

# *Ramón de Murillo's Plan for the Reform of New Spain's Frontier Defenses*

INTRODUCTION AND ANNOTATION BY JESÚS F. DE LA TEJA<sup>1</sup>  
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BY THE TIME THAT JUAN DE OÑATE MARCHED INTO NEW MEXICO IN 1598, Spain's northward expansion from the central valleys of Mexico had created a vast frontier region stretching from the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of California. Increasingly difficult climatic and topographic conditions, more mobile and intractable Indian groups, and a focus on silver mining as the engine of expansion created a settlement pattern consisting of islands of Spanish settlement surrounded by vast expanses of Indian controlled territory. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Spanish Bourbon dynasty inherited not only an immense Indian frontier, but a new imperial frontier, as French penetration of Spanish territory from Louisiana forced Spain to occupy Texas.

Throughout the eighteenth century the northern frontier of New Spain defied Spanish efforts to bring peace, efficiency, and economy to the administration of the region. Along with two major inspections, those of Brigadier Pedro de Rivera and the Marqués de Rubí, charged with imposing order and reducing costs among what was essentially a chaotic and corrupt agglomeration of presidios and local militias, there were numerous reorganizations of pre-existing jurisdictions and attempts to establish new ones. None of these efforts proved a viable solution. The Coman-

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<sup>1</sup> In the 1980s, during a visit to the Archivo General de Indias, Ron Tyler uncovered Murillo's proposal while collecting Texas-themed images. He turned the document over to John Wheat for translation, but each then forgot about it. In late 2002, while working on images for a textbook, Ron remembered the Murillo plan and asked if I would be interested in working with it. He was then kind enough to key in John Wheat's impeccable translation, to which I have added the necessary notes. I would like to thank Ron Tyler for bringing the document to my attention and making valuable suggestions to the introduction, John Kessell, David Weber, and Lance Blythe for their helpful comments, and Fred Bauman, manuscript reference specialist in the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, for confirming the location of the plan.



Figure 1. On the state of the troops that garrison the frontier line of the nine interior provinces of New Spain

Explanation	
N. 1 Quilted leather coat of seven buckskins	N. 6 Pistols hanging from saddle skirt hooks
N. 2 Saddle pommel and cantle	N. 7 Shield
N. 3 Carbine	N. 8 Boots and spurs
N. 4 Saddlebags for water and provisions	N. 9 Wooden stirrups
N. 5 Lance	N. 10 Cartridge box

dancia General de las Provincias Internas, which started out as an autonomous, all-encompassing administrative unit that was to include all the northern *gobiernos* from the Gulf of California to the Gulf of Mexico, was too large to function any better than the viceroyalty in governing the region. From the founding of the Provincias Internas in 1777 to the outbreak of the Mexican War of Independence in 1810, Madrid juggled and rejuggled the makeup of the unwieldy administrative unit, splitting the jurisdiction in two only to recombine it and then split it again; putting it under the authority of the viceroy then restoring its autonomy. The system never really worked.<sup>2</sup>

Failure to impose political and administrative order on the northern frontier was not for lack of trying. A copious volume of reports, proposals, and recommendations issued forth from governors, commandant generals, and field officers. Many of these efforts resulted from the specific in-

<sup>2</sup> On the Pedro de Rivera inspection tour of 1724–1728 see Thomas H. Naylor and Charles W. Polzer, S.J. (comps. and eds.), *Pedro de Rivera and the Military Regulations for Northern New Spain, 1724–1729: A Documentary History of His Frontier Inspection and the Reglamento de 1729* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press,

structions of various royal administrators looking for fresh and meaningful information on which to act, but some of them were nothing more than well-intentioned meddling by lower-ranking officials who thought they had the answer. Ramón de Murillo, author of the proposal under consideration here was one such meddler. His plan, like so much else addressed to the Court of Charles IV, was doomed to suffer the disregard of a monarchy poised on the brink of annihilation.

So far the only thing we know of Murillo comes from the letter he wrote to Charles IV's prime minister, Manuel de Godoy,<sup>3</sup> introducing himself and his plans. The letter, dated August 26, 1804, informed Godoy that for six years he had served with the rank of cadet both at the war desk of the Interior Provinces and in the field. He claimed to have participated in a number of campaigns against enemy Indians, most likely Apaches. Just when this service took place he does not make clear. It is also unclear whether or not he saw action in Texas, but the fact that he titled one of the watercolors "Texas Hussars" suggests he had an understanding of conditions in Texas, perhaps from his tenure at the war desk.

Murillo was ambitious in his representation to the government. He offered proposals on four issues:

1st—A general plan of the present state of the Interior Provinces of the Kingdom of New Spain; of the current state of the troops that garrison the frontier line and state in which they should be, both the regular infantry and cavalry and the militias; with attention to the increases and reforms that should be made in them for the better execution of the royal service, to the benefit of the state, and without additional burden on the exchequer.

2nd—The method it will be very important to observe in the Eastern Interior Provinces in case of war with the Anglo Americans, by which, though their forces be considerably greater, not only will they not advance their conquests, but the opposite will occur.

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1988). On the Rivera and Rubí expeditions with emphasis on Texas see Jack Jackson (intro. and ed.), William C. Foster (annot.), *Imaginary Kingdom: Texas as Seen by the Rivera and Rubí Military Expeditions, 1727 and 1767* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1995). A number of works cover the vicissitudes of the Provincias Internas, the most comprehensive of which are two works by Luis Navarro García: *Don José de Gálvez y la Comandancia General de las Provincias Internas del Norte de Nueva España* (Seville: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1964) and *Las Provincias Internas en el siglo XIX* (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1965). A good brief summary of the organizational changes can be found in the introduction to Bernardo de Gálvez, *Instructions for Governing the Interior Provinces of New Spain, 1786*, trans. and ed. Donald E. Worcester (1951; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1967).

<sup>3</sup> Godoy ingratiated himself with the royal couple shortly before Charles ascended the throne in 1788. He was the queen's lover but nevertheless had the confidence of the king, who in 1792 elevated him to prime minister at age 25. In 1795, having successfully extracted Spain from war with revolutionary France, Charles granted Godoy the title Prince of the Peace. Often mischaracterized as incompetent, he was actually a victim of Spain's structural weaknesses at the beginning of the nineteenth century. He never managed to return to Spain following the royal exile imposed by Napoleon Bonaparte on Charles and his son Ferdinand. He died in Paris in 1851.

3rd—On the necessity and advisability of establishing a flying artillery<sup>4</sup> in those provinces as part of the system for making war, as the one presently established in those places is a little less than useless.

4th—On the [system] that should be established in the Floridas in order to maintain ourselves there without losing ground.<sup>5</sup>

The plan presented below is the first element of Murillo's proposal. The author divided the plan into two parts. The first consists of twenty-four sections and contains a broad description of current conditions on New Spain's northern frontier, with a detailed analysis of the problems in the presidio system, down to the wastefulness of having drummers in cavalry companies. Like many officers brought up during the Age of Enlightenment, Murillo could not fail but include a direct assault on the Franciscan religious program, or as he titled section 23: "On how futile and wasteful it is to the royal treasury to send missionaries to Western America."

The second part of the plan consists of Murillo's solutions to all the problems. In this section he raised the radical idea of replacing the traditional presidio companies with hussars and the flying companies with chasseurs. In each case, Murillo found the dress and equipment of the military on the northern frontier inadequate when compared with European models. For Murillo the *soldado de cuera* was a useless relic of the past that needed urgent replacement if Spain was to successfully hold off the challenges of hostile Indians and Anglo-Americans. To make his points as clear as possible Murillo painted three watercolors representing the typical presidio "Soldado de cuera"<sup>6</sup> [Fig. 1], his ideal heavy cavalryman, which he styled "Usares [Hussars] de Texas" [Fig. 2], and a light cavalryman, which he styled "Cazadores [Chasseurs] de Nueva Vizcaya" [Fig. 3].

The separation of the watercolors from the plan has been the cause of some confusion and misinformation.<sup>7</sup> In 1965 J. Hefter and Francisco Ferrer Llul presented a very brief article in *Military Collector & Historian* magazine that misinterpreted both Murillo's proposal and the watercolors that accompanied it. Instead of reading the plan as a proposal for

<sup>4</sup> The Spanish reads *artilleria volante*, that is, light field artillery.

<sup>5</sup> Ramón de Murillo to [Godoy], Aug. 26, 1804, Sección de Gobierno, Audiencia de Santo Domingo, legajo 2599 (Archivo General de Indias, Seville). Negative photostatic copy, Manuscript Division, materials copied from Spanish Archives, box 3845 (Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.).

<sup>6</sup> An excellent summary of the common soldiery on the frontier, although the analysis of racial information has been superceded by more recent work on the imprecise and fluctuating character of racial designations, is Max L. Moorhead, "The Soldado de Cuera: Stalwart of the Spanish Borderlands," *Journal of the West*, 8 (Jan., 1969), 38–55.

