

Annals of Iowa
January, 1867

THE ARMY OF THE SOUTH WEST, AND THE FIRST CAMPAIGN IN ARKANSAS
BY SAM'L PRENTIS CURTIS,
LATE LIEUTENANT AND AID-DE-CAMP TO MAJOR GENERAL CURTIS

CHAPTER THIRD

All commanders are very naturally disposed to speak as favorably as possible of their own cause and success, and as disparagingly as may well be of their enemies. This report of Price puts as favorable a view as could well have been done upon his retreat. Although abounding in false statements and misrepresentation, in the way so common with rebel Generals, it is withal a tolerably correct statement. Some of its erroneous points may be briefly mentioned.

His statement that Missouri had been admitted as an equal member of the Confederate States, was always claimed to be truth by the rebel government. After the Missouri state convention, elected more especially to consider the subject, had decisively refused to secede, a small and fugitive rebel fraction of the state legislature, a body elected before the rebellion, and with only limited powers, in no way as great as those of the convention, assembled within the lines of the rebel army at Neosho, a remote and obscure point in the extreme south-western corner of the state, and undertook to declare Missouri out of the Union and in the Confederacy, when nearly the whole of its territory was held by the Union army. This step was necessary among the rebel leaders, to give their cause ill Missouri even a color of law among their ignorant populace and soldiers. Right or wrong they would adhere to it. But were secession legal, under such circumstances it would be absurd to claim such action, by such a contemptible and illegal body, to have been that of the people of the state of Missouri, when entirely unratified by them, in the face of the contrary decision of their sovereign convention, and more especially when so contrary to all previous and subsequent action of the state.

The loss suffered by Price, of guns, stores, &c., before reaching Cassville, he may have considered as "unworthy of mention in any respect;" but it is not true, as he impliedly states, that he was not attacked until reaching Cassville. Neither is it true that the two armies were greatly unequal in numbers. It is difficult to perceive in what manner he could have repulsed his enemy "upon every occasion with great determination and gallantry," when that enemy was continuously driving him in a headlong flight to Arkansas. His exceedingly modest estimate of his own loss, may be true, but is more probably false. We may suppose that the commander of a fugitive and closely pursued army, may not very accurately be able to know the loss of an enemy, when he has been constantly driven before that enemy for nearly two hundred miles, never once even holding a contested point, or possessing ally of the usual means by which commanders estimate the loss of their foes. We know in this instance the light nature of the Union loss, and when General Price informs us that he "knows" it "to be ten times as great" as his own, we may know that he utters a deliberate falsehood.

On March 6th, 7th and 8th, was fought the battle of Pea Ridge, by the rebels called Elkhorn, of which, the official reports are given, as furnishing the best and most accurate account of that terrible contest.

CHAPTER FOURTH
OFFICIAL HISTORY OF THE BATTLE OF PEA RIDGE— THE PRELIMINARY REPORT OF
GENERAL CURTIS

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF THE SOUTH WEST,
PEA RIDGE, ARK., March 9.

[By Telegraph from Springfield, Mo. March 10, to Major General H. W. Halleck,]

General:—On Thursday the 6th instant, the enemy commenced an attack on my right, assailing and following the rear guard of the detachment under General Sigel to my main lines on Sugar Creek Hollow; but he ceased firing when he met my reinforcements about four P. M.

During the night I became convinced he had moved on so as to attack my right or rear; therefore, early on the 7th, I ordered a change of front to the rear, on my right, which thus becoming my left, still rested on Sugar Creek Hollow. This brought my line across Pea Ridge, with my new right resting on the head of Cross Timber Hollow, which is the head of Big Sugar Creek. I also ordered an immediate advance of cavalry and light artillery under Cod Osterhaus, with orders to attack and break what I supposed would be a reinforced line of the enemy. This movement was in progress, when the enemy, at eleven A. M. commenced an attack on my right. The fight continued mainly at these points during the day; the enemy having gained a point, hotly contested by Col. Carr, at the Cross Timber Hollow; but entirely repulsed, with the fall of the commander, Gen. McCulloch, in the centre, by our forces under Col. Davis. The plan of attack on the centre was gallantly carried forward by Col. Osterhaus, who was immediately sustained and superseded by Col. Davis' entire division, supported also by Gen. Sigel's command, which had remained till near the close of the day on the left. Colonel Carr's division held the right under a galling and continuous fire all day. In the evening, the firing having entirely ceased in the centre, and there having been none on the left, I reinforced the right by a portion of the second division, under General Asboth.

