

Action at Lebanon, Tenn.

REPORTS. No. 1 MAY 5, 1862.

Report of Brig. Gen. Ebenezer Dumont, U. S. Army. LEBANON, TENN., May 5, 1862.

I surprised and attacked the enemy under Col.'s Morgan* and Wood this morning at 4 o'clock at this place, and after a hard-fought battle of one and a half hours and a running fight of 15 miles in pursuit achieved a complete and substantial victory. My force was about 600, composed of detachments from Col. Wynkoop, G. Clay Smith, and Wolford; that of the enemy, as stated by himself, upward of 800, besides which the disloyal inhabitants not in the army opened a murderous fire on our soldiers from their houses and kept it up until all the organized forces of the enemy had fled or been slain or captured. The loyal inhabitants-not a few, but having no arms-could render us no assistance. Forces on either side were exclusively mounted troops. I captured, say, 150 prisoners, among whom is one Col. Wood, 3 captains, and 4 lieutenants; upward of 150 horses and upward of 100 stand of arms, I would think. Our killed will not exceed, as now advised, 6, and our wounded 25. Among the latter is Col. G. Clay Smith, Fourth Kentucky Cavalry, in the abdomen, dangerously. I am not as yet advised that we lost any prisoners except Maj. Given, Seventh Pennsylvania Cavalry, who fell into the hands of the enemy during the street fight by mistaking the enemy for our own troops.

I will make a detailed report [see below] as soon as I can get returns which will enable me to make it strictly accurate; they are not yet in. The detailed report can make little change or in any way affect the substantial value of the victory; that was and is complete and overwhelming.

Never did men behave better. It will be my duty in my detailed report to mention meritorious conduct, a duty which justice to the meritorious requires and which I shall execute with exceeding delight, for in this little affair intrepidity, personal daring, and heroic courage were conspicuous from the firing of the first to the last gun. Battles of more import, measured by the number of troops engaged or results, might afford less to commend than does the battle of Lebanon of May 5.

I have the honor to be, your obedient servant, E. Dumont, Brig.-Gen.

No. 2 Reports of Col. William W. Duffield, Ninth Michigan Infantry.

MURFREESBOROUGH, TENN., May 5, 1862.

I have this instant returned from Lebanon after a four days' chase after Morgan. Detachment of Seventh Pennsylvania and First and Fourth Kentucky Cavalry overtook Morgan at Lebanon this morning at 5 o'clock, completely surprised him, thoroughly routed him, and captured a large quantity of arms and horses and 150 prisoners, among the number Lieut. Col. Robert C. Wood, of Adams' cavalry, late an officer in the U. S. Army. The enemy were pursued by Gen. Dumont to the Cumberland River. Gen. Dumont is still at Lebanon.

WM. W. DUFFIELD, Col., Cmdg. Twenty-third Brigade.

HDQRS. TWENTY-THIRD BRIGADE,
Murfreesborough, Tenn., Tuesday, May 6, 1862.

CAPT.: Agreeably to verbal instructions received from Brig. Gen. E. Dumont, I started in pursuit of the rebel force, commanded by Col. John H. Morgan, which had attacked Gen. Mitchel's train at Pulaski, leaving early on the morning of the 3d instant, and taking with me the Ninth Michigan Infantry, Lieut.-Col. Parkhurst, and the Eighth Kentucky Infantry, Col. Barnes. Upon reaching Wartrace, and learning that the Fourth Kentucky Cavalry, Col. Smith, had been ordered to Shelbyville, I directed Col. Barnes to occupy Wartrace, and protect the bridges at that place with the Eighth Kentucky Infantry, where it still remains. With the Ninth Michigan Infantry I move on to Shelbyville, reaching that point at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. Learning from scouts that the enemy was at Unionville and moving northward, I telegraphed Col. Lester, of the Third Minnesota Infantry, to place strong guards at the bridges at Murfreesborough, and to Col. Barnes, of the Eighth Kentucky Infantry, to adopt similar precautions near Wartrace, and, after bivouacking for the night on the Fayetteville road near Shelbyville, proceeded to Murfreesborough at daybreak on the 4th instant, by railway, with the Ninth Michigan Infantry, halting at the cross-roads and throwing out scouting parties in both directions.