<sup>7</sup> Due to the special preservation needs of illustrative materials, maps, plats, and other special materials were separated from the original documents and placed in a separate record group, Mapas y Planos. The watercolors associated with Murillo's plan were placed in a series titled Uniformes, although their relationship to legajo 2599 was maintained.

action, they interpreted it as a set of regulations that Charles IV and Godoy implemented in their efforts to "introduce French fashions into the military forces stationed in the nine Interior Provinces of New Spain." They went on to state that "the century-old Cuera Dragoons . . . were declared obsolete and superseded by new Hussar companies operating out of Texas and designated as *Usares de Texas*." After discussing the Texas hussar uniform in detail, they conclude that "this dashing hussar outfit was of but brief duration, and before long, the homely, undisciplined Cuera dragoon with all his old-fashioned gear, six-inch spur rowels, lance, musket, and leather armor was again patrolling the vast frontier regions."<sup>8</sup> In their brief article they make no mention of the other two illustrations.

Just when the "*Soldado de cuera*" watercolor first came to light in the context of borderlands history is uncertain. It is not an illustration in John Francis Bannon's *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821*, first published in 1963, nor is it to be found in Sidney B. Brinckerhoff's and Odie B. Faulk's *Lancers for the King: A Study of the Frontier Military System of Northern New Spain* (1965) or Brinckerhoff's and Pierce A. Chamberlain's *Spanish Military Weapons in Colonial America, 1700-1821* (1972). Even more significantly, it does not appear in Odie B. Faulk's *The Leather Jacket Soldier: Spanish Military Equipment and Institutions of the late 18th Century*, a profusely illustrated book that contains photographs of a number of *cueras* and sketches of *cuera*-clad soldiers. It did appear in Odie B. and Laura E. Faulk's *Defenders of the Interior Provinces: Presidial Soldiers on the Northern Frontier of New Spain*, which was published in 1988.<sup>9</sup>

It seems that Murillo's "*Soldado de cuera*" first came to light in Bradley Smith's *Spain: A History in Art*, a 1966 book chronicling the story of Spain's European and imperial history.<sup>10</sup> In borderlands historiography the "*Soldado de cuera*" seems to have put in its first appearance as a full-color plate in John L. Kessell's *Kiva, Cross, and Crown: The Pecos Indians and*

<sup>8</sup> J. Hefter and Francisco Ferrer Llul, "Military Dress: Spanish Texas Hussars ca. 1803," *Military Collector & Historian: Journal of the Company of Military Historians*, 17 (Winter, 1965), 118-120. Thanks to David M. Sullivan, administrator for the Company of Military Historians, for making a complete copy of the article available to the annotator.

<sup>9</sup> Sidney B. Brinckerhoff and Odie B. Faulk (eds. and trans.), *Lancers for the King: A Study of the Frontier Military System of Northern New Spain, With a Translation of the Royal Regulations of 1772* (Phoenix: Arizona Historical Foundation, 1965); Sidney B. Brinckerhoff and Pierce A. Chamberlain, *Spanish Military Weapons in Colonial America, 1700-1821* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1972); Odie B. Faulk, *The Leather Jacket Soldier: Spanish Military Equipment and Institutions of the late 18th Century* (Pasadena, Calif.: Socio-Technical Publications, 1971); Odie B. and Laura E. Faulk, *Defenders of the Interior Provinces: Presidial Soldiers on the Northern Frontier of New Spain* (Albuquerque: Albuquerque Museum, 1988), 45. Although he includes only plats of presidios as illustrations, the "*Soldado de cuera*" is not mentioned in Max L. Moorhead, *The Presidio: Bastion of the Spanish Borderlands* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975).

<sup>10</sup> Bradley Smith, *Spain: A History in Art* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1966), 153. The caption to the color image bears the caption "colonial cavalryman in Mexico wore quilted cloth armor as protection against arrows. Other arms included pistols, lance." The image credit, which appears on p. 291, compounds the error of "quilted cloth armor," by inaccurately dating the image as "17th century."



Figure 2. Texas Hussars in battle action. [Right side]: On the state in which the presidio companies should be placed.

Explanation of armament and gear

N. 1	Saber	N. 5	Saddlesbags for water and provisions
N. 2	Shield	N. 6	Blanket
N. 3	Pistols and holsters	N. 7	Closed wooden stirrups for protection of the feet in rough country
N. 4	Saddle		

*New Mexico, 1540–1840*. Reinforcing the idea that its dissemination in borderlands studies began with that 1979 work is James Officer's use of the image in his 1987 *Hispanic Arizona, 1536–1856*, in which he thanks Kessell for making the image available.<sup>11</sup>

If Kessell provided a valuable service in making the “*Soldado de cuera*” known to the public, he also added to the confusion regarding the purpose of the painting. The caption to the plate not only translates the title and legend, it also includes the following comment: “this representation by Ramón de Murillo was part of a reform proposal that would have cut the protective thigh-length leather coat, or *cuera*, down to jacket size.” Murillo, to the degree that he addressed the issue of the *cuera*, was not calling for its reduction in length, but for its complete elimination. Neither the hussars nor chasseurs he proposed to replace the *soldados de cuera*

<sup>11</sup> John L. Kessell, *Kiva, Cross, and Crown: The Pecos Indians and New Mexico, 1540–1840* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1979), plate facing p. 359 [note that the subsequent 1987 and 1989 editions published by Southwest Parks and Monuments Association omit the color plates]; James E. Officer, *Hispanic Arizona, 1536–1856* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1987), 39.

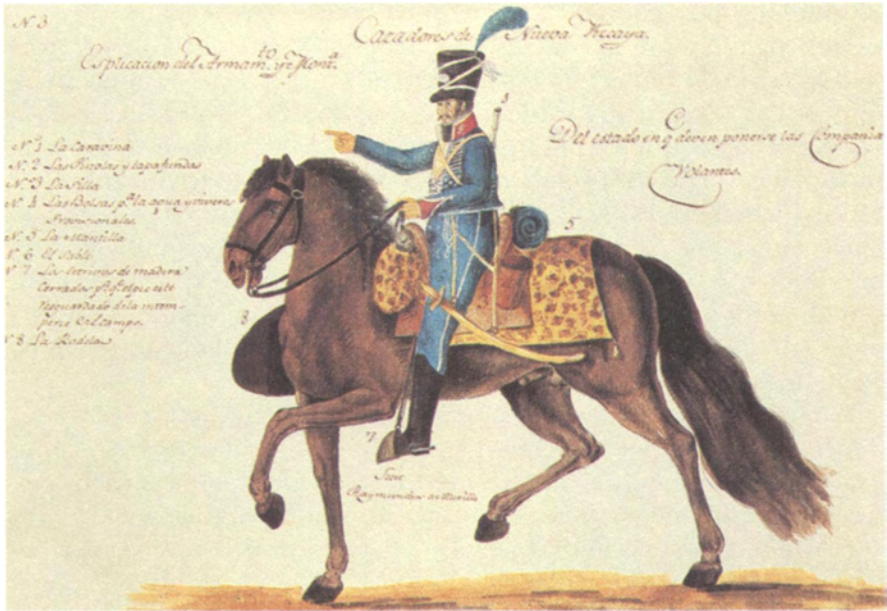


Figure 3. Nueva Vizcaya Chasseurs. [Right side]: On the state in which the flying companies should be placed.

Explanation of armament and gear

- |      |                                     |      |  |
|------|-------------------------------------|------|--|
| N. 1 | Carbine                             | N. 5 | Blanket  |
| N. 2 | Pistols and holsters                | N. 6 | Saber  |
| N. 3 | Saddle                              | N. 7 | Closed wooden stirrups for protection of the feet in rough country |
| N. 4 | Saddlebags for water and provisions | N. 8 | Shield   |

would have employed what Murillo labeled a “worthless item.”<sup>12</sup> Kessell’s interpretation was subsequently picked up in 1992 by David Weber, who employed it in *The Spanish Frontier in North America*. His caption reads: “a *soldado de cuera*, drawn circa 1803 by Ramón de Murillo to accompany a proposal to cut the heavy thigh-length leather coat to jacket size, as shown here.” Jerry Thompson’s 1997 *A Wild and Vivid Land: An Illustrated History of the South Texas Border* and Kessell’s 2002 *Spain in the Southwest: A Narrative History of Colonial New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and California* both refer to a proposal to cut the length of the coat.<sup>13</sup>

With the publication of Murillo’s plan and watercolors together, the confusion is eliminated regarding both the purpose and the date of the

<sup>12</sup> See below, section 7, p. 21.

<sup>13</sup> Kessell, *Kiva, Cross, and Crown*, plate facing p. 359; David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 219; Jerry A. Thompson, *Wild and Vivid Land: An Illustrated History of the South Texas Border* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1997), 24; John L. Kessell, *Spain in the Southwest: A Narrative History of Colonial New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and California* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 335.

illustration (most authors date it as circa 1803 or late eighteenth century, although Bernard L. Fontana in his survey, *Entrada: The Legacy of Spain and Mexico in the United States* claims it to be a “seventeenth-century drawing”<sup>14</sup>). The watercolor was not intended to illustrate the ideal *soldado de cuera*, but to show the typical presidio cavalryman’s uniform and equipment.<sup>15</sup> The detailed legends included in all three watercolors helped Murillo highlight the differences between what he believed to be the archaic and arcane elements of the *soldado de cuera*’s gear and the modern appearance of his proposed hussars and chasseurs. As for the date, by reuniting the watercolors with their source document we now know that although they might have been executed earlier, Murillo first presented them in August 1804.

