



**August 17, 1863 - Cavalry action, Confederate cavalry routed from Yankeetown, pursued to Kingston**



STEVENSON, ALA., August 21 [Friday], 1863—11.15 a. m. (Received 11.35 p. m.)

Col. J. C. KELTON, Assistant Adjutant-Gen.:

Crittenden is on the Sequatchie. Two divisions of Thomas' corps near Battle Creek. Minty's cavalry had a fight with Dibrell's Brigade, of Forrest's, at Sparta, on Monday night [17th]; whipped and drove them to Yankeetown and Kingston. We lost 15 wounded.



Van Cleve's division and the cavalry reached Pikeville the evening of the 19th [Sunday]. Palmer, with a brigade and Wilder's cavalry left the valley yesterday morning [20th] for a reconnaissance on the Tennessee, from Harrison's [landing] to Chattanooga and above. I have reconnoitered the river below Bridgeport. It is a formidable obstacle, from 500 to 800 yards wide. pontoons are coming. I think we shall maneuver to cross where they do not expect us.



W. S. ROSECRANS, Maj.-Gen.

*OR*, Ser. I, Vol. 30, pt. III, pp. 98-99.

HDQRS. THIRD DIVISION, TWENTY-FIRST ARMY CORPS, Pikeville, Tenn., August 19, 1863.

Lieut. Col. LYNE STARLING, Chief of Staff, Twenty-first Army Corps:

COL.: I reached this place at 11 a. m. to-day, and delayed writing until I should hear from Col. Minty. He arrived this evening, and reports that he found Dibrell at Sparta on Monday [17th] afternoon with a strong force, equal to, if not greater than, his own. Attacked and routed him, driving him toward Yankeetown and then toward Kingston, pursuing him till 8 p. m., taking 18 prisoners. Our loss was 15 wounded; rebel loss not known.

Col. Minty left one battalion at Rock Island, and one with instructions to watch rebels near Sparta. His command is so reduced with broken-down horses that he has but about 1, 200 mounted men with him. There being a rebel force in the vicinity of Kingston, he should have a strong force to make the reconnaissance toward the Tennessee to-morrow; [20th] he can take about 1,000 men. Capt. Abeel has instructions to establish the courier line to Dunlap. Col. Minty's forage and provision train, from McMinnville, is not expected before to-morrow evening, when he makes his reconnaissance. Is he to remain in the valley of the Tennessee till further orders? I so read the instructions.

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

H. P. VAN CLEVE, Brig. Gen., Comdg. Third Div., Twenty-first Army Corps.

*OR*, Ser. I, Vol. 30, III, p. 79.



Report of Col. Robert H. G. Minty, Fourth Michigan Cavalry, commanding First Brigade.

HDQRS. FIRST BRIGADE, SECOND CAVALRY DIVISION, Smith's Cross-Roads, Tennessee Valley, August 26, 1863.

SIR: At 2 a. m., on 17th instant, in accordance with orders from Maj.-Gen. Rosecrans, through Brig.-Gen. Van Cleve, I marched for Pikeville, via Sparta.

I sent my artillery and wagons direct with the infantry train. At 2 p. m. my advance struck Gen. Dibrell's pickets 2 miles from Sparta.

I sent the Seventh Pennsylvania and Fourth Michigan up the east side of Calfkiller Creek to Sperry's Mill, where they found Dibrell's brigade and quickly drove it across the creek. With the Third Indiana and Fourth Regulars, I moved up the west side of the creek with the intention of cutting off their retreat, but the nature of the ground was so much in the enemy's favor that they had no difficulty in escaping.

I followed them to within a short distance of Yankeetown, and then moved back toward Sparta, for the purpose of going into camp for the night.

About 4 miles above Sparta the road runs close to the creek with a high bluff (thickly wooded) on the opposite side.

Here about 200 men lay in a volley, wounding Lieut. Vale, the brigade inspector, and 2 of my orderlies.

Part of the Fourth Michigan and one squadron of the Fourth Regulars were quickly dismounted and engaged the enemy across the creek. In an attempt to cross the creek a little higher up, the Fourth Regulars lost 1 man drowned and a few wounded. The Seventh Pennsylvania and Third Indiana crossed lower down, and, with slight loss, succeeded in dislodging the rebels.