On reaching Murfreesborough at 4 o'clock in the afternoon I learned that the enemy at noon had crossed the railway 10 miles north of that place, tearing up the track and burning the station house and a quantity of cotton stored there, and that upon the arrival of the First Kentucky Cavalry, Col. Wolford, from Nashville, Col. Lester had dispatched that force in pursuit, together with the Third Battalion of the Seventh Pennsylvania Cavalry, Maj. Given. I also learned that the Fourth Kentucky Cavalry, Col. Smith, had reached Murfreesborough, from Shelbyville, and the Second Battalion Seventh Pennsylvania Cavalry, Col. Wynkoop, from Nashville, and that both forces had united at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and proceeded with Gen. Dumont and yourself to Lebanon. Taking only my own escort of 15 men, I also started for Lebanon at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. Lieut.-Col. Parkhurst and three of my own staff followed after,

overtaking me at Los Cases. Here also I met the First Kentucky Cavalry, Col. Wofford, and the Third Battalion Seventh Pennsylvania Cavalry, Maj. Given, returning from the pursuit, having been informed that I had been cut off at Shelbyville and needed re-enforcements. I directed this force to turn back with me at once and unite with the one recently dispatched from Murfreesborough under Gen. Dumont, and pushed on all night for Lebanon, overtaking the forces under Gen. Dumont, who had halted at 1 o'clock on the morning of the 5th instant within 4 miles of that place and rested until daybreak. The column was then put in motion, proceeded at the trot, drove in the pickets, and charged into the town. The enemy was completely surprised, and was only aware of our presence by the fire of his pickets, posted less than a mile from the village. His main force was quartered at the college buildings, on the outskirts of the town, from which he endeavored on foot to reach the livery stables in the village, where his horses had been picketed for the night, to saddle up and mount; but being overtaken by the head of our column, threw himself into the houses lining the street, and maintained a heavy and well-sustained fire from the windows upon each side of the street. He was, however, driven from house to house until he fled from the town in the wildest confusion.

I need not inform you of the personal daring and gallantry of our troops, exposed, as they were, to this murderous cross and flanking fire from a sheltered and concealed foe, yet still delivering their fire at the windows with great coolness and precision, falling back to load and again returning to the attack, as both Gen. Dumont and yourself were present and can speak from personal observation.

During the time occupied in forcing the street a large portion of the enemy rallied in the public square, but were repulsed by a vigorous charge, and retreated toward the north and east, our troops following in close pursuit. Gen. Dumont and yourself having followed, directing the pursuit, and being left in charge of the town, I directed Lieut.-Col. Parkhurst to search the village and collect the wounded with my own escort and the small force of 15 men of the Third Battalion Seventh Pennsylvania Cavalry, under Capt. Essington, which did not join in the pursuit. While so engaged several scattering shots were fired upon us from the windows of adjoining houses and a sudden and most unexpected volley poured in from the windows of the Odd Fellows' Hall. The attack was so unexpected that the troops fell back in great disorder, but were promptly rallied in the public square. The Odd Fellows' Hall was a large brick building, in the center of the village, immediately opposite the stables occupied by a portion of the enemy's horses, and he had thrown himself into it, barricaded the lower windows and doors, and was firing from the second-story windows. Having no artillery with which to shell him out, I directed Capt. Essington, the officer in

command of the troops remaining in the village, to dismount his men, and, with my own escort, also dismounted, to advance under cover of the houses and stables on the other side of the street, to maintain a steady fire upon the windows, and when the enemy had been silenced to demand an unconditional surrender, and in case of refusal to fire the building. This was done, and the enemy laid down his arms and surrendered unconditionally to Lieut.-Col. Parkhurst. His force was more than double our own, consisting of 50 privates, 10 non-commissioned officers, 4 lieutenants, 1 captain, and the field officer in command, Lieut. Col. Robert C. Wood, jr., all of Col. Wirt Adams' rebel cavalry, in all 66 prisoners, who were turned over to Gen. Dumont on his return that afternoon.

I inclose you herewith the list of prisoners taken and an inventory of the captured arms. I remain, captain, your obedient servant, WM. W. DUFFIELD, Col., Cmdg. Twenty-third Brigade.

OR, Ser. I, Vol. 10, pt. I, pp. 884-886.
Official Report of General Dumont

Headquarters, U.S. Forces
Nashville, May 15th, 1862
Colonel James B. Fry, A.A.G.

I now in pursuance of your directions, have the honor to submit to you a more detailed report of the expedition resulting in the defeat of the enemy under Colonel John Morgan, at Lebanon, Tenn., on the morning to May 5th, 1862.