While recent borderlands historians have found the “*Soldado de cuera*” a useful illustration of what a frontier soldier should have looked like, an examination of the three images together helps us understand how different were the perspectives of regular army and frontier military officers. Undersupplied, undertrained, and underpaid, entire companies that were properly dressed and provisioned were rare. It did little good for Murillo to propose uniforms and armaments that would have entailed considerable new expense when the Crown was unwilling to spend what was necessary on the much simpler, though rustic, gear called for in existing regulations.<sup>16</sup> Regular army officers might have looked upon the *cuera* and the lance as cumbersome and obsolete, but at least some presidio officers considered them of value—the former because it afforded some protection from the numerous arrows that enemy Indians could fire while the soldier reloaded his musket, the latter because it could be used from horseback while the musket could not.<sup>17</sup> Murillo’s hussars and chasseurs, as equipped in his watercolors, might have worked against similarly armed and trained enemies, but not against Indians.

Murillo’s proposal was quickly reduced to the status of artifact. The collapse of Spain’s North American possessions, first in what remained of

<sup>14</sup> Fontana may have been following Smith’s erroneous dating in *Spain: A History in Art* (see above n. 10).

<sup>15</sup> Although authors rightly point out that the *cuera* was a knee-length affair, there is evidence that in this, as in most other frontier military matters, there was great variability and disregard for regulations. Zebulon Montgomery Pike, who traveled throughout the region in 1807, only a few years after Murillo made his observations, described the presidio uniform as “a short blue coat, with red cape and cuffs, without facings, leather or blue cotton velvet small-clothes [knee-breeches] and waistcoat, the small-clothes always open at the knees, the wrapping-boot with the jack-boot and permanent spur over it, a broad-brimmed, high-crowned wool hat, with a ribbon round it of various colors” (Elliott Coues [ed.], *The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike* (2 vols.; 1895; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, 1987), II, 794–795).

<sup>16</sup> A complete translation of the presidio regulations of 1772, including a description of uniform and arms, can be found in Brinckerhoff and Faulk, *Lancers for the King*.

<sup>17</sup> Moorhead, “The Soldado de Cuera,” 44–45; Moorhead, *The Presidio*, 186–188.



Florida and then in New Spain, afforded Spanish policy-makers little opportunity to toy with yet one more scheme to make a rational administrative unit out of far-flung and minimally held border regions. Not only did the Texas Hussars and Nueva Vizcaya Chasseurs never come into existence, but the much maligned yet resilient presidio companies were hard pressed to survive into the era of Mexican independence.

As for the "*Soldado de cuera*," the watercolor that accompanied the plan, it represents one of the few surviving contemporary images of Spanish borderlands denizens. While local military officers, royal surveyors, and the occasional military engineer created an ample supply of maps and plats of presidios, towns, and whole provinces, artists rarely journeyed to the hostile environs of the frontier. From New Mexico comes a hide painting depicting Spanish soldiers and their Indian allies engaged in battle with Frenchmen and their Indian allies. In the 1760s Jesuit missionary Ignacio Tirsch sketched Spanish settlers in Baja California, including a soldier who appears to be wearing a *cuera*. The Malaspina expedition, which went up the Pacific coast in the early 1790s, did have talented artists in its company, one of whom executed a sketch of a California *soldado de cuera*. There are a few others. Murillo's detailed and colorful "*Soldado de cuera*," therefore, bears considerable importance for imagining the frontier military at the end of the Spanish empire.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> These images can be found in Kessell, *Spain in the Southwest*, 194–195, 202, 213–214, 234–235, 262–263, 340–341; and Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 170, 260, 287, 288, 315.

Index<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The plan, along with the original letter of introduction from Murillo to Godoy, can be found in Sección de Gobierno, Audiencia de Santo Domingo, legajo 2599 (Archivo General de Indias, Seville). Negative photostatic copies can be found in materials copied from Spanish Archives, box 3845, Manuscript Division (Library of Congress). Page numbers for the original document are indicated as numbers with slashes, i.e., /2/.

/2/Demonstrational plan that shows the current state of the Interior Provinces of the kingdom of New Spain and the actual and preferred condition of the troops who garrison the Frontier Line—cavalry and infantry veterans, as well as of the militias—with an explanation of the reforms which they must undergo for the better performance of the royal service to the benefit of the state and without burden to the budget.

No. 1

On the current state of the nine interior Provinces of the kingdom of New Spain.

The Interior Provinces of New Spain are nine in number: Coahuila, Texas, Nuevo Santander,<sup>2</sup> Nuevo Reino de León, and the frontier of Colotlán,<sup>3</sup> to the east, and Nueva Vizcaya, Sonora, New Mexico and California to the west.

They have long been governed by two commandancies general, one located in Saltillo, capital of the former, and the other in Chihuahua [capital] of the latter, until the competing jurisdictions which arose between the two caused the command of all provinces to fall to the western one, independent of the viceroy of Mexico to whom both were previously subject. They cover an area 250 leagues from north to south and 200 leagues from east to west. Along the latter exists the Frontier Line of heathen Indians whom we have not yet been able to settle, and who wage such a destructive war against us that/2a/since the year 1770 there is a third less population than used to exist.

No. 2

On the reasons why the aforesaid provinces are in such a decadent state.

The commandant general, being the chief of the nine provinces, has many grave responsibilities under his charge. In the field of military performance he has been replaced by adjutant inspectors, and the current one as well as his predecessors—though they have had

great political expertise—have been ignorant of military matters because their principles have been incompatible with those of the profession which they lately adopted. For this reason, the troops have sunk to such extreme incompetence that, whereas in 1770 a detachment of 200 soldiers would attack and destroy an enemy force of 500 Indians, today the situation is just about the reverse. Contributing to this is the fact that, since those troops are mounted at their own expense, they enter into battle without enthusiasm for fear that their horses might be killed,

<sup>2</sup> Today the northeastern Mexican state of Tamaulipas, which before the U.S.-Mexico War had its northern boundary along the Nueces River.

<sup>3</sup> A colonial jurisdiction that is today composed mainly of the isolated northern tip of the Mexican state of Jalisco and adjoining areas of Zacatecas. See Peter Gerhard, *The North Frontier of New Spain* (rev. ed.; Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 73–78.

thus placing their own self-interest before the honor and glory of the armed service.

No. 3

On the different nations which inhabit those vast lands: their character, system of government, and the manner in which one and another wage war against us.

The Indians inhabiting those vast lands are Comanches, Lipans, Utes, and Jicarillas, in the east. Each category of these constitutes a considerable nation in their forces and capabilities. They are at war with those of the west, in defense/3/of their property. They reside on the plains of Las Palomas<sup>4</sup> and the slopes of the Rio Grande in tents made from cured skins and are dressed and shod with the same. Their weapons are

the long musket and the [bow and] arrow. The first-named [Indians] make little use of these, preferring instead the *macana*, which is a flint stone hatchet with a handle thirty inches long. As soon as they fire the rifle and shoot an arrow, they fling themselves on their adversaries with the *macana*, quickly deciding the outcome either for or against them. They are very humane and fairly reliable. Peace has been made with them, and though at times it has been broken, that has been due to our breaking the treaties with them through some unfounded suspicions. Each of them recognizes a chief who leads them, especially in military matters. On the other hand, those who inhabit the west: Mescaleros, Gileños, Mimbrenos, Chiricahuas, and Navajos, are natural enemies of humankind.<sup>5</sup> They spare no one, live in the open air in the mountains with no permanent residence, and go about almost naked. They have no tents and little else for their subsistence, rather they make raids, rob our provinces, and devastate prosperous ranchers. They cannot settle, and thus,/3a/as much out of habit as of necessity, they wage the cruelest war against us. They do not gather in masses, but are divided into bands consisting of the related families which, with their many or few relatives, form into *rancherías*.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> May possibly be a reference to the Paloma Apaches, hence the Buffalo Plains on which this tribe resided. See Elizabeth A. H. John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds: The Confrontation of Indians, Spanish, and French in the Southwest, 1540-1795* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, Bison Books, 1975), 255, 328.

<sup>5</sup> These are all Athabaskan-speaking peoples, which, except for the Navajos, were considered members of the Apache nation. Murillo groups them together because their sphere of activity was the New Mexico-Nueva Vizcaya-Sonora frontier region in today's border states of New Mexico, Arizona, Sonora, and Chihuahua. Classification of the various Apache groups is extremely variable. Edward H. Spicer, for instance, includes only the Chiricahuas, Mimbrenos, and Gileños among the western Apaches, associating the Mescaleros with the Jicarillas and other Plains Athabaskan speakers. For a brief synopsis of the ethnography see Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest: The Impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on the Indians of the Southwest, 1533-1960* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1962), 229-261.