Before the day closed I was convinced the enemy had concentrated his main force on my right. I therefore commenced another change of my front forward, so as to face the enemy where he had deployed on my right flank in strong position. The change had been only partially effected, but was fully in progress, when at sunrise on the 8th, my right and centre renewed the firing, which was immediately answered by the enemy with renewed energy along the whole extent of line. My left, under General Sigel, moved close to the hills occupied by the enemy, driving him from the heights, and advancing steadily towards the head of the hollows. I immediately ordered the centre and right wing forward, the right turning the left of the enemy and cross firing on his centre. This final position enclosed the enemy in an arc of a circle. A charge of infantry extending throughout the whole line completely routed the whole rebel force, which retired in great confusion, but rather safely through the deep impassable defiles of Cross Timber. Our loss is heavy. The enemy's can never be ascertained, for the dead are scattered over a large field, and their wounded too many of them be lost and perish. The foe is scattered in all directions, but I think his main force has returned to Boston mountains. General Sigel followed towards Keitsville, while my cavalry is pursuing him towards the mountains, scouring the country, bringing in prisoners, and trying to find the rebel Maj. Gen. Van Dorn, who had command of the entire force at this battle of Pea Ridge. I have not as yet the statements of dead and wounded so as to justify a report, but I will refer you to a dispatch I will forward very soon. The officers and soldiers in this command have displayed such unusual gallantry, I hardly dare to make distinctions. I must, however, name all of my commanders of divisions. General Sigel, who gallantly carried the heights and drove back the left wing of the enemy; Brig. General Asboth, who is wounded in the arm, in his gallant effort to reinforce the right; Colonel and acting Brig. General Davis, who commanded the centre where McCulloch fell on the 7th, and pressed forward the centre on the 8th; Colonel and acting Brig. Gen. E. A. Curry who is also wounded in the arm and was under continuous fire of the enemy during the two hardest days of the struggle. Also commanders of brigades, Cols. Dodge, Osterhaus, Vandever, White, Schaffer, and

Greusel, distinguished for their gallantry. For that of others, I must refer you to reports of division commanders. I must also tender my thanks to my staff officers, Capt. T. I. McKenny A. A. General. Captain W. H. Stark and Capt. John Ahlefeldt, and Lieut. J. M. Adams, and Stitt, all acting aids, and Lieut. A. Hoepfner my only engineer officer. All the staff officers did gallant service in carrying orders and aiding in their prompt execution.

Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Ohio and Missouri may proudly share the honor of victory which their gallant heroes won, over the combined force of Van Dorn, Price and McCulloch at Pea Ridge, in the Ozark mountains of Arkansas.

I have the honor to be, General,
Your obedient servant
SAMUEL R. CURTIS,
Brigadier General.

THE FINAL REPORT OF GENERAL CURTIS COMMANDING THE ARMY

"Captain:—The brief telegraphic report which I gave on the 9th inst. is not sufficient to present even the general outline of the battle of Pea Ridge, and, with the reports of my commanders of divisions, I now submit a more general detail.

My pursuit of General Price brought me to Fayetteville, Arkansas. The entire winter campaign from the 26th January to this time including the march from Rolla to the Boston mountains 240 miles. was attended with continual exhibitions of toil, privations, conflict and gallantry, some of which I have telegraphed to headquarters, and may hereafter deserve more full development. After reaching Arkansas the forces of General Price were rapidly reinforced by regiments which had been stationed in Arkansas and the Indian territory. I therefore expected these combined forces would return upon us to give us battle, and in conformity with the orders of the General [Halleck] of the 22d February, I selected Sugar Creek as the strongest of several strong places taken from the enemy, to make a stand against any and all odds.

I reported my force to you on the 12th February, after Colonel Davis' division had joined me, at 12,095 men, and 50 pieces of artillery, including 4 mountain howitzers My long line of communications required garrisons at Marshfield, Springfield, Cassville and Keitsville, besides a Constant moving force to guard my train. My force in Arkansas on the 7th inst., was therefore not more than 10,500 cavalry and infantry, with 49 pieces of artillery including the mountain howitzers, one piece having been sent out into Missouri and thus prevented from joining us in the battle.

The scarcity of forage and other Supplies made it necessary for me to spread out my troops over considerable country, always trying to keep it within supporting distance, convenient to rally on the positions selected for battle.

On the 4th of March this force was located as follows: The 1st and 2nd Divisions under Generals Sigel and Asboth were four miles south-west of Bentonville at Cooper's [McKeissick's] farm, under general orders to move round to Sugar Creek about 14 miles east. The 3d Division under Col. Jefferson C. Davis, acting Brigadier General, had moved and taken position at Sugar Creek under orders to make some preparatory arrangements and examinations for a stand against the enemy. The 4th Division was at Cross Hollows under command of Col. E. A. Carr, acting Brigadier General; my own headquarters were also at this place, which is about 12 miles from Sugar Creek on the main telegraph road from Springfield to Fayetteville.

Large detachments had been sent out from these several camps for forage and information, one from Cross Hollows to Huntsville under command of Col. Vandever, and three from Cooper's [McKreissick's] farm to Maysville and Pineville.

One of these under Major Conrad with one piece of artillery and about 260 men did not reach us till after the battle. All the others came in sate and joined in the engagement.

The enemy had taken position in the Boston Mountains, a high range that divides the waters of White River from the Arkansas.

General Price had rallied the forces that had fought at Carthage, Wilson's Creek, and Lexington, augmented by his exertions to recruit in Missouri during the winter. On his arrival from Springfield in Arkansas, he reported to Governor Rector that between four and five thousand of these had joined the Confederate service, previous to his leaving Springfield. The circulation of all manner of extravagant falsehoods on his way, induced the whole country to leave their homes, and for fear we would kill them thousands joined his ranks.

General McCulloch brought at least eleven regiments to the field, and General Pike five.

Besides these regularly organized Confederate troops which General Price met in Arkansas, there were many companies and regiments of Arkansas volunteers, most of the country people being required to take up arms. From this data and the general opinion of the country, I estimate the force of the enemy to have been at least fifty or forty thousand. This was the force in and near Boston mountains, rallying to drive us from Arkansas and Missouri.

