

September 27 – 28, 1862 – Skirmishes at Augusta (27th) and Brooksville (28th), Ky.

Reports

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No. 1

Report of Lieut. Col. H. Blair Wilson, 44th Ohio Infantry
Hdqrs. U. S. Forces, Maysville, Ky., Sept. 29, 1862

Sir: About dusk on the evening of the 27th instant, a special messenger brought me the intelligence from Ripley that Col. Basil W. Duke, with about 750 of John Morgan's gang of rebels and two small pieces of artillery, had attacked Colonel Bradford's command at Augusta, 18 miles below this place, and after a most desperate resistance on the part of Colonel Bradford and his entire force I immediately assembled all the available force at my command, being 325 infantry and one 6-pounder piece of artillery, and sent then, under command of the Hon. William H. Wadsworth, to Germantown, 12 miles distant from Maysville. I also dispatched a courier after 100 Calvary (the only mounted force I had sent to Flemingsburg, about 2 o'clock that afternoon, to capture or drive off a rebel recruiting party and some of Humphrey Marshall's Cavalry, which were there. I instructed Colonel Wadsworth to reach Germantown before daylight and remain there until I could arrive with re-enforcements. In the meantime a boat had been sent up the river about 18 miles to bring down a body of Home Guards to take possession of Maysville and repel any attempt that I feared might be made to make a raid on that place in my absence. I then took a boat and went to Ripley, where I found 175 of the armed and organized militia and one smooth-bore 6 pounder field piece. I appointed Lieutenant-Colonel Edwards, of the Militia, Commander of this force, and immediately crossed the Ohio to Dover, and started with them to Germantown, 11 miles distant where we arrived a little after daylight. I ordered Col. E. Grand Girrard, of Ripley, to procure provisions for my men, and after collecting all the force he could to press on after me.

Colonel Wadsworth had reached Germantown before daylight. He had posted pickets on all roads and had taken every necessary precaution to aid my design of surprising the enemy. My original design was to march down from Germantown to Augusta, having ascertained that a march of only 3 miles from Germantown in that direction would bring me completely in the rear of the enemy and render a successful retreat on his part quite improvable, my design being, however, to surprise him at Augusta; but some scouts that Colonel Wadsworth sent to me brought in the intelligence that Colonel Duke, after burning the ___t part of the town of Augusta, had retired in the direction of Brooksville, and had probably reached that place before midnight. I at once started out for Brooksville, 7 miles distant from Germantown, and was over taken on the way by the cavalry from Flemingsburg, which had then marched since 2 o'clock the preceding evening more than 60 miles. I arrived within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from Brooksville about 8 a.m., when I halted and ordered Captain Youart, commanding detachment of the Forty-fourth Ohio Volunteers, to proceed by a circuitous route and take possession of the Falmouth road, concealing himself from the view of the enemy. I did this, being well assured that the enemy would retreat on that road. Captain Youart had just started when Judge Bush, who had been sent with his cavalry to the heights to reconnoiter, informed me that the enemy was forming in line of battle. I was then satisfied that the enemy had notice of our approach, and my principal force being militia and undrilled recruits, and knowing the enemy outnumbered me, I thought it imprudent to divide my force, and countermanded my order to Captain Youart. It was very unfortunate that I did so. The truth was that the enemy had no notice of my presence, and had formed his line with the view of marking out to Falmouth road. This was detected upon my