<sup>6</sup> Spaniards applied the term *ranchería* to the settlements of Indians that did not fully meet their definition of "settled." That is, unlike the Pueblos, who inhabited complex towns of solidly constructed

When they are quiet and tranquil, it is the eldest who heads and governs them. But in all situations of attack or defense, command passes to the young man who, among them all, is reputed to be the bravest and most vigorous. And though with many of these we have adopted a policy of winning them over to peace with flattery and tenderness, that has had and continues to have the poorest results. At the king's expense, they are given every necessity, the same as a soldier. Despite the sacrifice borne in their maintenance by the royal treasury, however, and the favors handed out to them, the day they feel the urge and the companies are at reduced strength, they take up arms and attack us, causing us enormous damage. In spite of these disillusionments, negotiations still go on, coming together one day and falling apart the next. As a result, in addition to our making no headway in negotiations, the troops have to be even more alert as they await the day when the Indians rise up, and the glory of our arms is weakened and degraded with such intolerable and irregular policies. They are held up as traits of virtue and Christian compassion, when they really are weaknesses of the spirit and despicable cowardice.

No. 4

By what means the Indians are provided with all weapons and munitions.

Although our enemies should have no other weapons than [bows and] arrows, they do not lack firearms and bladed weapons. Many of them acquire these from the English<sup>7</sup> who carry on illicit trade, giving them in return deer, buffalo, beaver, and other skins. They

do heavy trading in such merchandise, and the aid which they provide to our enemies causes us tremendous harm.

No. 5

On the troops which are on the frontier to make war on them.

To contain our enemies and wage a vigorous war upon them, there is in said provinces a sizeable number of cavalry and infantry troops, divided into companies along the entire stretch from east to west. Each one is stationed at its fortified post with a greater or lesser

contingent according to the demands of the area which they occupy along the Line. Cavalry troops are distinguished by the names "presidial"

dwelling, *rancheria* peoples lived in more or less scattered villages of wickiups or other less durable shelters and were known for their mobility.

<sup>7</sup> Although Murillo uses the term "English," the date of the report—late 1804 or early 1805—would suggest that U.S. traders are the parties involved. Much of this trade was thirdhand, American traders doing business with Plains tribes, which then carried out commercial dealings with more westerly groups. Much research remains to be done on this subject, but for an overview of southern Plains trading practices focusing on the Comanches see Pekka Hämäläinen, "The Western Comanche Trade Center: Re-thinking the Plains Indian Trade System," *Western Historical Quarterly*, 29 (Winter, 1998), 485–513.

and "flying." The first enjoy a larger salary and perform offensive and defensive operations, while the others constitute a kind of reserve force devoted to serving the/4a/capital; escorting the trains of passengers who enter and depart each month, until they are safely delivered; pursue the enemies who invade our territories; and reinforce the detachments sent on offensives, which they call campaigns. The infantry troops, in addition to being like the presidial cavalry and having to defend their posts on the Line, contribute a large part of their forces to those detachments, or campaigns, of which they form most of the vanguard.

No. 6

On the troops' uniforms  
and how poorly they are  
clothed.

Both types of troops have the same uniform, which consists of a short jacket and very wide trousers of blue cloth or shag, a vest with crimson lining and collar, gold buttons, and a round hat with narrow brim and a crimson band on the crown, in place of a cockade. The officer class is distinguished by their rank and by two little gold patches on the ends of the collar. There is much tolerance of dressing out of uniform, such that with the impropriety of their dress they end up looking ridiculous.

No. 7

On their armaments.

Armament for the cavalry consists of a carbine, pistols, long lance, and shield. Additionally,/5/as a principle of ordinance or regulation, in all their formations and battle actions they wear

a leather jacket,<sup>8</sup> so that the arrows which the enemy fires will not inflict internal body wounds. It was created more out of weakness than of military practicality. It amounts to a kind of large doublet of six buckskins sewn together, with cotton and brown paper stuffed between them in quilted sections. Despite the fact that experience has shown that it is in-

<sup>8</sup> The Spanish term for the protective garment is *cuera*, from *cuero* for hide or skin. Although commonly translated as "leather jacket" and so shown in Fig. 1, available descriptions and contemporary illustrations show it as much longer in length and usually made of buckskin, at least in its outer layers. For an illustration of the traditional *cuera* see plate 51, David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 260. A very similar portrait, this one including musket and shield, can be found at the lower right-hand side of a map titled "Mapa de los pueblos y lugares de Saltillo, Parras, Alamo, Hornos y Cuencamé, de la Intendencia de Durango (Nueva Vizcaya), por Melchor Núñez de Esquivel. 1787," found facing p. 404 in Vito Alessio Robles, *Coahuila y Texas en la época colonial* (2nd ed.; Mexico: Editorial Porrúa, 1978). Zebulon Montgomery Pike, who traveled throughout the Provincias Internas in 1807, described the presidial soldier's uniform thus: "Their dress is a short blue coat, with red cape and cuffs, without facings, leather or blue cotton velvet small-clothes [knee-breeches] and waistcoat, the small-clothes always open at the knees, the wrapping-boot with the jack-boot and permanent spur over it, a broad-brimmed, high-crowned wool hat, with a ribbon round it of various colors," Elliott Coues (ed.), *The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike* (2 vols.: 1895; reprint, New York: Dover Publications, 1987) II, 794-795.

sufficient protection to stop the penetration of arrows and serves only to impede free movement, the use of such a worthless item has not been abandoned.<sup>9</sup> The carbine, too, is more troublesome than it is useful because it is such a nuisance, and because its erratic fire from horseback contributes nothing in battle. Moreover, the handling of the reins, shield, and lance, which they try to undertake while firing the carbine, gets them so confused that they cannot operate it calmly. The enemy uses their confusion to its own advantage. The same is true of the lance; they make use of it only when the enemy gets very close, at which point they face them with the lance to hold them back. It is as useless as it is/5a/dangerous to the soldier because of the ease with which it breaks. The *adarga*, or round shield, is more appropriate. With it, both horse and rider often escape injury. It is not uncomfortable to carry or wield and costs little since it consists of three uncured cowhides firmly sewn together, with the royal arms on the outer face. The utility of this weapon would be much greater than it already is if the troops followed other procedures more in accord with European tactics. The pistols also are quite useful and they make use of them at every opportunity, carrying them where they should and not underneath the rear saddlebow, from which it is difficult to extract them in time in those emergencies where a moment's delay can bring grave consequences. They have no saber or broadsword because, being ignorant of the tactics to operate effectively with this weapon, they consider it useless (when it is the most essential one). Among the infantry, some employ the rifle and lance and others the [bow and] arrow.

No. 8

On their saddles.

Their saddle amounts to a seat similar to the one for bullfighters, with front and back saddlebows and two wide sidebars of strong wood, which, attached to the bows, form the frame. For greater stability, it is covered in moistened leather which, after/6/drying, contracts and holds so tightly that the saddle becomes a solid piece. On the inside are placed the saddle pads and cantles, the former made of calfskin and the latter of rolled woolfell, all of it quite soft so that it seats well and

<sup>9</sup> The *cuera* was controversial because it required that the soldier wearing it trade mobility for protection. In the Regulation of 1772, developed from the Marqués de Rubí's reform proposals following his inspection tour, an effort was made to standardize the *cuera*. Commandant General Marqués de Croix opposed its use, however, and began the process of replacing it six years later with the introduction of the *tropa ligera*, or light troop, lightly equipped cavalry units designed for quick strikes. From that time forward, presidial troops were divided into companies of *soldados de cuera*, or heavy cavalry, and *tropa ligera*, or light cavalry. For a full discussion of the presidial trooper's uniform and armament see Max L. Moorhead, *The Presidio: Bastion of the Spanish Borderlands* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975), 185-193.

does not hurt the horse's back. Hanging from the top of the aforesaid planks are the stirrup straps and the stirrups, which are also of wood and carved from blocks so that the foot might be better protected from bad weather in open country. The whole saddle is secured by a main cinch which they make themselves out of horsehair. They do not use a poitrel (breast-leather) nor do most use the crupper, and though [the saddle] does not move when climbing and descending elevations, the horse is bothered by the pressure of the cinch. The saddle skirts are of strong leather. One notable defect that is seen in this device is that it lacks gun holsters, having instead some large bags in which to carry water and provisions. The pistols are carried underneath the rear saddlebow hung on the hooks of the saddle skirts, as is shown in painting No. 1.

No. 9  
On their boots and spurs.

Their boots and spurs are two indicators that prove the lack of military procedures that prevails among said troops. The former consist of two cured deerskins of/6a/a hazelnut color, one bound to each foot and held up with the bindings under the knees, in the same fashion used by peasants to wear their stockings and leather soles. It so happens that when they get wet they become useless and fall apart in a short while. With regard to the spurs, there prevails an abuse that approaches the limits of utmost barbarism: each soldier attempts to outdo the rest in their size. They are so inconsiderate of their horses that they glory in lacerating their flanks with the spurs and in crippling them with their wild antics. Whoever refuses to act this way is considered to be timid and no man of the outdoors (to them the greatest dishonor). As a result of this fanatical obsession, they kill many horses and ruin many others, such that they are unable to travel when the circumstances require.