On Friday night, May 2d, 1862, at midnight, I received a despatch [sic] sent by Brigadier-General Negley from Columbia, Tenn., informing me that on that day, Morgan, at the head of two thousand men, had, at Pulaski, Tenn., captured 280 convalescents of General Mitchells command, and was then attacking General Mitchells wagon train, south of Pulaski, and asking me to send re-enforcements [sic]. Upon glancing over the map I was satisfied that I could not get troops to Pulaski in time to participate in anything to be done there, but that I might stand a chance to intercept the enemy by pushing with all speed by railway to Shelbyville, and thence in pursuit, shaping my course by the route of the enemy.

I immediately telegraphed to Colonel Duffield at Murfreesboro to hold 1,000 infantry in readiness to move by rail by the time of my arrival that I would be there with the cars to transport them before morning. One hour afterward I was on my way with the train, accompanied by a guard of thirty men from the 51st Ohio regiment, Colonel Stanley Matthews, whom I consulted as to the course

best to be pursued, and who rendered what I considered judicious an valuable advice and prompt assistance.

Upon him I devolved my command at Nashville, during my temporary absence from the city. At six o'clock on Saturday morning, May 3d, I reached Murfreesboro with the train, but, to my mortification, found that my despatch [sic] to Colonel Duffield had not been delivered; and that troops were not ready. I went to Colonel Duffields camp and informed him what I wanted. In the shortest possible time he had the 9th Michigan, Lieutenant-Colonel Parkhurst, and the 8th Kentucky, Colonel Barnes, on board the cars, and with these regiments, Colonel Duffield and myself proceeded forthwith on the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad to Wartrace.

At Wartrace I posted the 8th Kentucky regiment and the thirty men from Colonel Matthews regiment, with a view to intercept the enemy, should he attempt to cross the railroad at that place. Having ordered the 4th Kentucky cavalry forward from Wartrace to Shelbyville, with the 9th Michigan, I proceeded to Shelbyville, and there posted it with the same view. At Shelbyville I learned that the enemy had encamped on Friday night nearer Farmington, which is about halfway between Shelbyville and Pulaski. I reached Shelbyville about 5 o'clock p.m. on Friday, and immediately ordered forward the 38 Indiana regiment, Lieutenant-Colonel Merriweather, toward Farmington [a Union community in Rutherford County]. As vain as it would seem for infantry to overtake a mounted enemy, I considered it best to have them about, in view of the information which had been given me as to Morgans strength. Eager for the fray, never did men make a better march than did this regiment on that night, and if it did not finally participate in the engagement, it was simply because a physical impossibility stood in the way. I feel grateful to Lieutenant-Colonel Merriweather and his regiment for the promptness and zeal displayed in joining me in pursuit of the enemy.

With some three hundred of the 4th Kentucky cavalry, Colonel G. Clay Smith, I followed the 38th Indiana regiment toward Farmington, not being able to get ready to start as promptly as did Colonel Merriweather. At midnight I halted my command and sent forward scouts to ascertain the whereabouts of the enemy, and learned that he had crossed Duck river that morning, making toward Doolittle, on the Shelbyville and Nashville turnpike. With that start it seemed evident that he could not be overtaken with infantry; still, I directed Lieutenant-Colonel Merriweather and Lieutenant-Colonel Ruchstul, of the 4th Kentucky cavalry, to follow on his trail. Believing that the enemy intended to pursue an easterly direction and to cross the railroad at some point between Wartrace and Murfreesboro, with a detachment of Colonel Smiths 4th Kentucky cavalry,

returned to Shelbyville, reaching that place a little before daybreak. I directed Colonel Duffield to again take the cars, with the 9th Michigan, and go to the bridge north of Wartrace, fearing that Morgan would cross at that place before I could intercept him and burn the bridge. I proceeded myself on Sunday morning [4th], after an hours rest, with Colonel Smith and the detachment from his command, toward Murfreesboro, hoping to intercept Morgan as he crossed the Shelbyville and Murfreesboro pike. Knowing that infantry could no longer aid me, and still supposing the enemy strong, I sent a courier foreword to Murfreesboro, with word to Colonel Wynkoop, 7th Pennsylvania cavalry, and Colonel Wolford, 1st Kentucky cavalry, to meet me at 2 o'clock p.m. of Sunday. Wynkoop did meet me with 120 of his men, informing me that Morgan had already crossed the railroad between Murfreesboro and Nashville, tearing up the track, burning cotton, and that Wolford had gone in pursuit. Causing Wynkoop to join me with his 120 men, I hastened forward to Murfreesboro, arrived there about 5 o'clock p.m. of Sunday, fed my horses, and pushed forward toward Lebanon, Colonel Duffield and Lieutenant-Colonel Parkhurst accompanying me.