The two armies thus constituted and located were within hearing of each other's cannon, about 30 miles apart. I submit an accompanying map showing some of the topographic features of the country on the roads which we traveled.

Our troops were weary and somewhat exhausted in their long forced marches, and frequent conflicts. Our cavalry had specially suffered in the breaking down and loss of horses. But our troops were generally well armed, drilled and anxious to encounter the enemy at any reasonable hazard. They were all intelligent, ardent, flushed with our repeated successes in many encounters on our way, and all conscious of the righteousness of their country's cause.

The arrival of Major General Van Dorn on the 2d of March, in the camp of the enemy, was the occasion of great rejoicing and the firing of 40 guns. The rebel force was harangued by their chiefs with boastful and passionate appeals, assuring them of their superior numbers and the certainty of an easy victory. Dispatches were published falsely announcing a great battle at Columbus Ky., in which we had lost three gun boats and twenty thousand men; and thus the rebel hordes were assured the occasion was now opened to drive the invaders from the soil of Arkansas, and give a final and successful blow for a Southern Confederacy.

The fifth of March was cold and blustering. The snow fell so as to cover the ground. No immediate attack was apprehended, and I was engaged writing. About two o'clock P. M. scouts and fugitive citizens came. Informing me of the rapid approach of the enemy to give me battle. His cavalry would be at Elm Spring some twelve miles distant that night, and his artillery had already passed Fayetteville. Satisfied of the truth of the report, I immediately sent couriers to General Sigel and Colonel Vandever, and ordered them to move immediately to Sugar Creek, where I also ordered Colonel Carr to move with his Division.

I also sent you a despatch which may have been lost with other mail matter which I have since learned was captured by the enemy. I told you I would give them the best reception possible.

All my messengers were successful in delivering their orders. Col. Carr's Division moved about 6 P. M. Col. Vandever had intelligence of the movement of the enemy before my messenger reached him, and made immediate changes in his march so that with great exertions he arrived on the 6th. General Sigel deferred his march from Cooper's [McKreisk's] farm till two o'clock in the morning of the 6th, and at Bentonville tarried himself with a regiment and battery till he was attacked about 9 A. M. He arrived at Sugar Creek at 2 o'clock A. M. on the 6th, and immediately detailed parties for early morning work in felling timbers to obstruct

certain roads to prevent the enemy from having too many approaches, and to build works to increase the strength of my forces. Col. Davis and Col. Carr, early in the day, took their positions on the high projecting hills commanding the valley of the creek leaving the right of the line to be occupied by the 1st and 2nd Divisions, which were anxiously expected.

The valley of the creek is low and from a quarter to a half a mile wide. The hills are high on both sides, and the main road from Fayetteville by Cross Hollows to Keitsville is quite a detour, but it also comes up the Sugar Creek valley; a branch however takes off and runs nearly parallel to the main telegraph road some three miles from it. The Sugar Creek valley therefore intercepts all these roads.

The 3rd and 4th Divisions had, before noon of the 6th, deployed their lines, and cut down a great number of trees which thoroughly blockaded the roads on the left. Later in the day I directed some of the same work to be done on the right. This work was in charge of Col. Dodge who felled trees on the road which ran parallel to the main road to which I have before referred. This proved of great advantage as it retarded the enemy some two hours in their flank movement. Breast works of considerable strength were erected by the troops on the headlands of Sugar Creek as if by magic, and a battery near the road crossing was completely shielded by an extensive earth work erected under the direction of Col. Davis by a pioneer company commanded by Capt. Snyder. About two o'clock P. M. General Asboth and Col. Osterhaus reported the arrival of the 1st and 2nd Divisions.

This good news was followed immediately by another report that Gen. Sigel, who had remained behind with a detachment, had been attacked near Bentonville and was quite surrounded by the enemy's advance forces. I immediately directed some of the troops to return to his relief. In the mean time he had advanced with his gallant little band fighting its way within three or four miles of our main forces. The two Divisions [1st and 2nd] turned back in double quick, and a large cavalry force also started, all being anxious to join in a rescue of their comrades in peril.

Part of the 1st Division, under Col. Osterhaus, soon met the retreating detachment and immediately opened fire with artillery and infantry, which checked the further advance and terminated the action for the day. In the retreat and final repulse, which occupied several hours, our loss was some twenty killed and wounded.

The enemy must have suffered more, as our artillery had telling effect along the road and the rebel graves in considerable numbers bore witness of the enemy's loss.

The firing having ceased I sent back other troops that had joined the movement and designated the positions on the right which were promptly occupied by the 1st and 2nd Divisions. Our men rested on their arms confident of hard work before them on the coming day. The accompanying map of the battle ground with fully illustrate the positions then and subsequently assumed. In my front was the deep broad valley of Sugar Creek forming the probable approach of the enemy, our troops extending for miles and generally occupying the summits of headlands on Sugar Creek. In my rear was a broken plateau called "Pea Ridge" and still further in my rear the deep valley of Big Sugar Creek or "Cross Timbers." My own headquarters and those of Generals Sigel, Asboth and other commanders of Divisions, were near Pratt's house, the lines "A" "B" and "C" show the different fronts assumed during the progress of the battle.

The approach by Bentonville brought the enemy to my extreme right, and during the night of the 6th and 7th, he began a movement round my flank by the road before mentioned which crosses Pea Ridge some three miles north-west of the main telegraph road.