No. 10  
On the strength of the companies, both double and single.

The strength of the companies, as was mentioned in Chapter 5, is greater or less according to the positions which they occupy on the Line. If it is a double [company] it consists of the following positions:



captain 1st lieutenant 2nd same 1st <i>alférez</i> 2nd same 1 chaplain 2 1st sergeants  2 2nd same 6 carabineers or corporals /7/ 1 drummer 1 armorer 140 privates	Total strength of double companies . . . 162
1 captain 1 lieutenant 1st <i>alférez</i> 2nd same 1 chaplain 1 1st sergeant  2 2nd same 4 corporals or carabineers 1 drummer 1 armorer 94 privates	Same for single companies . . . 110

No. 11  
 On the distribution of military duties.

No. 12  
 On horse herd duty.

The service is divided into three duties, which are: care of the horse herd, defense of the post of the Line, and offensive operations in enemy territory.<sup>10</sup>

For the horse herd detachment or guard, a junior officer or sergeant is detailed with one quarter of the forces of each company. Since the principal aim of the enemy is to see how to deprive the troops of mounts in order to render

them incapable of performing their duty for some time, they always direct

<sup>10</sup> Duties were much broader than Murillo's comments suggest. Soldiers were detailed to mission-guard duty, an assignment that often included serving as instructors or overseers to Indian workers.

their attacks to this purpose. For this reason, the troops are exposed to constant danger, in addition to living day and night in the open without tents or any other resource to provide the slightest relief or comfort, until they are relieved by those who are on defensive duty. The horses remain under the highest security, grazing in those pleasant fields with no other means for/7a/their sustenance.

No. 13  
The post on the Line  
which is on defensive  
[duty].

Half of the forces of each company are on defensive duty at their respective fortified positions. In order to do guard duty and be prepared for the first incident, each individual has with him a horse assigned from the herd. Very early those who are not on duty mount up

and go out to forage in order to sustain them. After this is done, the ten or twelve men occupied with the least duties get out in two parties, to the left and the right, to reconnoiter and see whether some hostile [Indians] have entered our territory during the night. They recognize them without fail from their tracks, possessed of an admirable knowledge in this area. And since at every post they do the same thing at the same time, one party will meet up with another and they will exchange news about what has occurred. When they return to their [respective] companies they report this to their commanders so that they might take the measures and give the orders that are most appropriate. This method is the most essential one that could be adopted for such a purpose, because, even though the enemy sneaks in silent and unseen, scarcely has he/8/entered when, through his very tracks, he is swiftly overtaken and prevented from destroying our settlements, particularly those of prosperous landholders.

No. 14  
On the offensive assignments  
which they call campaigns.

The offensive assignments that they call campaigns are carried out by assembling one fourth of the forces of each company, after having covered horse herd and defensive assignments. They draw the supplies, munitions, and other necessities from their respective stores,

as well as three horses and a mule, the latter for carrying the provisions and the former for combat. Having all assembled at the rendezvous point,

Escort duty often took significant numbers of troops away from their posts, especially in times of increased Indian hostilities. In addition, soldiers carried the mails, performed construction and repair projects, and maintained their own or company gardens and livestock. For a general discussion of duties see Moorhead, *The Presidio*, 197. Although the editor disagrees with their conclusion that the life of a soldier was "boredom and monotony that went on year after year after year," a good description of the various activities of a presidial company at San Antonio de Béxar is provided in Odie B. Faulk and Laura E. Faulk, *Defenders of the Interior Provinces: Presidial Soldiers on the Northern Frontier of New Spain* (Albuquerque: Albuquerque Museum, 1988), 54-55.

they set out in three sections: vanguard, main body, and rear guard. The vanguard consists of infantry plus some from the cavalry who are known for their agility and intelligence in following tracks. These proceed far in advance of the main body, on foot, carrying on their backs provisions for eight or ten days as well as the proper weapons. They continue exploring and reconnoitering the terrain until they find an enemy track, which they report immediately back to the commander who is following in the main section. They continue on that trail, reporting everything they notice, until the aforesaid tracks appear to be recent/8a/and other signs make them think the enemy's residence to be near. In such case, they make a halt and hide themselves sending word to the two other divisions to do the same so as not to be seen or heard by the lookouts which the Indians post on the highest peaks in the mountains as a precaution. After night-fall, they begin to move, some on the trail of the enemy, and others on the trail of the first group, until the vanguard manages to observe their *rancherías*. Having seen their location and the number of persons that might live in them, the leader of the vanguard returns and informs the expedition commander about the number of the enemy, the local conditions, the position which they occupy, and the best way to attack them. In light of his report, the two of them draw up a plan to attack at dawn the next morning. At that hour everything is ready, and at the shout of "Santiago" a clamorous din of yells and rifle shots breaks out, so disconcerted and without coordination that it serves more to confuse than to harm the enemy. If they are *gandules*<sup>11</sup> that is, 15 years or older, they either use their agility to escape or defend themselves to the death, with the result/9/that all or most of this category get away due to the poor positioning and ineptness of the attack and the lack of discipline among the troops, and because neither they nor their leaders know to execute a feint. All that are left are some old dead or captured men or women, or boy or girl, who they take back to the capital with all the pomp of a victory. It is one that costs us dearly, because those who escaped, resentful about the child or wife who was taken from them, seek vengeance by entering our provinces and burning the ranches, killing all who live there, stealing the cattle, and slaughtering the ones they cannot take with them. Such are the fruits of the noisy military actions of said troops, with outstanding bravery shown by he who barbarically sacrifices a pitiful old man who, prostrated by his advanced age or afflictions, could not flee the scene, or equally, a child in shock from fear and surprise.

<sup>11</sup> From the Arabic *gandūr*, dandy or braggart, in medieval Spain the term was also used for a member of a Moorish militia. By the eighteenth century it had come to mean a rogue, rascal, or vagabond. On the Mexican colonial frontier the term came to refer to an Indian warrior—equivalent to brave—although that definition did not make it correctly into the dictionary of the Royal Academy of Spain until 1936.

No. 15  
Salaries enjoyed by individuals of those companies.

In the salaries received by these troops according to the last regulation issued by the late Most Excellent Señor Marqués de Rubí,<sup>12</sup> there are variations which defy all reason. Despite the fact that the flying [company troops] work under the same rotation in the performance/ga/of all their duties, and have more reason to wear out horses because they are constantly on the move on escort duty, they receive less pay, as is shown in the following table, *to wit*:

1 captain	2400 pesos	Annual salaries of the presidial companies, both double and single
1 first Lieutenant	700	
1 second same	60	
1 first <i>alférez</i>	550	
1 second same	500	
1 chaplain	500	
2 first sergeants	300	
2 2nd same	276	
6 corporals	264	
140 privates at	240/ea	
1 captain	1200 pesos	Annual salaries of individuals of flying companies
1 first lieutenant	600	
1 second same	550	
1 first <i>alférez</i>	500	
1 second same	450	
2 first sergeants	276	
2 2nd same	264	
6 corporals	240	
1 drummer	162	
140 privates	216	
1 Spanish lieutenant commander	1000 pesos	Same for the Opatas <sup>13</sup>
2 Indian sergeants	216	
2 [2nd] same	204	
2 1st corporals same	192	
4 2nd same	180	
109 Indian privates	168	

<sup>12</sup> The reference is to the *Reglamento e instrucción para los presidios que se han de formar en la línea de frontera de la Nueva España*, issued in 1772 by royal order and based on the recommendations made by the Marqués de Rubí following his inspection of the frontier line in 1766–1768. On the Texas portion of the inspection tour, and for a discussion of Rubí's proposals, see Jack Jackson (ed.), and William C. Foster (annot.), *Imaginary Kingdom: Texas as Seen by the Rivera and Rubí Military Expeditions, 1727–1767* (Austin:

No. 16

On the condition of the troops, each in their respective categories according to what His Majesty pays them.

With the salary each rank enjoys, the soldier must attend to everything necessary for his subsistence and that of his family (most or all of them being married), buy weapons and saddles, furnish clothing and shoes at his expense, and keep 7 horses and a mule in serviceable condition according to ordinance or

regulation, /10/ because without that number he could never carry out the duties and tasks required of him. Yet, despite the fact that it becomes impossible for soldiers to subsist on such a meager income, their conscientiousness in repairing their footwear, the ingenuity with which they manage their own saddle trappings, and the economy and industriousness of their families allows them to prevail, not only without debts, but with a sizeable balance in their favor in the case of the presidial soldiers. The flying [company troops], in addition to having fewer assets, are not as well mounted or clothed as the others because they are provided with less, and face greater expenses because they spend most of the time away from their families and in constant movement. The junior officer class is worthy of even greater admiration, because, as is shown in the preceding table, with the meager salary that is designated to them—no matter how much they deny themselves and economize—they cannot avoid being constantly in debt and nearly shirtless.