I had proceeded from Murfreesboro about eight miles toward Lebanon, when, to my utter amazement, I met Colonel Wolford coming back with his command. He informed me that he had followed the enemy until almost reaching him, when he was overtaken with an order from Murfreesboro to return on account of an apprehended attack on that town. I ordered him to join me, which he obeyed with alacrity and gladness, and having now some six hundred troops of the 1st and 4th Kentucky and 7th Pennsylvania cavalry, I pushed toward Lebanon, confident that, after my long, tedious, and discouraging march, I would yet be able to strike the enemy before he could cross the Cumberland and get beyond my reach. At a little after midnight I reached a point within four miles of Lebanon, and learning that Morgan was certainly there, posted a guard to intercept any one that might give him intelligence of my approach, and halted with a view of resting my greatly fatigued men and of striking him at daybreak. A little before the break of day I moved forward at a rapid pace, the detachment from the 7th Pennsylvania, led by Colonel Wynkoop, in advance, followed by Colonel Wolford at the head of the detachment of the 1st Kentucky cavalry. Colonel G. Clay Smith commanded the rear guard, composed of a detachment from the 4th Kentucky cavalry. I directed Wynkoop and Wolford to move at full speed into town by different streets and charge upon the enemy, believing that the benefits resulting to us by his surprise would be of more value than any advantage I could obtain by a different policy. I felt confident that I could whip him if he did not escape, and that all I had to fear was from his heels; that the best way to prevent his escape was to precipitate my main force upon him, strike him hard and first, and not suffer him to get out of my sight or beyond my reach. To avoid the risk of this course, I held Colonel Smiths 4th Kentucky momentarily

in reserve. I hesitated some in pursuing this policy of making a charge without knowing precisely the enemys position or strength, but am now fully satisfied that his escape would have been inevitable if it had not been adopted, as the roads leading from the town were very numerous, many of them diverging at right angles from the main road outside of town. The enemy, it seems, were in two squadrons, one in charge of Morgan and the other in charge of Lieutenant-Colonel Wood, all under command of Morgan. Morgan occupied the college, a large, massive building, on a hill to the right of the road, along which I must enter the town. Wood and his men occupied the public square and the various buildings in and around it, including an immense livery stable and the Odd Fellows Hall, which were not immediately upon the square. To charge upon or approach Morgan at all, it was necessary that the attacking forces should go beyond him into the public square, because there was first a creek, then a stone fence, then a hill, and then a board fence between the road and the college, and to get beyond these obstacles, my whole line was exposed to a fire from Morgan on the right and from Wood in front. The charge was most gallantly made by Colonels Wynkoop and Wolford, and seeing that to hold Colonel Smith in reserve was but to expose him to the fire of Morgan, with no ability to return it effectively, rather than order him to fall back, I directed him to charge also through another street into the public square. A terrible fight ensued; no man flinched. On every side, where I looked, determined valor and heroic courage were conspicuous.

It was as yet hardly light the rain fell in torrents. The town was illuminated by a sheet of flame and redolent with the unceasing roll of musketry. Morgan did not at this time come down to the square, but maintained his ground on the hill and in the lane of the north of the college, and from thence gave his troops in the town what aid he could by opening upon us an annoying but a destructive fire. From the fire of the first gun, my troops constantly advanced, gave back not an inch, while the enemy quailed before the valor, wavered before the deadly fire of my men, and finally broke and fled in every direction and in the utmost terror. During the deadly strife, Colonel G. Clay Smith was shot in the leg painfully, but bravely kept the field at the head of him men until the enemy finally fled, and then joined many miles in pursuit. Colonel Wolford was badly wounded in the abdomen by a pistol shot, and by a desperate charge upon the head of his column, but off from his command and subsequently captured, but subsequently recaptured. [sic] He is a brave and determined man , and his troops on this occasion proved themselves worth of so gallant a leader. After Wolford was wounded and captured his command devolved upon Lieutenant-Colonel J. W. Letcher, and well, faithfully, and [sic] bravely did he take upon himself the responsibility and do his duty. He won credit, and it pleasant to me to award it.

The public square being cleared of the enemy, the filed being ours in this quarter,

I determined now to direct my attention more particularly to the Morgan on the hill, who had annoyed us a good deal, and had, up to this time, been engaged by but a small part of my command.