I ascertained in the morning this flank movement of the enemy, which I perceived was designed to attack my right flank and rear. I therefore immediately called my commanders of Divisions together at Gen. Asboth's tent, and directed a charge of front to the rear, so as to face

the road upon which the enemy was still moving. At the same time I directed the organization of a detachment of cavalry and light artillery supported by infantry to open the battle by an attack from my new centre on the probable centre of the enemy, before he could fully form. I selected Col. Osterhaus to lead this central column, an officer who displayed great Skill, energy and gallantry each day of the battle

The change of front thus directed, reversed the order of the troops, placing the 1st and 2nd Divisions on the left, their left Still resting on Sugar Creek. Osterhaus and the 2d Division in the centre, and the 4th Division became the extreme right; while I was explaining the proposed movement to commanders and Col. Osterhaus was beginning to rally and move forward his attaching column, a messenger brought me intelligence that my picket, commanded by Major Weston, of the 24th Missouri, had been attacked by infantry. This was at Elk Horn tavern where the new right was to rest; Col. Carr being present, he was ordered to move into position and to support the Major as soon as possible.

This was the commencement of the second day's fight. It was about half past ten o'clock, and the officers separated to direct their several commands.

The fire increased rapidly on the right and very soon opened in the sentry After visiting the right where I perceived the enemy was making a vigorous attack, and finding Col. Carr under a brisk fire of shot and shell coolly locating and directing the deployment, I returned to my central position near Pratt's house and sent orders to Col. Davis to move near to Col. Carr to support him. In the mean time Col. Osterhaus had attacked the enemy and divided his forces but he was soon pressed with greatly superior numbers that drove back our cavalry and took one. flying battery which had advanced with it. The Colonel however was well supported by his infantry, and soon checked a movement that threatened to interrupt the deployment of other forces. I considered the affair so imminent, I changed my order to Col. Davis and directed him to move to the support of the centre which was his proper place according to my order for the chance of front. My new line was thus formed under the enemy's fire, the troops generally moving in good order and gallant bearing. Thus formed the line was not continuous but extended entirely across Pea Ridge, the Divisions in numerical order from left to right, Col. Osterhaus remaining in command of a detachment and operating with Col. Davis in resisting McCulloch and McIntosh who commanded the enemy's force in the centre. I did not err in sending Col. Davis to this point, although Col. Parr on the right also needed reinforcements The battle raged in the centre with terrible fury. Col. Davis held the position against fearful numbers, and our brave troops nobly stood or charged in steady lines. The fate of the battle depended on success against this flank movement of the enemy, and here, near the Town, was the place to break it down. The fall of Generals McCulloch, McIntosh, and other officers of the enemy who fell early in the day, aided us in our final success at this most critical point, and the steady courage of officers and men in our lines chilled the ardor and broke down the hordes of Indians, cavalry, and infantry, that were arrayed against us.

While the battle thus raged in the centre the right wing was sorely pressed and the dead and wounded were scattered over the field. Col. Carr sent for reinforcements, and I sent a few cavalry and my body guard with the little mountain howitzers under Major Bowen. These did good service at a most critical period. I urged Col. Carr to stand firm, that more force could be expected soon. Subsequently Col. Carr sent me word that he could not hold his position much longer. I could then only reply by sending him the order to "persevere" He did persevere, and the sad havoc in the 9th and 4th Iowa and Phelps' Missouri regiment, and Major Weston's 24th Missouri, and all the troops in that Division will show how earnest and continuous was their perseverance. Seeing no sign of approaching foes by the telegraph road, I sent him three pieces of artillery and a battalion of infantry of Col. Benton's command (part of the third Division) which had been located at Sugar Creek to guard the approach. Each small accession to the 4th Division seemed to compensate an over-powering force. ^ s to the left, I was repeatedly informed it stood safe and firm although threatened by the foe. About 2 P. M. my aid Capt. Adams, who had communicated with that wing, informed me he had just seen Gen. Sigel and Asboth on

Sugar Creek and there was still no attack in that quarter and no appearance of an enemy. About this time the enemy's forces melted away in the brushy centre and the fire gradually ceased.

Believing the left and centre no longer menaced, and the enemy was concentrating on the right, I again sent word to Col. Carr that he would soon be reinforced. I had now resolved to bring up the Seat and centre to meet the gathering hordes near Elk Horn Tavern. To inform myself of the condition of the extreme left, I went in person to that point. On my way I ordered forward the remainder of Col. Benton's command, three pieces and a battalion which had remained guarding the crossing of the main telegraph road.

I found Generals Sigel and Asboth with the troops on the hill near the extreme left, where all was quiet, and the men, not having been under fire, fresh and anxious to participate in the fight.