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arrival at the heights overlooking the town. It was then too late to take possession of the Falmouth road, and I could not, from any position on that side of the town, play on the rebels with artillery. I therefore ordered my detachment of the Forty-fourth Ohio Volunteers to charge at double quick time down into the town, and I ordered the artillery and the remainder of my force to follow them promptly at quick-time. This was the first notice that colonel Duke had of our presence. He, with a guard of 25 men, was in the court house at that moment, and he was paroling prisoners. Some of my cavalry, seeing the 44th running into town, became excited, and imprudently and without orders rushed in advance of the 44th down a road leading to the rear of the court house. Colonel Duke rushed out, mounted his men, and dashed off on the Falmouth road, passing within 25 yards of my detachment of the 44th Ohio, which mistook them for our own men, who had charged at around the court house. They were dressed like our own cavalry. I felt greatly annoyed, but under the circumstances I could not censure the men for not firing on them. We pressed to the other side of town and perceiving that the main body had halted about half a mile distant on hearing the alarm, I ordered the artillery into position and commenced shelling them. They third shot exploded in their midst, killing 6 and wounding 1, when they retreated precipitately toward Falmouth and were soon out of the range of our cannon. Between 30 and 40 prisoners were released that Duke did not have time to parole. Some of them out and fled, and I do not know the precise number thus released.

Our loss was 1 killed. He belonged to the 14th Ky. Cavalry. He was shot from an alley, I think, by a citizen of Brooksville about the same time Colonel Duke escaped from the court house.

At noon we started for Augusta, 9 miles distant, and were overtaken by two wagon loads of provisions and 100 more men under Colonel Grand-Girard. We reached Augusta before sundown, where boats were procured and we arrived at this post the same night before 9 o'clock.

I do not think men could be found who will bear up more fortitude under privation, hunger, and a most fatiguing march than did all the men on this occasion. Col. Charles A Marshall, Hon. William H. Wadsworth and Judge Bush, of Maysville; Colonel Edwards and Colonel Grand-Girard, of Ripley, volunteered to accompany me, and I feel under great obligations to them for the part taken by each. More than half of my command were citizens, but all marched and behaved like veteran troopers, excepting on the occasion when the cavalry charged without orders, and their zeal and eagerness deprived us of Colonel Duke and 25 of his men. They made, however, a most handsome dash.

I am, sir, our most obedient servant.

H. B. Wilson
Lieutenant-Colonel, Commanding Post

Maj. N. H. McLean
Asst. Adjt. Gen. & Chief of Staff, Dept. of the Ohio

No. 2

Report of Capt. A. D. Wilson, Master of gunboat Allen Collyer, of Skirmish at Augusta

Gunboat Allen Collyer,
Off Foster, Sept. 27, 1862 - p.m.

Dear Sir: I went up to Augusta to get some ammunition from the Belfast. Was there at 12 .m. While there the Florence Miller passed down. Colonel Bradford sent a note requesting me to stay, as he expected an attack before night. About an hour after Florence Miller came back, blowing her whistle. I then started down the river, and when I met her I understood them to say that the rebels were crossing the Ohio at Chilo. I hurried down and found it was a party of scouts that went out from Augusta yesterday and were returning. I hurried back as soon as possible, and found that the rebels had attacked Augusta with artillery, compelling Colonel Bradford to surrender, burning the town, the Belfast and the Florence Miller going up the river. Had it not been for the blowing of the Miller's whistle and the misunderstanding of information I would have been there and assisted the Belfast. I have returned to watch the part of the river assigned to me.

Yours truly,

A. D. Wilson, Master

Capt. John A. Duple

I understand that the rebels are 1,000 strong, with 3 pieces of artillery.

The Belfast and Miller are above Augusta, and I do not think can run by the guns planted on the hill back of town. I went within one mile of town, and did not think I could do any good attacking them, as Colonel Bradford and men were prisoners.

A. D. Wilson

No. 3

Report of Joseph Doniphan, of Skirmish at Augusta

Augusta, Ky., Sept. 28, 1862

Sir: On Saturday, about 12 o'clock m., Colonel Bradford received intelligence of the approach of between 400 and 500 rebels, under command of Basil Duke. The Colonel immediately prepared to defend the town, his force consisting of about 100 Home Guards, and Militia, and the gunboat Belfast, Captain Sedam, commanding.

About 1 o'clock the gunboat Allen Collyer moored along side the Belfast, and Colonel Bradford dispatched a messenger to the Collyer, requesting her to remain, as we would certainly be attacked by 2 o'clock.