Inspired by the success that we had already achieved, my gallant troops had no sooner received my command than they engaged Morgan closely, and came down upon him with a jar. Their fire was so well directed and soon became so hot that he gave way in good order and led us a chase through many of the streets and alleys of the town, thinking he would be able to dodge us and make his escape on a road unobserved. To this end he made many attempts to decoy me after small parties, that would approach us, fire into us, and then slowly retreat. I suffered not myself to be thus put upon the wrong scent, but kept my eyes upon, and gave my attention to the main force of the enemy, and at length disconcerted and defeated his purpose, by bringing all my forces to bear upon him, and compelling him to stand or be put to utter rout. He chose the latter, and fled toward that point on the Cumberland river at which the town of Rome is situated. That town is thirteen miles from Lebanon. He fled at full speed, and was joined, a mile from town, at the junction of an intersecting road, by some two hundred or three hundred men, driven by us from the public square. My troops, with the exception of a portion left behind under the gallant Colonel Duffield and Lieutenant-Colonel Parkhurst, to look after such of the enemy as might still be secreted in the houses, followed, never permitting the enemy to get out of sight, killing, wounding, and taking prisoners at every half mile, for a distance of twenty miles, and not losing a man on our part in the chase. At Rome we recaptured Colonel Wolford, who had been carried at a fearful rate, wounded as he was, a distance of thirteen miles. Having followed the enemy until my horses began to drop dead under their riders, and until the enemy had been so killed, wounded, captured, or escaped singly by byroads, that not to exceed forty men were still together, the pursuit was finally abandoned at Carthage. From Lebanon to Carthage the road was strewn with the dead and wounded of the enemy, and with many horses that had been shot or had fallen dead from exhaustion. In this latter respect my command suffered even more than the enemy. Bearing our trophies of victory taken in the chase, consisting of upward on one hundred prisoners besides those taken in the town, and many horses and arms, I ordered my command back. I had not proceeded far on my return until met by a messenger informing me that they were still fighting at Lebanon. I hastened with all speed, but found all quiet and in good order when I arrived, but learned from Colonel Duffield and Lieutenant-Colonel Parkhurst and Major J. A. Brents, to all of whom I am greatly indebted...that after I had followed the retreating enemy with my main command, it was discovered that some sixty or seventy were in the Odd Fellows Hall. These had been, in my absence, surrounded and captured. This was a good job, and made me proud of the victory achieved, valor displayed, and trophies won. Lieutenant-Colonel Wood

took refuge in this hall, in the hope that all my troops would follow Morgan, and that he could then withdraw with his men and escape. In this purpose he was signally defeated by the vigilance of Colonel Duffield, Lieutenant-Colonel Parkhurst, Major Brents, Captain Essington, Lieutenant Birnet, and the officers and men to whom that duty had been by me confided. It was Major Brent who threw a guard of the 1st Kentucky cavalry to the rear and prevented the escape....

The disloyal inhabitants, it is believed by many, united with the enemy, fired from the houses upon and killed some of my men. I thought to punish these murderous non-combatants and assassins by burning down the houses from which the firing came, but found that I could not do it without destroying the property of Union men, of which some of the best specimens in Tennessee or any other land or country reside in this town. I feared, too, that I might make a mistake and do injustice, as some that I arrested declared that through firing came from their houses, they did not fire, but that Morgans and Woods men, when hotly pursued, broke into the houses and did the firing. Such was possible. I doubted, but could not disprove it.

Of the horses captured, many had been taken by Morgan from loyal citizens; indeed, that seems to be his mode of always keeping well mounted on fresh horses. I have returned many of these, and it affords me great pleasure to do it.

In this expedition we killed and wounded many of the enemy. A number were killed and wounded in town, but by far the greater number in the pursuit. They lay along the road for a distance of twenty miles. On our return we found that many of them had been taken away by the inhabitants. I have been told that we killed upward of sixty, among whom was Captain A. C. Brown of Louisiana, brother-in-law of Governor Isham G. Harris. We captured upward of one hundred and fifty prisoners.... We captured upward of one hundred and fifty horses and mules, many saddles and bridles, and many swords, guns, [sic] and pistols. A number of negro [sic] slaves fell into our hands, acting as the servants of Morgans officers and men.

We captured an elegant American flag that had been taken from the dome of the court house the night before. Also a most elegant sword, presented to Major Governor, of the 18th Ohio Volunteers, and captured by Morgan at Pulaski.... We also captured Morgans negro [sic] and mare. Morgan told Colonel Wolford, while the Colonel was in his hands as a prisoner, that his force was upward of eight hundred. Our loss was ten killed, twenty-one wounded, and five missing....

Major J. A. Brents, *Patriots and Guerrillas*, pp. 139- 152.