It was now safe to make a new change of front so as to face Big Sugar Creek. I thereupon ordered this force forward. Gen. Asboth moved by the direct road to Elk Horn Tavern, and Gen. Sigel went by Bee Town to reinforce Davis if need be; but to press on to reinforce Carr if not needed, in the centre. Both Generals moved promptly. I accompanied General Asboth, collecting and moving forward some straggling commands that I found by the way. It must have been near five o'clock when I brought this force to the aid of Col. Carr. He had received three or four shots, one a severe wound in the arm, many of his field officers had fallen and the dead and wounded had gradually reduced his force. He had been gradually forced back near half a mile, and had been about seven hours under constant fire. His troops were still fiercely contesting every inch of ground. As I came up the fourth Iowa were falling back for cartridges, in line, dressing on their colors in perfect order. Supposing with my reinforcements I could easily recover our lost ground, I ordered the regiment to halt and face about. Col. Dodge came up explaining the want of cartridges. but informed of my purpose, I ordered a bayonet charge, and they moved again with steady nerve to their former position when the gallant 4th [Iowa] was ready to support them. These two regiments slave Lyon imperishable honors. Gen. Asboth had planted his artillery in the road and opened a tremendous fire on the enemy at short range. The 2d Missouri infantry also deployed and earnestly engaged the enemy. About this time the shades of night began to gather around us, but the fire on both sides seemed to grow fiercer and more deadly. One of my body guard fell dead, my orderly received a shot and Gen. A Asboth was severely wounded in the arm. ^ messenger came from Gen. Sigel saying he was close on the left and would soon open fire. The battery of Gen. Asboth ran out of ammunition and fell back This caused another battery that I had located on the right of the road to follow this latter fearing a want of support. The infantry however stood firm or fell back in good order, and the batteries were soon restored, but the caissons got quite out of reach. The artillery firing was renewed however and kept up till dark, the enemy firing the last shot, for I could not find another cartridge to give them a final round. Even the little howitzers responded "no cartridges. " The enemy ceased firing and I hurried men after the caissons and more ammunition. Meantime I arranged the infantry in the edge of the timber with fields in front where they lay on their arms and held the position for the night. I directed a detail from each company to bring water and provisions, and thus without a murmur these weary soldiers lay, and many of them slept within a few yards of the foe, with their dead and wounded comrades scattered around them.

Darkness, silence and fatigue soon secured to the weary, broken slumber and gloomy repose. The day had closed with some reverses on the right, but the left had been unassailed, and the centre had driven the foe from the field.

My only anxiety for the fate of the next day was the new front which it was necessary to form by my weary troops. I directed Col. Davis to withdraw all the remainder of his Division from the centre and move forward so as to occupy the ground on Carr' s immediate left. Although his troops had been fighting hard most of the day and displayed great zeal, energy and courage at 12 o'clock at night they commenced their movement to the new position on the battlefield, and they too, soon rested on their arms. Nothing further had been heard from Gen. Siegel's command, after the message at dark, that he was on or near the left. His detour carried him round a brushy portion of the battlefield that could not be explored in the night. About two o' clock he reported at my headquarters with his troops, who he said were going to their former camp for provisions. The distance of his camp, some two miles further, was so great I apprehended tardiness in the

morning, and urged the General to rest the troops where they were at my headquarters and send for provisions as the other troops. This he readily concurred in, and those troops bivouacked also for the night.

The arrangement thus completed to bring all four of my Divisions to face a position which had been held in check all the previous day by one, I rested certain of the final success on the coming day.

The sun rose above the horizon before our troops were all in position, and yet the enemy had not renewed the attack. I was hardly ready to open fire upon him as the 1st and 2d Divisions had not yet moved into position.

Our troops that rested on their arms in the face of the enemy, seeing him in motion could not brook delay, and the centre under Colonel Davis opened fire. The enemy replied with terrible energy from new batteries and lines which had been prepared for us during the night. To avoid raking batteries, the right wing fell back in good order but kept up a continuous fire from the new position immediately taken. The 1st and 2d Divisions soon got under way and moved with great celerity to their position on the left. This completed the formation of my third line of battle. It was directly to the rear of the first, and was quite continuous, much of it on open ground. We then had our foe before us, where we all knew our ground.

The broken defiles occupied by him would not admit of easy evolutions to repel such as could be made by us on the open plain. Victory was inevitable. As soon as the left wing extended so as to command the mountain, and rest safely upon it, I ordered the right wing to move forward so as to take position where I placed it the night previous. I repaired myself to the extreme right and found an elevated position considerably in advance, which commanded the enemy's centre and left. There I located the Dubuque battery and directed the right wing to move its right forward so as to support it and give direction to the advance of the centre right wing. Capt. Hayden soon opened a fire which proved most galling to the foe and a marker for our line to move upon: Returning to the centre I directed the first Iowa battery under Captain David to take position in an open field where he could also direct a fire on the central point of the enemy. Mean lime the powerful battery of Captain Welfley and many men were bearing on the cliff, pouring heavy balls through the timber near the centre, splintering great trees and scattering death and destruction with tempestuous fury.

At one time a battery was opened in front of Haydens battery, on the extreme right, so near us that I could not tell whether it was the enemy or an advance of Hayden, but riding nearer I soon perceived its true character, and directed the 1st Iowa and the Peoria battery, Captain Davidson, to cross fire on it, which soon drove it back to the common hiding place, the deep ravines of Cross Timber Hollows.

While the artillery was thus taking position and advancing upon the enemy, the infantry moved steadily forward. The left wing advancing rapidly soon began to ascend the mountain cliff from which the artillery had driven most of the rebel forces. The upward movement of the gallant 36th Illinois, with its dark blue line of men and gleaming bayonets, steadily rose from base to summit, when it dashed forward into the forest driving and scattering the rebels from these commanding heights. The 12th Missouri, far in advance of others, rushed into the enemy's lines bearing off a flag and two pieces of artillery. Everywhere our line moved forward and the foe as gradually withdrew. The roar of cannon and small arms was continuous and no force could then have withstood the converging line and concentrated cross fire of our gallant troops. The enemy was outflanked on both wipers and his centre overpowered. Our guns continued some time after the rebel fire had ceased, and the rebels had gone down into the deep caverns through which they had begun their precipitate flight.