No. 17

On the duties performed by the company quartermasters.

There is in each company a quartermaster who is responsible for the stocking of foodstuffs and goods for the subsistence and supply of its members and their families. The wives arrive every Saturday to receive the weekly ration which their /10a/ respective husbands

are assigned, consisting of an appropriate measure of corn, flour, vegetables, salt, soap, and cigars. The cost of this, as well as of whatever unexpected needs the soldier might have, is, with the authorization of the captain or commander, extended to the soldier by the quartermaster, and its amount is charged in the ledgers. Every four months there is an

Texas State Historical Association, 1995). A complete translation of the Reglamento is available in Sidney B. Brinckerhoff and Odie B. Faulk, *Lancers for the King: A Study of the Frontier Military System of Northern New Spain, with a Translation of the Royal Regulations of 1772* (Phoenix: Arizona Historical Foundation, 1965).

<sup>15</sup> This is the presidial company of San Miguel de Bavispe in northeastern Sonora, which was manned entirely by Opatá Indians. Opatá and Pima Indians were also recruited for service at other presidios in the region and otherwise were organized into mission militias. For a discussion of this service see Cynthia Radding, *Wandering Peoples: Colonialism, Ethnic Spaces, and Ecological Frontiers in Northwestern Mexico, 1700–1850* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 256–263.

accounting, and with what remains to them in liquid assets they clothe their families. Officers withdraw what they need from the company's stores, at legitimate prices, and receive the rest of their income in currency. The performance of this methodical and scrupulous duty calls for individuals with a knowledge of economics, with expertise in the handling of paperwork, and good mathematical skills. Several of those assigned to that duty, knowing their lack of aptitude for such an arduous commission, asked to be relieved of it because they lacked the sufficient qualities necessary to respond to the confidence being placed in them. This was denied them, and rather, they were made to embrace the duty. As a result of this compulsion, in the adjusting of accounts they came up with deficits on the ledger, and despite the certainty that they did not come from embezzlement, but rather were the result of an incompetence worthy of pity and compassion, they were placed under arrest and tried, losing their rank, honor, and respect.

No. 18

On the highly inefficient method observed in the supply of the company stores.

In the supply of the company stores, we observe the most prejudicial and onerous methods. Every year the quartermasters calculate the consumption for their respective companies, and based on existing goods in store, they draw up a list or invoice of what they need. With that, each one goes to the merchant of his choice in the capital, who, by means of a duly authorized agreement, commits himself to deliver by the stipulated deadline the goods requested of him in the lists or invoices presented to him. In fulfillment thereof the merchants obligate their persons and current and future assets with all legal formality. As with notaries, they are given an 8 percent commission and in turn they order from their contacts in Mexico City, Puebla, and Michoacán the European and domestic goods, to whose total cost they add a 2½ percent for shipping. This brings the total commissions to 13 percent, which, along with the surcharges applied to the goods for the agreements made with the agents—and because it is impossible for the latter to procure them on first or second purchase with what is credited to the quartermaster, given the reductions and losses in the retail trade—means that what is consumed by the troops costs them 38 percent above market. Added to this grievous hardship is the fact that the goods are leftovers, scarcely worthy of sale because of their terrible quality. The evils suffered by those poor soldiers with this system are indescribable. These would be ended by an economic arrangement, up to now unfamiliar to them, that would make it possible for them better to perform their duties and be more fit for the royal service.

No. 19  
On the wastefulness of the drummer's position in these cavalry companies.

In all the companies, presidial as well as flying, contrary to all order and general custom, there is a drummer's position with no other duties than to play the prayer<sup>14</sup> and the call to order. They never go out with detachments or campaigns because they are totally useless. They enjoy a wasted income of 13½ pesos per month. In addition to being superfluous, this post creates problems because human vice and the drummers' constant inactivity cause them to disturb the /12/tranquility of many absent soldiers, corrupting the morals and good customs of their families. If the aforesaid companies replaced them with a bugler familiar with the cavalry calls, it would be very advantageous for all the formalities of the service. And in battle situations they could operate according to them, not as now, where they lack the basis, amid the noise and shouting, to issue commands to any effect.

No. 20  
Regarding the armorer.

The armorer is a position that is indispensable to keeping armaments in good condition. He receives the same salary as the drummer and remains at his post on the Line.

No. 21  
Regarding the Chaplain.

The chaplains are parish priests for the towns which are growing up near the fortified posts and which are developed and protected by the troops that garrison them. At the same time that they fulfill their ministry to the soldiers, they attend to the faithful attached to them through the administration of spiritual nurture. They draw an annual salary of 500 pesos.

No. 22  
On the wretched condition of the militias.

In all of the nine [Interior] Provinces there is a considerable number of mounted militias that wear the same uniform as the cavalry veterans, with the sole difference that the latter's has /12a/yellow buttons and stripes, and the former's, white. The establishment of these bodies was most advantageous at the outset, because their officers were chosen from the principal landowners, who, out of honor as much as to defend their considerable properties, kept their companies in the best state of preparedness and lent to the defense of the fatherland with their persons and their abilities. Today, as the result of corruption and abuses wrongly introduced, these

<sup>14</sup> That is, the Angelus, the morning, noon, and evening prayers.

honorable duties are obtained by the most worthless and despicable merchants and bar owners, who look upon the welfare of the state with total indifference and seek only to promote their interests and to enjoy their military privileges<sup>15</sup> without any discomfort or sacrifice. Such is the state of neglect in said militias that it is not known whether there are any privates, corporals, or sergeants; one can only see a sizeable number of officers without subordinates, who insult and tarnish the uniform of the king, dispensing the most adulterated and lowest-grade goods in their stores, and often wiping the counters with the tails of their coats. Given this situation, the existence of these militias in the state shown above is as prejudicial to the welfare of said Provinces as it is abominable/13/to military decorum. It is indispensable that they get back on the right footing or be disbanded entirely, and that the licenses and offices of their respective positions be withdrawn from those officers so that henceforth they may not further abuse the favor and trust that the king has granted to them, much less distract the attention of magistrates with their numerous and strange lawsuits, both civil and criminal.

No. 23

On how useless the apostolic missionaries are to the Interior Provinces.

Each year some 250 friars are sent from Spain to these and others of His Majesty's dominions in the role of apostolic missionaries. Their transfer would be useful were the government's motives in doing so compatible with the allowances at their disposal in their ministry

and with the conditions that are necessary for them to fulfill their obligations. This is impossible to do because of the situation that prevails in all of Western America. Leaving totally aside whether their conduct and procedures are good or bad, we will test only whether or not they are important to the spiritual development and welfare of the state. If they wish us to believe that through their preaching we have furthered our conquests, bringing the Indians to a true understanding, that is a/13a/supposition devoid of truth. As is shown in Chapter 3, neither do our enemies appear in places which would be appropriate for it, nor much less can the friars go out to the faraway and inaccessible sierras to seek and preach to them. Even where that were possible, [the Indians] being such enemies of humankind, the [friars] would fall victim to their fury, to no avail. Lately, not only have they not succeeded in the conversion of said Indians, but they have not even seen them, except for some prisoner when the troops

<sup>15</sup> The *fuero militar*, or military code, was a set of legal exemptions and privileges, including an exemption from civilian jurisdiction, to which active military men were entitled. During the reforms of the eighteenth century this status was extended to active militia members. For a fuller explanation see Lyle N. McAlister, *The "Fuero Militar" in New Spain, 1764-1800* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1957).



return from campaign. If the settlers of these lands are not in a state of extreme consternation, they should thank the valor of the many soldiers who spill their blood for the glory of the king and defense of the fatherland. The aforesaid friars are assigned to the towns called missions of the Upper and Lower Tarahumara, and those of the Yaquis, Opatas, Seris, etc., where the Indians live subject to their justice. To these they are mere parish priests, with nothing more to do than say mass for them on festival days and preach them an occasional sermon during the year.<sup>16</sup> Yet it is impossible for them to carry out even such limited obligations, since they do not speak the Indians' language/14/nor they Spanish. Neither understands the other, for which reason, the poor Indians, despite having joined the brotherhood of our holy religion so long ago, continue as savage as those of El Moqui,<sup>17</sup> who have not the slightest notion of Jesus Christ. In addition to the above, they create a heavy burden on the royal treasury. The minimum cost to the king for each one at his respective mission is 1,500 *pesos*, which comes to 7,500,000 *reales* for their support. They are also designated 430 *pesos* annually for what they call a *sínodo*, which amounts to 2,400,000 *reales de vellón*. This, added to the preceding figure, gives a total of nine million, nine hundred thousand *reales de vellón* which the royal treasury bears in this department.

No. 24

On how fruitless have been the measures taken for the development of said Provinces, and their drain on royal finances.