It being now after 8 o'clock, and quite dark, I bivouacked for the night. In the morning I could not find any trace of the enemy, except a couple of them dead, which the citizens were ordered to inter. The enemy's force was estimated by the citizens at 1,500. I placed it at 1,200, but every foot of the ground over which we fought was familiar to them. It was wooded, hilly, broken, and intersected by half a dozen branches or creeks, with plenty of good positions, all of which they were able to take advantage of. My force numbered about 1,400, and the country was to us terra incognita, notwithstanding which we drove them at a gallop.

I had 1 man drowned, and 15 wounded, including 3 commissioned officers. I took 23 prisoners, including 1 lieutenant, and representing four regiments.

The enemy's loss in killed and wounded I have no means of ascertaining. I know of only 2 who were killed. A few badly wounded were left at the houses of citizens.

I will send in regular report of casualties in a day or two.





I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,  
ROBT. H. G. MINTY, Col., Comdg.

*OR*, Ser. I, Vol. 30, pt. I, p. 921.

H. P. VAN CLEVE,  
Brig. Gen., Comdg. Third Div., Twenty-first Army Corps.  
Report of Col. George G. Dibrell, Eighth Tennessee Cavalry, C. S. A.  
SPARTA, August 18, 1863.

~ ~ ~

[Maj.:]<sup>Note 1</sup> On August 17, I started a scout from Company I to go as far as Rock Island in the direction of McMinnville. They went as far as the Eleven-Mile House, and there met Col. Minty again with a very large cavalry force, said to be seven regiments, or 3,500 men, and with one of my slaves as a guide. They immediately charged our scouts and running fight ensued back to camp just across the Calfkiller River, from where we were encamped before. The 200 re-enforcements under Col. McLemore had arrived only a day or two before. We rallied our men and repulsed those that pursued our scouts to the river. The enemy at Sparta divided, part going up to our camp 2 miles on each side of the river. I posted Col. McLemore with his 200 men at our former battle-ground (the mouth of Wild Cat Creek), and took the Eighth Tennessee to Meredith's Mill, above, on the Calfkiller River. The enemy pursued us on to the creek and the river, and from 2 o'clock until dark the skirmish was heavy, and many efforts on their part to charge us and force a crossing was repulsed with heavy loss. We could only defend ourselves, owing to the smallness of our forces. At least half of the Eighth was absent on leave to get up supplies. But we held our ground and punished them severely.

After dark the enemy withdrew a short distance and went into camp, and fearing that [they] intended renewing the attack in the morning, I ordered Col. McLemore to withdraw his command back to where the Eighth was, and would retire about 2 miles to the top of Cumberland Mountain, on Forster's road, place that we could not be flanked out of. As McLemore was withdrawing his men under Capt. McGregor the enemy in his front made a fierce charge on him. His men rallied promptly near the barn of the Widow Fisk and repulsed them handsomely, killing 6 men and 6 horses. After that we retired to the top of the mountain, leaving scouts and pickets to watch the enemy.

Early on the morning of the 18th, our scouts reported the enemy moving in the direction of Sparta. Thinking they would attempt to ascend the mountain at Bon Air Springs, we moved rapidly to that place. But upon arriving there we could see the enemy moving in the direction of Pikeville. They were too far off and our force was too small to attempt pursuit.





We returned to our old camp to-day, and find our loss is 2 killed, 6 wounded, and 4 captured. The enemy's loss was heavy as we had every advantage in position, and their men reported to citizens their loss in killed at 40 or 50 and wounded 200 or 300. We have buried 5 dead to-day they left on the field, found in a sink-hole, in which it is supposed they were thrown by negroes they had sent out to gather in. They arrested and carried off a number of citizens, and said there was a general move of Rosecrans' army on Chattanooga.

As they went in that direction I am of the opinion their army is moving on Chattanooga. I will report again to-morrow.

Very respectfully,

G. G. DIBRELL, Col., Comdg.

*OR*, Ser. I, Vol. 30, pt. II, pp. 527-528.

The Yankees have rather made a scatterment of Dibrell's men. At least some of them who are cut off can't find the regt. They fired at each other and done some damage. Capt. Woolsey and the chaplain of the regt. stayed here last night. They went across the mountain, supposing that Dibrell's and Starne's men were up the river somewhere.

*Diary of Amanda McDowell.*

**Note 1:** For the preceding part of this report, see above, August 9, 1863 Action at Sparta, Tenn., in *OR*, Ser. I, Vol. 23, pt. I, p. 847.