Finally our firing ceased. The enemy had suddenly vanished. Following down the main road which enters a deep canon, I saw some stragglers and men running in great trepidation

through the gorges of the mountains. I directed a battery to move forward, which threw a few shots at them, followed by a pursuit of cavalry comprised of the Benton Hussars and my escort from Bowen's Battalion which was all the cavalry convenient at the time. General Sigel also followed in this pursuit towards Keitsville, while I returned trying to check a movement which led my force north, where I was confident a frightened foe was not likely to go. I soon found the rebel force had divided and gone in every direction, but it was several hours before I learned that the main force after entering the canon had turned short to the right, following obscure ravines which led into the Huntsville road in a due south direction.

General Sigel followed some miles north towards Keitsville firing on the retreating force that ran that way. Col. Bussey with cavalry and the little howitzers followed beyond Bentonville. I camped on the field and made provisions for burying the dead, and care of the wounded.

This sad reckoning shows where the long continued fire was borne, and where the public sympathies should be most directed. The loss of the enemy was much greater, but their scattered

battalions can never furnish a correct report.

The reports of Division and other officers of their killed and wounded of my command are all submitted. with such details as were seen or understood by local commanders. They give interesting incidents and notice many deserving heroes. I mentioned in my telegraph report of the 9th March and I now repeat the names of those who have done distinguished service. These are my commanders of Divisions, Generals Sigel and Asboth, Col. and acting Brigadier Gen. Davis, and Colonel and acting Brigadier General Carr. They commanded the four Divisions. I also again present commanders of Brigades, Cols. Dodge.

Osterhaus, Vandever, White, Schaffer, Pattison and Greusel. The three first named I expressly commend. I also renew the just thanks due to my staff officers: Capt. T. I. McKenny, A. A. A. General, Capt. W. H. Stark, Captain John Ahlefeldt, Lieut. J. M. Adams, and Lieut. Stitt, all acting aids. Also Lieut. A. Hoepfner my only engineer. To these I must now add Major Bowen Who commanded my body guard and with the mountain howitzers did gallant service in every battlefield, in the pursuit, and especially at 'Pea Ridge. " Captain Stephens, Lieut. Madison and Lieut. Crabtree, of this battalion, also deserve honorable mention. Major Weston of the 24th Ho., Provost Marshal in camp and in battle, did gallant service. Lieut. David, Ordnance Officer on my staff took charge of the first Iowa Battery after Captain Jones was wounded and did signal service I must also thank my commanders of Posts who supported my line of operation and deserve like consideration as their duties were more arduous; Col. Boyd at Rolla; Col. Waring at Lebanon; Col. Mills at Springfield, and Lieut. Col. Holland at Cassville.

To do justice to all I would spread before you the most of the rolls of this army for I can bear testimony to the almost universal good conduct of officers and men who have shared with me the long march, the many conflicts by the way, and final struggle with the combined forces of Price, McCulloch, McIntosh and Pike under Major General Van Dorn at the battle of Pea Ridge.

I have the honor to be very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
SAMUEL R. CURTIS,
Major General."

Capt. N. H. McLEAN, Assistant Adjutant General.

CHAPTER FIFTH

THE REPORT OF GENERAL FRANZ SIGEL
"HEADQUARTERS 1st AND 2d DIVISIONS, CAMP PEA
RIDGE, ARKANSAS, March 16, 1862

general:—I have the honor to lay before you the following reports in regard to the actions of the 1st and 2d Divisions from the third to the 9th day of this month.

1st. Expedition to Pineville on the 5th of March. On the evening of the 5th the main body of the two Divisions was encamped near McKreisick's farm three and a half miles south-ward of Bentonville, and one mile from the fork of the roads beadier west to Maysville, and north-east to Pineville, Missouri. The 2d Missouri under Col. Schaffer and one company of cavalry were stationed at Osage mills, (otherwise called Smith' s mills) five and a half miles south east of McKreisick's farm, whilst our pickets guarded all the other avenues to the camp.

For the purpose of reconnoitering the country towards the Indian territory, and to detain the rebels of south-west Missouri to follow Price' s army by the state line road, Major Conrad with five select companies of infantry, sixty men of cavalry, and two pieces of Welfley' s battery, was ordered to proceed on the first day to Lindsay's Prairie. where he arrived in the evening, sixteen miles southwest of McKreisick's farm, on the scout (the 5th) to Maysville, and to return on the 3d day to our camp.

Such was our position on the 5th when I received orders from you to send a detachment of cavalry to Pineville where there were said to be two or three hundred rebels who disturbed and endangered the Elation people of McDonald county. I directed Major Meszaros with eighty men to march at 10 o' clock P. M. on the north-western road to Pineville whilst Capt. Keilmansegge was sent to Maj., Conrad at Maysville to lead his sixty men of cavalry with one piece of artillery and twenty infantry, at 10 o'clock ill the night from Maysville to Rutledge and Pineville, and to act in concert with Major Meszaros. A home guard company stationed between Pineville and Keitsville was ordered to occupy at night the roads leading to Neosho and Kent, and thereby prevent the secesh to escape in that direction.