In spite of the interest shown daily by His Majesty in the progress of the settlers of said provinces, allowing them to hold continuous annual fairs,<sup>18</sup> exempting them from the majority of royal taxes, and relieving them of the *tercio* and *quinto*<sup>19</sup> on all silver extracted from their mines, and despite the sacrifices borne

<sup>16</sup> The Indian groups mentioned by Murillo here include only those of the Sonora-Nueva Vizcaya region, where missionaries had been at work for almost two centuries. The situation was very different in other parts of the Provincias Internas, particularly Alta California, where the Franciscans had begun their work only in 1769.

<sup>17</sup> That is, the Hopis, who had successfully resisted Spanish efforts to reconquer them following the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. Throughout the eighteenth century missionaries ventured into Hopi lands in northeastern Arizona with no success. Even drought conditions late in the century could not bring them to accept either Spanish sovereignty or Christianity. See John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds*, 572-576, 593-601.

<sup>18</sup> Trade fairs were exempt from the ad valorem taxes, such as the *alcabala*, usually charged on all commercial activity except in provinces designated as war zones, such as Texas. Some trade fairs, particularly in New Mexico, were organized for the benefit of trade with Plains Indians, while those held at Saltillo and Valle of San Bartolomé were geared to the exchange of frontier products such as wool, leather, and livestock for manufactured goods from central New Spain or overseas. For a discussion of the trade fairs see Jesús F. de la Teja, "St. James at the Fair: Religious Ceremony, Civic Boosterism, and Commercial Development on the Colonial Mexican Frontier," *The Americas: A Quarterly of Inter-American Cultural History*, 57 (Jan., 2001), 395-416.

<sup>19</sup> Beginning with the conquest, the Spanish Crown claimed one-fifth of all booty, treasure, and subsoil

by the royal treasury, those subjects are in no way alleviated. The merchant who finds the roads under assault and his goods exposed/*14a*/to imminent danger will not attempt any risky ventures. When the miner considers that any day his mines will be invaded, his machinery will be destroyed, and his workers will suffer a cruel fate, he ceases working them. Finally, the landowners—rather than be assaulted by enemies who will steal their cattle or slaughter those they cannot take, and set fire to their fields—if they manage to save their lives, are reduced to a miserable state and seek safety with their remaining possessions, abandoning their ranches. Given this situation, all of His Majesty's charitable gestures to benefit the aforesaid Provinces will be fruitless until, as a basic fundamental, the troops are brought under the most rigid discipline and military expertise. At the same time, we should promote colonization by every workable means, sending to those lands even those sentenced to capital punishment who have not committed the offense of lese majesty (that is, not older than 35 years).<sup>20</sup> There they will truly prove useful, because said provinces could be considered to be for them like a city under siege, and if they commit another crime, justice/*15*/will provide their punishment. If their fear of it causes them to flee, they will find it impossible to ford the deep Rivers Concho, Norte, Puerco, San Antonio, etc., which have no bridges, and only some of which are crossed on ferries by the caravans of passengers which arrive and depart every month. Aside from these inconveniences, they would doubtless fall into the hands of the enemy and therefore would be even more wretched. Finally, the local climate, fruitfulness, and other natural offerings of the country constitute, especially for every European, a veritable blessing. On the contrary, in C eta, Melilla, Pell n, Cartagena, Puerto Rico, Havana, San Juan de Ul a, the Philippines, etc., one who is naturally evil becomes perverse.<sup>21</sup> A good person whom the misfortune natural to human frailty led to any one of these prisons, soon degenerates in every good principle within their walls. He adapts to shamelessness, to misery, and to dishonor; he abandons his religious sentiments and delights in being caustic, insolent, and impudent; at last he builds a heart full of corruption, so eternally dangerous to society that it would be better if he did not exist/*15a*/ among the living.

*/16*/In light of what is contained in the preceding chapters, it is indispensable to reform the problems which have caused decadence in the aforesaid nine provinces, and to restore the military spirit to those troops,

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wealth. The production of silver was subject to the royal fifth, but only on rare occasions did the Crown attempt to collect its full share, often settling for 10 percent or less, depending on circumstances.

<sup>20</sup> High crime committed against the Crown or state.

<sup>21</sup> Murillo is speaking of the fortresses at these locations, the first three in the Mediterranean, which also served as prisons. Individuals condemned to hard labor were often sent to fortresses as cheap labor.

employing every possible measure with which to achieve the extinction of the enemy and general tranquility. They are, to wit:

1. The command of the nine provinces should be combined under one commandant under the orders of the viceroy of Mexico, so that the two, acting in common, might provide all the means necessary to the best performance of the royal service. With two commandants sharing similar authority in their respective jurisdictions, it is impossible for them to combine well in military operations because each one wants to reserve for himself the final word on arrangements. Therefore, their points of view are in conflict, with the result that things are not carried out properly. The viceregal government cannot decide which of the two is to blame, unless there were a *juez de residencia*<sup>22</sup> ruling on a daily basis. Added to this is the fact that said provinces are separated by inaccessible mountains called the Bolsón de Mapimí<sup>23</sup> inhabited by renegade Indians of many nations who, for their evils, have been expelled/16a/from their *rancherías*. That region is a second Sierra Morena.<sup>24</sup> When those Indians make their incursions by way of the east, the commandant of these provinces blames the one for the Western Provinces for carelessness in keeping vigil on the Indians who are living in peace on the Line of his frontier. When it is the other way around, the western commandant reacts in the same way, claiming that the peaceful [Indians] of the east have raided the provinces under his command. If the peaceful have done it, they blame it on the ones from Mapimí. Thus, the truth cannot be verified, and in these disputes neither are these latter attacked and exterminated nor are the others disciplined, all to the detriment of the king and of the state.
2. Appointments made henceforth to the aforesaid post of commandant general should fall to commanders of cavalry, and not of infantry.
3. Appointments of adjutant inspectors should be from soldiers with specialized training and practical experience, so that they will know how to correct the faults of the troops and so that review inspections will be carried out properly.
4. Horses which are killed in battle should be charged to the king's

<sup>22</sup> In the Spanish administrative system, a judge responsible for carrying out an end-of-tenure inspection of a royal office holder. This judge was usually the incumbent's successor.

<sup>23</sup> Large, remote basin and range region dividing Coahuila from Nueva Vizcaya and stretching from the Big Bend of the Rio Grande in the north to Parras in the south. Because of its supposed inaccessibility, it became a refuge for Indians fleeing Spanish rule.

<sup>24</sup> Mountain range in southern Spain famous as the stronghold of smugglers and other criminals. Best known today from Georges Bizet's opera "Carmen."

account, which will cause the troops to operate in battle with greater boldness/<sup>17</sup>/and zeal than they do now because of their fear of losing what has cost them so much labor.

5. In view of the content of chapter 3 we should show the utmost consideration for the Indians of the east, seeking to avoid interruption of the current good harmony and not failing in our basic obligations to them, much less in their rights as people.
6. We should wage the cruelest war against those of the west, and if, as expected, the force of our arms obliges them to seek peace, it will be granted to them as a humane gesture, but on conditions which do not besmirch our honor and decorum, but make them understand our superiority and leniency. The slightest transgression of their agreement will be punished severely. No fault on their part will be tolerated, nor will they be provided with everything at the king's expense, as they are today. They will have to find the means [of their subsistence], whether by cultivating the nearby fertile countryside or through the game and wild fruits which abound there.
7. In order to prevent the illicit foreign trade that causes us so many problems in every way, our coast guards should be stationed so as to patrol them and oblige its commanders to fulfill their duty, and to be continually on the move/<sup>17a</sup>/at sea inspecting all the ship traffic near our colonies. In this way, we can make our domestic goods more desirable, custom duties will be higher, and our [Indian] enemies will be deprived of the principal means of making war upon us.
8. In order to instill a discipline that will cause those troops to perform all operations with skill, we should issue a new regulation or specific ordinances for them. The one currently in effect,<sup>25</sup> issued by the Most Excellent Señor Marqués de Rubí (deceased)—the situation having changed totally since that time—is full of defects.
9. Presidial companies should be placed on the same uniform footing as our hussars [Fig. 2], and the flying companies, on that of the mounted chasseurs [Fig. 3], with the difference that it makes more sense for the latter to be dressed in blue trousers and jacket rather than green, because this color is more permanent in the open air of the country. And to better distinguish one another, the former will have a scarlet plume and the latter, blue, with the company's instead of the regiment's name on the badge<sup>26</sup>/<sup>18</sup>/

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<sup>25</sup> That is, the Regulations of 1772.

<sup>26</sup> Emblem on headgear.

