely's aide-de-camp, Captain F. L. Winn. As previously stated, these figures reveal that not a single person was killed by a soldier.<sup>6</sup>

The newspapers frequently carried headlines to the contrary during the hectic days immediately following the earthquake and helped to perpetuate the rumors of large numbers of deaths caused by Federal soldiers, but the articles were generally uncritical. The San Francisco Examiner correctly reported on 28 April 1906 that the rumors of wanton slaughter by the troops were false although it incorrectly attributed some shootings to the soldiers; "but they were men who needed shooting," it reported.<sup>7</sup> The implication is, therefore, that even had the soldiers killed looters as authorized by Mayor Schmitz, such actions would have been generally acceptable.

Surprisingly there was little criticism of General Funston's posse comitatus violation. His decision to commit Federal forces was supported by civilian officials from the President and the Secretary of War to the Governor and the Mayor. General Greely commended his prompt action and Funston stands with Greely as one of the true heroes of the entire episode. His performance in San Francisco was another in a series of exploits which enhanced his reputation and which led to his rise to a position of even greater responsibility ten years later. One wonders if an Army general who made a similar decision in the second half of the twentieth century would receive the same praise that Funston did.

Praise for the Army's efforts came from all levels in California. Governor Pardee expressed his personal appreciation in a letter to General Funston on 4 June 1906<sup>8</sup> and the California State legislature passed Senate Concurrent Resolution Number Four on 12 June 1906 commending the officers and men of the Regular Army and the National Guard for their services.<sup>9</sup>

On 30 June 1906 Mayor Schmitz wrote to General Greely expressing his appreciation and that of the people of San Francisco:

The magnificent work which has been done by the United States Army under your control in the matter of taking care of our homeless and destitute should justly receive the commendation of all of our fairminded citizens. It has been a great pleasure and personal privilege to have had the aid, during the trying times, of our national troops and has tended largely to the successful handling of the situation. I am pleased to note that there has not been one death caused by the regular soldiers, and, in fact, no serious disturbance or conflict of any kind. I am proud as an American to testify to the manly qualities exhibited on this occasion of the regular soldier, and of the high efficiency evidenced by the officers of the Army...<sup>10</sup>

On 2 July 1906, former Mayor Phelan, as chairman of the Finance Committee of the Relief and Red Cross Funds, wrote to General Greely:

As citizens we feel that the Army in time of peace has demonstrated its efficiency and usefulness under your command as it has in our days of trouble signalized its splendid qualities on the field of battle.<sup>11</sup>

The press also expressed the appreciation of the public. A representative article in praise of the soldiers may be found in the San Francisco Examiner on 22 April 1906. While still alluding to their use of force, the author wrote:

...there was always the steady figure of the young American with his gun and bayonet, regardless of the flaming houses or falling walls, with his mind set singly on what he was there to do - setting an example of calmness and efficiency.

Theirs has been a difficult duty.

At such times as these when the most rigid and arbitrary rules must be enforced, there is no time for fine discriminations or for consulting the dignity of this person or that. But somehow, through all the grim severity of the military rule, there has been a spirit of good nature; a desire to hamper as little as possible the law-abiding citizens, though to the thief and the troublemaker the awful penalty was meted out without hesitation.<sup>12</sup>

Another article which appeared in the New York Times on the same day commented on the fact that the relief of San Francisco came from a

source not normally associated with charity or mercy and that the Army should be praised on account of its promptness and efficiency in the relief effort. It was further stated that dispatches from London expressed envy at the way in which the United States Army had cut through red tape which would have slowed the British Army.<sup>13</sup>

Individual citizens also expressed their feelings. Examples are contained in a number of letters from private citizens to a General Lee and members of his family and are quoted in the Journal of the Military Service Institution. "From the first few hours of the fire the city was under martial law - thank God for that! With chaos around us we could feel sure of not being murdered or robbed with Uncle Sam's soldiers on guard every few blocks," wrote one person.<sup>14</sup> Another stated, "I think we never would have pulled through without the United States troops, and wish the city were under martial law now."<sup>15</sup> Still a third wrote, "The military saved us. It has been our preservation from utter ruin. Thank Heaven for it, and that it was at hand to protect us from more desperate destruction from looters, thieves, and ghouls."<sup>16</sup>

A cynic might suspect such letters appearing in a military journal, but the conversion of cynics is rarely worth the effort that such a task requires. What is significant is that such quotations are illustrative of the majority opinion as expressed by the Governor, the Mayor, and in the press. Another example is a letter in General Funston's papers on file with the Kansas State Historical Society. On 3 May 1906, 131 residents of a refugee camp on the Presidio took time to express to him their "deep gratitude and thankfulness" for the manner in which the military had assisted them and they singled out

specific soldiers for their executive ability, kindness, fairness, or courtesy.<sup>17</sup>

The efforts of the United States Army in subduing the fire and assisting in the relief effort in San Francisco were noble peacetime accomplishments which well served the citizens of California, which improved the quality of life in San Francisco, and which enhanced the Army's reputation and honor. The story of the Army's efforts is one in which American soldiers and civilians alike may quite justly be proud.

## CHAPTER VI

Notes

<sup>1</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 224-225.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., I, 224

<sup>3</sup>Frank W. Aitken and Edward Hilton, A History of the Earthquake and Fire in San Francisco (San Francisco, 1906), 228.

<sup>4</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 101.

<sup>5</sup>Charles J. O'Conner, et al., San Francisco Relief Survey (New York: 1913), 5.

<sup>6</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 139.

<sup>7</sup>"What San Francisco Owes the Regulars," San Francisco Examiner, 28 April 1906, 16.

<sup>8</sup>A copy of Governor Pardee's letter to General Funston may be found in the Frederick Funston collection, Box 33:1, Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.

<sup>9</sup>ARWD, 1906, I, 102.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., I, 105.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., I, 131-132.

<sup>12</sup>"Kindness of the Firm Hand," San Francisco Examiner, 22 April 1906, 10. (Editorial page).

<sup>13</sup>"The Work of the Army," New York Times, 22 April 1906, 10. (Editorial page).

<sup>14</sup>Henry E. Noyes, "An Earthquake Chronicle," 39 (1906), 118.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 119. The references to martial law in these letters and in many of the newspaper articles of the day show that many people felt that it had been imposed and that they approved of such imposition. The appearance of so many soldiers contributed to such an impression, but, as it has already been shown, martial law was never declared and from the start Army officials declared that the military was to be strictly subordinate to the civil authorities. ARWD, 1906, I, 103-104.

<sup>16</sup>Henry E. Noyes, "An Earthquake Chronicle," JMSI, 39 (1906), 119-120.



17 Letter from residents of Camp Presidio, 3 May 1906.  
Frederick Funston Collection, Box 33:1, Kansas State Historical  
Society, Topeka, Kansas.