Major Meszaros and Capt. Non Keilmansegge should approach the town from the east, south-east and south-west. It was understood that these detachments should attack the town simultaneously at 5 o'clock in the morning. Just a few minutes before 10 o'clock in the evening, when Meszaros was prepared to leave the camp.

I received news from Col. Schaefer at Osage mills, that his pickets posted in the direction of Elm Spring were fired upon by the enemy. This in addition to your own despatches, reporting the enemy's forces at Fayetteville, and a strong party of cavalry advancing towards Middletown, and besides this, your order to march to Sugar Creek, made me at once aware of the dangerous position of my command. I therefore ordered Col. Schaffer to break up his camp immediately, to send the cavalry company to Osage Spring, to cover his right flank, and to march with his regiment to Bentonville, leaving Osage Springs to the right, and McKreisick's farm to the left. All other troops I ordered to be prepared to march at 2 o'clock in the morning.

In regard to the expedition to Pineville, it was too late to countermand the movement under Capt. Von Keilmansegge, and I therefore ordered Major Meszaros to begin his march and accomplish his task, with his own detachment and that of Capt. Von Keilmansegge, but to return to Sugar Creek as quickly as possible without running his horses, so that they could be of some use in the ensuing bate.

Major Conrad was made aware of our situation and instructed to join us at Sugar Creek by some circuitous road leading north-east. The result of the expedition was not very great, but satisfactory. The attack was made according to the instructions given, and at the precise time, but only one Captain, one Lieutenant, and fifteen men of Price's army were found in the town, and made prisoners; the others had left some days previously.

The commands of Maj. Meszaros and Capt. Von Keilmansegge [arrived] safely on the 6th in our camp at Sugar Creek, bringing with them their prisoners. Unfortunately they had to leave behind and then destroy a printing press and types taken at Pineville, as the roads they took were too bad to bring this important material along. Major Conrad with his detachment found his way to Keitsville and Cassville, which place he left on the 9th and arrived at the former place with Colonel Wright some time after I had opened the road to Cassville on the pursuit of Price's forces, which retired from Keitsville to Berryville.

II. Retreat from McKreisick's farm by Bentonville to camp Halleck * on Sugar Creek.

At two o'clock in the morning of the 6th the troops encamped at McKreisick's farm moved forward toward Bentonville in the following order

Advance guard under General Asboth.

1 Company of 4th Mo. cavalry (Fremont Hussars.)

2d Ohio Battery under command of Lieut. Chapman.

15th Mo. volunteers under command of Col. Joliat.

*Not Camp Halleck, camp Halleck was at Cross Hollows.

Train of 1st and 2d Divisions, escort and guarded by detachments of the respective regiments. The 1st Division under Col. Osterhaus The flying Battery 5th Mo. cavalry (Benton Hussars), and the 36th Illinois cavalry, Capt. Jenks.

Before leaving camp I detached Lieutenant Shepherd, of Co. "A," Benton Hussars, with twenty men from Osage Springs to communicate with Col. Schaffer, and to bring news to Bentonville as soon as the enemy would approach that place.

The advance guard of General Asboth arrived at Bentonville at 4 o'clock when I directed him to halt until the train came up more close. He then proceeded to Sugar Creek, followed by the train. Meanwhile the 2d Missouri, Col. Schaffer, and one part of the 1st Division arrived in town. I ordered this regiment as well as the 12th Mo. under command of Major Wanglein, the Flying Battery under Captain Elbert, and the whole disposable cavalry force under Col. Nemett, comprising the Benton Hussars, the 36th Illinois cavalry under Captain Jenks, and a squad of thirteen men of Fremont Hussars under Lieut. Fred. Cooper, to occupy and guard the town to let the whole train pass, and remain at my disposal as a rear guard.

At 8 o'clock the train had passed the town and was moving on the road to Sugar Creek. With the intention not to be too close to the train and awaiting report from Lieut. Shephard's pickets at Osage Springs, two hours elapsed, when (ten minutes after ten) it was reported to me that large masses of troops, consisting of infantry and cavalry, were moving from all sides towards our front and both flanks.

After some observation I had no doubt that the enemy's advance guard was before us, I immediately called the troops to arms and made them ready for battle. As Bentonville is situated on the edge of Osage prairie. easily accessible in front, and covered on the right and left and rear by thick woods and under brush, I ordered the troops to evacuate the town and to form on a little hill north of it. Looking for the 2d Missouri I learned to my astonishment, that it had left the town by a misunderstanding of my order.

I am glad to say this matter is satisfactorily explained by Col. Schaffer, but at the same time, I regret to report that this regiment was ambuscaded on its march and lost in the conflict thirty seven men in dead, wounded and prisoners.

The troops now left to me, consisted of about eight companies of the 12th Mo., with an average strength of forty five men; five companies of Benton Hussars, and five pieces of the

Flying Battery, in all about six hundred men. The troops I directed to march in the following order:

Two companies of the 12th at the head of the Column, deployed on the right and left as skirmishers, followed by the Flying Battery: one company of the same regiment on the right, and one on the left of the pieces, marching by the flank and prepared to fire by ranks to the right and left, the remainder of the regiment behind the pieces; two companies of cavalry to support the infantry on the right and left, and the rest of the cavalry under command of Col. Nemett, with one piece of artillery, following in the rear.

