

*April 1, 1863 - April 8, 1863 - Expedition from Murfreesborough to Lebanon, Carthage, & Liberty*



APRIL 1-8, 1863.-Expedition from Murfreesborough to Lebanon, Carthage, and Liberty, Tenn.

REPORTS.

No. 1.-Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans, U. S. Army.

No. 2.-Col. John T. Wilder, Seventeenth Indiana Infantry, commanding expedition.

No. 1.

Report of Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans, U. S. Army.

MURFREESBOROUGH, TENN., April 8, 1863—10 p. m.

Col. Wilder's brigade went to Carthage; from thence returned, via Snow Hill and Liberty. Chased Wharton's brigade out of Smithville. Captured his rear guard. Destroyed 5,000 bushels of wheat and a large quantity of bacon, and sends in about 350 horses and 70 or 80 prisoners. Gen. Palmer went within 10 miles of McMinnville, and ran the rebel cavalry, bringing in a number of prisoners. Van Dorn is at Springs Hill, and, it is said, means to attack Granger at Franklin tomorrow. We hope to make it expensive to the rebels.

W. S. ROSECRANS, Maj.-Gen.

No. 2.

Report of Col. John T. Wilder, Seventeenth Indiana Infantry, commanding expedition.

HDQRS. 1ST Brig., 5TH DIV., 14TH ARMY CORPS, Murfreesborough, April 9, 1863.

SIR: I have to report that, in obedience to orders received, I started with my command, consisting of the Seventeenth Indiana, Seventy-second Indiana, and Ninety-eighth Illinois Mounted Infantry, Lilly's fifth Indiana, One hundred and first Indiana, and One hundred and twenty-third Illinois Infantry; in all about 2,500 men. Taking up the line of march 2 p. m. April 1, moved out the Lebanon pike to Stone's River, crossing on the pontoon bridge, kindly furnished me by Brig.-Gen. [J. St. C. ] Morton, and went into camp for the night. Moved at 6 a. m., April 2, the infantry, with the battery, taking the pike for Lebanon, under command of Col. Monroe, One hundred and twenty-third Illinois, with the mounted force and the howitzers. I took the Las Casas and Cainsville road. At the latter point I communicated with Col. Monroe, at Baird's Mills, on the Lebanon road, directing him to arrive at Lebanon at 5 p. m. Moved forward with my command, scouring the country for animals with good success; also capturing several prisoners. My party of scouts, Sergeant Birney with 7 men, found and engaged [J. M. ] Phillips's rebel company, capturing 1 man and 8 Enfield rifles, killing 1 man and wounding several, and dispersing the



company without loss on our part. Took three of Morgan's men, with their horses and arms, at the house of Esquire Doaks. Arrived on the Lebanon and Alexandria road at 4 p. m., 3 miles from town. Sent the Seventy-second Indiana, under Maj. Carr, on the old or main road from Cainsville to Lebanon. Sent the Ninety-eight Illinois, Col. Funkhouser, over on to the New Middleton road, retaining the Seventeenth Indiana with myself. All instructed to arrive in town at 5 p. m. The commands met on the public square, but found no enemy. The Seventeenth Indiana, going in, took two wagons laden with corn, on the road to Liberty, for the enemy. Went into camp for the night. Destroyed a small quantity of wheat and bacon collected for the enemy.

Friday morning, the 3d instant, sent out parties to collect animals, which were highly successful, but marred by the loss of one man in the Ninety-eight Illinois, by the accidental discharge of a gun, rendering necessary the amputation of the thigh, from the effects of which he died.

Sent the Seventeenth Indiana, Lieut.-Col. Jordan, to Rome, via Jennings' Fork, and in the afternoon the command, except the Seventy-second Indiana, moved out the Rome road to the Big Spring Farm, and encamped for the night. The Seventy-second Indiana, Maj. Carr, took the Hartsville road, leaving it at a point 9 miles out, crossing over through Taylorsville (where, having no transportation, he destroyed a large quantity of wheat and bacon, collected for the enemy) to Big Spring Farm, and camped. Near Taylorsville he was attacked by a small force of the enemy, who succeeded in taking 2 of his men. He returned their fire, with what effect is not known, but drove them away. It being dark, pursuit was useless. The two men were Inhumanly butchered by their captors the next day, near Lebanon. Their names are known, and will be reported in another communication.

On the morning of the 4th instant, the command moved on to Rome. I there took the Seventeenth Indiana, and went on to Carthage, where I procured supplies, and turned over to the provost-marshal 30 prisoners, a lot of goods taken from a contraband trader direct from McMinnville, and three wagon-loads of manufactured tobacco, the latter being part of a lot seized by my order on the road from Big Spring to Rome. I had received information from several sources that the owners had disposed of it to the Confederate Government, and had received pay therefor; also that they were noisy and violent secessionists. This proves to have been a mistake, so far, at least, as one of the firm is concerned, Mr. Fuqua. I had distributed about one-third of the lot to the command. Mr. Fuqua's claim will doubtless be presented for adjudication.

On the morning of the 5th, the infantry and battery came up from Rome to Carthage, the Ninety-eighth Illinois and Seventy-second Indiana scouting the country for stock. The next day, the 6th instant, both commands moved to New Middleton, where rations were distributed. All the animals and prisoners turned over to the infantry, which marched to Alexandria, the mounted force, with a section of Lilly's battery and two howitzers, moving up Caney Fork, where we destroyed a large quantity of wheat and flour collected for the



enemy, and rendered the mill unfit for further use, cutting off this source of supplies.

Tuesday, 7th instant, we started for Liberty, where we had information of the arrival of Gen. Wharton's brigade the night previous. I took the Ninety-eight Illinois and Seventy-second Indiana, and went forward, sending orders to the Seventeenth Indiana (some distance to the rear and unavoidably detained) to come up with dispatch, and to take the road to and over Snow Hill, and to the rear of the [enemy], guided by Capt. [Joseph H. ] Blackburn, of Stokes' cavalry, who knew the country perfectly. The enemy, having learned of our coming, fled before the movement could be executed to cut off their retreat. All escaped us but one company of 39 men, commanded by a lieutenant, who were taken. In the mean time I had communicated with Col. Monroe, at Alexandria, directing him to move up to Liberty with his command, which he did with alacrity, skirmishing occasionally with small parties of the enemy, and driving them in so that they fell into our hands. We pursued the enemy over and beyond Snow Hill, but failed to overtake him. We again went into camp. While foraging in the evening, Maj. Carr, Seventy-second Indiana, surprised and captured a party of 10 rebels, and brought them into camp. We also found in the town a small mail, already sent to your headquarters.

The morning of the 8th, having our hands full of animals, prisoners, and negroes, it was deemed best to return to Murfreesborough, to shoe our horses and rest the command, where we await your further orders.

I must be permitted to make mention of the readiness and alacrity which characterized the actions of each and every man in the command, and to report that all did their duty.

The fruits of the expedition are about 400 horses and mules, 194 negroes, and 88 prisoners of war, brought to camp.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your most obedient servant,

J. T. WILDER, Col., Cmdg.

*OR*, Ser. I, Vol. 23, pt. I, pp. 200-203.