A few moments later the Florence Miller, carrying a gun, came along and anchored in front of our town.

Colonel Bradford then posted his men in the houses along Front Street and up Pine Street to Second. The enemy in the meantime had reached the hill back of the town and were rapidly surrounding us. Hardly had our forces gotten their positions when the rebels with two small pieces of artillery appeared on the hill. The Belfast threw a shell and so well was it aimed that it struck with 30 feet of the enemies' gun, killing 2 or 3 of the rebels, and causing them to change the position of their gun. The enemy then opened fire, throwing shell with little or no accuracy, and the Belfast fired two more shots with good effect.

Up to this time the forces in the house were not engaged, but to the surprise and sorrow of our people, the Belfast weight anchor and abandoned us to our fate. The Florence Miller, without firing a gun, did the same thing. The Allen Collyer, although importuned to stay with us, steamed off before the fight and never returned.

Then came a shout from the rebels and they were upon us. From every window our true and trusty boys were firing, and for one-half hour the leaden hail was doing its work of death. Rebel after rebel was made to bite dust, while our boys thus sheltered were fighting for their homes and firesides.

But what a scene now followed! The houses in which our forces were in were set on fire; the cannon of the enemy was planted in our streets, and disregarding women or children, they were firing shell into the houses. Yet true to their work, the little bank of Union men fought on until it was useless to hold out longer.

Colonel Bradford ordered a surrender. So soon as this was done then commenced the pillage and plunder, every rebel acting for himself. Stores were broken open and rifled of what was wanted by the rebels. This, however, was soon over. The rebel bugle was sounded, and the enemy retired from our town in good order, though in haste.

The fighting was desperate, and although our loss is small, yet gallant and brave men have gone from us forever. Our killed and wounded amount to 12 or 15, while that of the enemy between 75 and 100; among them some 8 or 10 officers. We had no means of ascertaining the names of all the rebels killed and wounded but among the number wounded mortally is a son of George D. Prentice, of Louisville, Capt. W. Rogers, of Harrison county, was killed, and a Lieutenant Wilson. The rebels left some of their dead and wounded in our hands, all of whom have been properly cared for. They took our horses, buggies, wagons, and all means of transportation to carry off their dead and wounded.

Among the killed on the Union side were Dr. W. Taylor, N. B. Worthington, John B. Story, George Byers, Oliver Stairs, John Gephert, John Perkins, and W. Greeg.

The prisoners were all taken from town as rapidly as they could march. Some have been paroled and sent home.

The conduct of the gunboats seems to us as cowardly in the extreme. Just above our town is a large sand bar, and so soon as the rebels could cross the bottom they ran out on this bar 100 or 150 strong, drew up in line of battle and fired volley after volley at the Belfast and Florence

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Miller, and not one shot was fired in return. With one _____ the whole horde of rebels could have been mowed down but these gallant commanders fled, fled! Ay, and when they got _____ actually hauled their cannon ashore and moved off _____ their boats.

Much of our town is destroyed; the loss will _____ principal sufferers are Thomas Myers, J. P. Ryan, _____ Taylor, Mrs. Hooke, T. F. Marshall, V. Weldin, _____, Mrs. Barr.

The Confederate forces are a battalion of _____-ford, Colonel Harris, and F. L. Cleveland, esq., _____ of the enemy.

On yesterday Colonel Wilson and Colonel W. _____ the forces from Maysville, Ripley and Chilo, passed _____ effort to overtake the rebels, but were there _____ their rear guard. They have retreated in gre-- _____ of Falmouth.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Joseph Doniphan

The foregoing is a true copy of skirmishes of Augusta, taken from Volume XVI of a series. Part one. Printed in Washington in the Government Printing Office, 1886.

Copied Nov. 18, 1940. by (signed) Grace E. Brooking, R. F. W.
Bracken County Field Worker
American Imprints Inventory, W. P. A.