In this formation, modified from time to time according to circumstances the column moved forward to break through the lines of the enemy who had already taken position in our front and on both flanks whilst he appeared behind us in the town, in line of battle reinforced by some pieces of artillery.

The troops advanced slowly, fighting and repelling the enemy in front, flankwards and rear, wherever he stood or attacked. from the moment we left the town at 10+ in the morning until 3 1/2 in the afternoon, when we met reinforcements, the 2d Mo., 25th Illinois, and a few companies of the 44th Illinois. We sustained three regular attacks and were uninterruptedly in sight and under the fire of the enemy. When the first reinforcements had arrived, I knew that we were safe, and left it to the 25th and 2d Rio., and afterwards to Col. Osterhaus, to take care of the rest which he did to my satisfaction.

It would take too much lime to go into detail of this most extraordinary and critical affair; but as a matter of justice I feel it my duty to declare that according to my humble opinion, never troops have shown themselves worthier to defend a great cause than on this day of the 6th of March.

III. Battle of the 7th near Leesburg [Leetown] and on Pea Ridge.

In the night of the 6th the two Divisions were encamped on the plateau of the hills near Sugar Creek, and in the adjoining valley separating the two ridges extending along the creek. The 2d Division held the right, and the 1st the left of the position, fronting toward the west and south-west in order to receive the enemy should he advance from the Bentonville and Fayetteville road Col. Davis' division, forming the centre, was on our left, and Col. Carr covered the ground on the extreme left of our whole line.

Early in the morning. report came in that troops and trains of the enemy were moving the whole night on the Bentonville road around our rear towards Cross Timbers, thereby endangering our line of retreat and communication to Keitsville, and separating us from our reinforcements and provision trains.

This report was corroborated by two of my guides, Mr. Pope and Mr. Brown who had gone out to reconnoiter the country. I immediately ordered Lieut. Schramm of my staff, to ascertain the facts, and to see in what direction the troops were moving. On his return he reported that there was no doubt in regard to the movement of a large force of the enemy in the aforesaid direction. You then ordered me to detach three pieces of the Flying Battery to join Colonel Bussey's cavalry in an attack against the enemy in the direction of Leesville [Leetown], Col. Osterhaus was directed to follow him, with three regiments of infantry and two batteries.

At about 11 o' clock the firing began near Elk Horn Tavern and Leesville

To see how matters stood, I went out to Col. Carr' s Division and found him a short distance beyond the tavern engaged in a brisk cannonade several pieces partly disabled and partly without ammunition were returning whilst another advanced from the camp. The enemy's fire was directed to the place where I halted. I ordered two pieces of the battery which came up to take position on an elevated ground to the left and to shell the enemy. After a few shots the fire of the enemy Opposite our position became (position on an elevation) weaker and I sent the two pieces forward to join their battery. I then returned to look after my own troops. and passing

along the road met the Iowa 3d cavalry which had been sent in advance of Col. Osterhaus and which now escorted their Lieut. Colonel, who fell severely wounded, back into camp. I immediately sent to you, to order the regiment back to Leesville, which order was given and the regiment returned.

I met Lieut. Gasson of the Flying Battery who reported to me, that our cavalry had been driven back by an overwhelming force and our three pieces taken by the enemy. As there was no infantry to support them I now ordered Major Meszaros and the two other pieces of the Flying Battery to reinforce Col. Osterhaus, but during their march I learned Col. Davis had been directed to advance with his whole Division to Leesville, which induced me to send only Major Meszaros to that point, and directed the two pieces of the Flying Battery to act as a reserve, and to join the troops left in their encampment. Proceeding to the camp to find out what was going on there and whether we were safe in our rear (toward Bentonville) I found the following troops assembled in their respective positions, the 17th Mo, and a detachment of sixteen of the 3d Mo., the 25th and 44th Illinois, two pieces of Welfley's Battery, (12 pounders), two companies thirty sixth Illinois cavalry, and nearly the whole 2d Division, comprising the 2d and 15th Mo., Carlin's Battery, and two companies of the Benton Hussars. It was about two o' clock in the afternoon when the cannonading and musket firing became more vehement and when you ordered me to reinforce Col. Carr at Elk Morn Tavern and Col. Davis and Col. Osterhaus near Leesville, as both forces, especially those at Leesville were according to your reports pressed hard and losing ground. I therefore sent General Asboth with four companies of the 2d Mo., under Col. Schaffer, and four pieces of the 2d Ohio Battery under Lieut. Chapman to assist Col. Carr. Major Poten with the 17th Mo., one company of the 3d Mo., two companies of the 15th Mo., two pieces of the Flying Artillery, under Capt. Elbert, and two companies of the Benton Hussars, under Major Heinrich, I ordered to advance on the Sugar Creek road toward Bentonville to demonstrate against the rear of the enemy. Two pieces of the 2d Ohio Battery with six companies of the 2d Mo. remained in their position to guard the camp, and two companies of the 44th Illinois, with twenty men of the 36th Illinois cavalry under Captain Russell were sent forward in a north-western direction to remain there as a picket between Leesville and the Sugar Creek road.

With all other troops, the 15th Mo., the 25th and 44th Ill., and the two pieces of Capt. Welfley's Battery, I marched to Leesville to reinforce Col. Davis and Osterhaus. My intention was to throw back the enemy from Leesville into the mountains and towards Bentonville, and then by a change of direction to the right to assist Gen. Asboth and Col. Carr by deploying on their left.

[To be Continued.]