Cuerpo de Defensores de la República
Servicios Distinguidos
Desde 1836
In 1832, he was the military Governor of the District of Tlapa. By 1842 he was a member of the National Congress being reelected in 1846. He was appointed Military Governor of Western Mexico in the same year. He resigned his post to fight in the Mexican War of 1846-48. In Mexico this is referred to as the "First North American Invasion." In 1852-53 he was Senator for the State of Guerrero, and held the post of Director of Customs at the Port of Acapulco.

Santa Anna was then the current "President" - Dictator of Mexico. He was always in the need of money to support his extravagances. He sold Mexican land to the United States, the money from which went into his pocket. Desperate for money he demanded that Comonfort turn over to him the treasury of Guerrero (Acapulco is in the State of Guerrero) -- and also the customs funds -- Comonfort refused. Santa Anna arrived with his army and Comonfort sent him back to Mexico city "empty handed."

Comonfort then went to the United States and returned with a load of military arms. He then joined up with three revolutionary leaders who were also opposing Santa Anna. They were: Juan Alvarez, an old and respected leader from early independence days with Morelos; Melchor Ocampo, and Benito Juarez. The four of them met with immediate success. Santa Anna departed Mexico with a lot of money, and Juan Alvarez became President, with Comonfort as his Minister of War in 1855. At this time the Minister of War was traditionally a General.

The four men were liberals and had the support of the Liberal Party. However, Alvarez was old, and he considered himself unequal to the task of the Presidency. He wanted to return home, so, by proclamation, Comonfort, by virtue of his education, reputation for honesty, and "middle of the road" moderation, was appointed by the Liberal Party and Congress to be the Provisional President of Mexico. He also retained the Ministry of War post, and Juarez was appointed Vice-President and head of the Supreme Court.

At this time Comonfort was a bachelor of 43, with no record of later marriage or heirs.

The problems which beset Mexico at this time were threefold. First, the Army had conceived special privileges for itself, trying to run things, living off the land and generally doing as it pleased. Secondly, the large land owners comprising the Conservative Party, tried to maintain a landed aristocracy. Thirdly, the Church, owning the most prosperous properties in Mexico, hiring private armies to police and collect rents, and many times obtaining regular army troops to do this work.

Comonfort sought to re-establish the federal system. He suppressed the property holdings of the Church by decree on November 24, 1855. Being a strict constitutionalist he told his Secretary of the Treasury, Miguel Lerdo, to draft a law to that effect. This was done and proclaimed June 28, 1856, stating that the Church or clergy could not hold property, and that Church land was to be sold to the people. Naturally the law was named after the Secretary of the Treasury, and became known as the Ley Lerdo. When Juarez, as Vice-President drew up a law it became known as the Ley Juarez. Comonfort, also by the decree of November 24, 1855, revoked the special privileges of the Army and the Conservatives. Their answer came in the form of a revolt which centered at Puebla, March 8-11, 1856. Comonfort had no army to enforce his decree on the Regular Army so he armed the people and together numbering some 15,000 civilian militia defeated a force of 5,000 Regulars at Puebla on March 23, 1856. Incidentally, Comonfort issued a medal in white enamel bordered by a green enamelled laurel wreath, gilded to commemorate the victory. It is inscribed RESTAURADOR DE LA PAZ, suspended from a white, bordered blue ribbon, issued on April 14, 1856; and was only awarded...
to Generals and "high chiefs", which may indicate that early Mexican medals may not have been too widely distributed, and this may account for their present day scarcity.

Comonfort sent an Ambassador to Rome to win Vatican support for his programs, but delegations of Mexican clergy foiled the Ambassador's reception.

Further revolts took place at Puebla and San Luis Potosi in the final months of 1856. But by February, 1857, the new Constitution was completed and elections were held by September. Comonfort was duly elected President and was also delegated to act as Vice-President as Juarez was elected President of the Supreme Court. The liberal reforms of the new Constitution provoked new uprisings by the military, the land owners and the Church.

Now there were two problems. One was the Church. The Liberal Party demanded that Comonfort abolish the Church, which Comonfort merely wanted to curb but not abolish it. The second was that the new Constitution gave the legislative powers over the executive, severely curbing Comonfort's power to carry out new reforms. This required Comonfort to go before the Congress and ask for special powers and some amendments of the Constitution or he would be powerless.

This was the cue that the Army and the Conservatives were waiting for. General Zuloaga, commanding at Tacubaya issued the "Plan of Tacubaya" which would be the instrument to "frame" Comonfort. It called for Comonfort to assume dictatorship and abolish the Constitution. The Liberal Party, dissatisfied because Comonfort failed to abolish the Church, and because he had asked for special powers, assumed that Comonfort had agreed to the "Plan." They proceeded to declare the Presidency vacant and named Juarez President.

In December, 1857 General Zuloaga (the Conservative General) led a march on Mexico City. Comonfort was able to raise an army of 5000 civilian militia but overnight all but 500 deserted. For two days the city held out but Zuloaga finally took the city. Juarez was arrested and imprisoned at the palace on December 17. Comonfort could do nothing, Zuloaga with his "Plan" offered Comonfort a dictatorship if he would abolish the Constitution. Since Zuloaga was in possession of the city Comonfort appeared to be in agreement. After several weeks of avoiding the confrontation Comonfort secretly helped Juarez to escape from the Palace. Juarez made his way to Queretaro where he was inaugurated President on January 19, 1858. Comonfort resigned and left, some say January 21, 1858, the day Zuloaga was sworn in as President, and some say by February. Eventually he went to New York City.

In 1862, Mexico was in danger of the French intervention and Comonfort returned to raise and command an army of 10,000 men and joined Juarez. He was appointed Minister of War by Juarez at San Luis a Queretaro. However he was defeated in the battle of San Lorenzo by General Bazaine in 1863, and at Cholula. Some sources say he was killed in the battle, some say he was ambushed by agents of General Tomas Mejia, a follower of Maximilian, and others state by a band of Mexican Imperialists (troops of Maximilian).

What has been stressed, too often, is that Comonfort abolished the Constitution and fled his office, and one account stated that he offered no resistance, was shocked at the liberalism of the Constitution, abolished it and fled unmolested when he realized what he did. Two articles which were written in 1860 attempted to link Comonfort with the Plan of Tacubaya. They were written during the regime of General Miramon (successor to Zuloaga). Manuel Payno wrote one of them and the other entitled "Memorial about the Revolution of December, 1857 to January 1858" testifies that Comonfort planned a "Golpe de Estado" (coup d'etat), and to this day Mexican encyclopedias and