10. The weapons for the former should be the curved saber, pistols, and buckler, in replacement of their carbine, lance, and leather jacket. The latter will carry a short carbine to perform service in the capital and on campaign for those who largely form the vanguard.
11. The saddle trappings for everyone should be the same, with the addition of a saddle blanket and covering of tiger skin,<sup>27</sup> holsters on either side of the front saddlebows to carry pistols, harness strap, crupper, and some large bags on either side of the cantle to carry water and provisions, plus regulation half-leggings and spurs, as shown in figures 2 and 3.
12. The companies should all have equal strength. In the cavalry and defensive operations at the posts of the Line there should be no changes, and what their commanders must know for the effective discharge of their duties—of which they are totally ignorant—should be included in the new regulation so that they may never plead ignorance.
13. In order that offensive detachments might achieve the greatest successes, it is indispensable that there prevail among those troops /18a/a deep sense of obedience. Furthermore, they will receive detailed instruction in tactics, about which they do not have the slightest notion, not even regarding what should be done to counter the general strategy used by the enemy to its greatest advantage. For this, four individuals, expert in the military arts and especially in cavalry tactics, will be chosen to go as adjutants, two to the east and the other two to the west. The first two will reside in Coahuila and Texas, and the latter in Arizpe, capital of Sonora, and in Chihuahua, in Nueva Vizcaya. There they will have one officer from each company and the cadets from every one come to undergo training exercises with those garrisons. As they learn and perfect their skills they will return to their companies to teach the others there. By this means, in the course of three or four months, we will manage to have them all prepared in the art of war. Besides being in charge of this obligation, the [adjutants] will see to it that superior orders are carried out by the garrison, they will plan the detachments which set out from the capitals/19/on offensive operations, and if necessary they will lead them. They will have the rank of captain and [receive] 1 000 pesos annually.
14. The income of hussars and chasseurs should be the same, by virtue of the work and duties to which one and the other are devoted. And

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<sup>27</sup> That is, jaguar.

so that they might subsist in the proper manner—having seven horses and one mule in serviceable condition, purchasing a saddle and trappings and weapons, and being in total conformity with the uniform model shown in illustrations 2 and 3, the following [salaries] will be the most commensurate, to wit

1 captain	2400. pesos
1 first lieutenant	850.
1 2nd same	750.
1 first <i>alférez</i>	650.
1 second same	600.
1 chaplain	500.
2 first sergeants at	300.
2 2nd same	288.
2 first corporals	276.
4 second same	264.
1 bugler	216.
140 privates at	240.

15. According to the preceding calculation of the salary increase given to all the individuals of the four companies of chasseurs, along with the one which has also been granted to the junior officers and that of the nine positions which have been created, the royal budget still is not burdened by the sum of 25 thousand pesos, whose expenditure cannot compare with the savings provided by the following /19a/reforms nor with the income which the royal treasury will receive when trade and agriculture can be promoted as a result of the defeat of our harmful enemies through the order and discipline of our troops.
16. The transfers which the officers of some companies have received with their promotions should not continue; each one should receive them within their respective unit.
17. For the post of quartermaster, each company should appoint an individual with a knowledge of business and sufficient instruction in the handling of papers. The resignation of one who lacks these qualifications and seeks relief will be accepted. Otherwise, he should not be held responsible for the results, and the blame should fall on the commander who forced him to undertake it against all reason.

18. The method observed up to now in the distribution of supplies should be completely eliminated and henceforth a more equitable system should be adopted. To this end it is better that merchants have no knowledge or participation in the distribution of said supplies, and that this commission fall to a capable individual of exemplary conduct and some experience in/20/commercial matters who resides in Mexico City, to whom will be forwarded—endorsed by the captains and approved by the commandant general—the lists or invoices of what is needed yearly for the supply of each company. He will go with these documents to make his purchases at the primary markets, and therefore firsthand, from which will result a 22 percent savings. Combining this with the savings of the 13 percent charged by the trade commissioners, we will find that all the goods purchased by the troops will cause 35 percent less drain to their assets, with the advantage that [the goods] will not be leftovers or of such poor quality as those they have sent up to now. And even though the aforesaid agent or quartermaster general be given 1 percent to aid in travel expenses the troops will still enjoy a savings of 34 percent in the goods which they consume. This will allow them to be in a better condition for service for the fulfillment of their duties, and to be less burdened.
- [19.] The post of drummer in the cavalry units should be eliminated, and in his place there should be a bugler who knows all the cavalry calls so that he may perform his service according to them./20a/especially on campaign. He will have three mounts, and will set out on [campaign] when his turn comes around.
- [20.] The post of armorer should continue in its same capacity so that the armaments are ready for use.
- [21.] By virtue of what is contained in No. 22, the militias should be eliminated or placed on the proper footing, in which case it will also be necessary to create regulations in order to govern them.
- [22.] In view of No. 23, no more missionaries should be sent to Western America, because they are totally useless there and cost the royal budget many millions, elevating those missions to parishes and granting to the native students and chaplains of the country exclusive rights to them after the corresponding examinations in the study of Castilian and Taramar. Under these circumstances, they would perform their duties well, instructing the Indians in the dogmas of Our Holy Religion and civilizing them in dealing with people, so that they may be useful to the king and to the state. And

although the aforesaid parish priests might receive, as an/21/allowance, the stipend that the friars enjoy, the budget still comes out ahead in the nine million [reales] it costs to transport them to their respective destinations.

- [23.] The measures proposed in No. 24 should be carried out precisely, thus achieving indescribable benefits. In the first place, the king will receive a heavenly reward for the mercy he shows in sparing the lives of those wretches whom the law has sentenced to death for crimes they were led to commit out of human frailty. 2nd, once they are taken to those countries, not only will they be useful in the development of their agriculture and population, they will contribute through self-interest to the defense of the nation. In addition to this, if the police of Mexico City, Puebla, Guadalajara, and Guanajuato round up all the idlers in the grog shops, gambling houses, second-hand shops, etc., and eliminate the women of ill repute who frequent the bordellos, we will create a body of useful men and women sufficient to populate not only the province of Tejas but also the other eight provinces of the East and West, and without a great burden to the royal budget./21a/

#### Note

No mention is made of infantry troops, since there are only three companies of Indians called Opatas who garrison part of the province of Sonora. In their present state it is not possible to improve them or to correct the performance of their duties, because they are to blame for all the advantages gained by our enemies in the west.<sup>28</sup>

Most Excellent Señor. Prince of Peace

Sir:

By virtue of the great confidence which the king has placed so opportunely in the care of your indescribable zeal and capacity, I have the satisfaction of placing in your hands the foregoing plan of the current state of the Interior Provinces of the kingdom of New Spain, and of the troops that garrison the Line of its borders, with a discussion of the reforms which need to [be] made in them, consequent to what I promised Your Excellency on August 25 of the proximate past year.

I hope, Most Excellent Sir, that the chapters which it contains will be examined with the attention which they demand, because

<sup>28</sup> For a very different contemporary opinion on the military performance of the Indian troops see José Cortés, *Views from the Apache Frontier: Report on the Northern Provinces of New Spain*, ed. Elizabeth A. H. John, trans. John Wheat (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 26–27.



Your Excellency is in a position to render a great service to the king, and I, to lend to Your Excellency's greater glory. Meanwhile, I pray to God for your important health. Yours ever faithfully,

Murrillo

[Rubric]

de todo el servicio, que se hace, que tienen mas motivo para enue-  
 ñezar los Cavallos por estar en continuo <sup>to</sup> exercicio, es-  
 tan <sup>te</sup> inferiorm<sup>te</sup> dotada, como se manifesta en el siguiente

estado que es CLAVES

1 Capitan	2400 p <sup>as</sup>
1 primer ten <sup>te</sup>	700
1 Segundo Id <sup>o</sup>	600
1 prim. el <sup>to</sup>	550
1 2 <sup>do</sup> Idem	500
1 Capellan	500
2 Cirujanos	300.
2 Dhos 2 <sup>os</sup>	276
6 Caros	264
1 So Soldador	240.
1 Capitan	2200 p <sup>as</sup>
1 prim. ten <sup>te</sup>	600
1 Segundo Id <sup>o</sup>	550.
1 prim. el <sup>to</sup>	500.
1 Segundo Id <sup>o</sup>	450
2 Cirujanos	276
2 Dhos 2 <sup>os</sup>	264
6 Caros	240
1 tambor	162
1 So Soldador	216.
1 ten. com. Capitan	2000 p <sup>as</sup>
2 Dhos 2 <sup>os</sup>	256
2 Dhos Idem	208
2 Caros 1 <sup>o</sup> Id <sup>o</sup>	192
4 Dhos 2 <sup>os</sup> Id <sup>o</sup>	180.
1 So Soldador Mayor	162.

Loco anual de las companias  
 Individuales asi doblar como sen-  
 cillas

Loco anual estos Individuos  
 en las companias Volantes.

Idem de los Indios e Infante.  
 Operas.

N. 16

Estado en que se hallan  
 los par cada uno enue clav  
 o el resto q<sup>ue</sup> se le impone?

Con aique cada uno enue clava tiene q<sup>ue</sup> atender  
 a todo lo necesario para su subsistencia, y la de su familia  
 por ser los mas o todos casados, comprar armamento y mon-  
 tenimientos de su cuenta de vestir y calzar, tener en estado ex-

17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40.

Page from Murillo's plan detailing inconsistencies in frontier military pay and explaining the inadequacy of the amounts given the obligations of soldiers and junior officers (see pp. 520–521). The plan is from Sección de Gobierno, Audiencia de Santo Domingo, legajo 2599, and the three watercolors are from Sección Mapas y Planos, Uniformes nos. 57, 81, and 89, all courtesy Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain.