

THE WAR OF THE REBELLION : A COMPILATION OF THE OFFICIAL RECORDS OF THE UNION AND CONFEDERATE ARMIES

Prepared, Under the Direction of the Secretary of War,
By
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Reports of Brig. Thomas Green, C. S. Army, Commanding Cavalry Brigade, of operations
June 22-July 13.

Headquarters First Cavalry Brigade,
Near Panco, on the La Fourche, June 30, 1863.

General: Early in this month I was ordered by you to lower Teche, for the purpose of reconnoitering the enemy at Brashear, and to collect together and fit up light boats preparatory to making a descent upon the enemy, if practicable. While engaged in the execution of these orders, you came down and assumed command, ordering me to advance toward the bay.

On the night of the 22nd instant, in accordance with orders, I moved to Cochran's sugar-house, 2 miles distant from the bay, with the Fifth Texas, Second Louisiana Cavalry, and Waller's battalion, and the Valverde and a section of Nichol's batteries, leaving our horses at that place. I advanced the troops above mentioned on foot before daylight to the village of Berwick, opposite the enemy's encampment.

At the dawn of day, finding the enemy quiet and asleep, I opened fire upon him from the Valverde Battery. The first shot exploded in the center of his encampment, causing the greatest confusion, the distance being only about 900 yards. We fired about 40 or 50 shots from our battery into the enemy before he replied to us at all. The first shot from the enemy was fired on us from his gunboat, which was at anchor in the bay a short distance

below our position. After daylight the gunboat advanced toward us as if to contest with our battery the position we occupied on the water's edge, but a few well-directed shots from the Valverde Battery drove the boat 1 mile below, where she opened on us with her heavy guns. About the same time several batteries from the opposite shore opened on us. The shot on the enemy was so well directed that we found it necessary to shift the position of our guns and caissons. The heavy gun on shore which first opened fire on us from the principal fort above Brashear, with the garrison of that fort, was brought down nearly opposite my position, and opened fire on me. With the running of the gunboat, and drawing out this heavy gun, and most of the garrison from Fort Buchanan, left the waters above free to the approach of Major [Sherod] Hunter's command in our little flotilla to Tiger Island. Major Hunter, who had moved under your orders from the mouth of the Teche during the night of the 22nd on board our Mosquito Fleet, landed, unperceived and unsuspected by the enemy, above their defenses, and making his way through the swamp, about 7 o'clock on the morning of the 23rd attacked the enemy in his rear while I was occupying him in front, completely surprising and routing him.

The enemy surrendered their defenses and the town of Brashear to Major Hunter about 7:30 o'clock on the morning of the 23rd. Major Hunter's command consisted of about 300 men from Baylor's the Fifth Texas, and Waller's battalion, and Second Louisiana Cavalry (picked men). After crossing a part of the troops, I was ordered to pursue the enemy to the Boeuf. During the evening of the same day, I had quite an animated skirmish with him at the Ramos, where he had burned both the railroad and public bridges, and was well fortified on the east bank; but, finding that I had flanked him with a part of my command on the east side of the Boeuf, he hastily retreated. I threw a small detachment over the Ramos on the night of the 23rd, and moved them as close as possible to the enemy on the Boeuf. Colonel Major's command being behind the enemy, and it being difficult for him to escape, about 400 strong surrendered to us about daylight on the morning of the 24th. Our troops during the three day's campaign did their duty with great alacrity, and behaved with gallantry on all occasions.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

THOMAS GREEN,
Brigadier-General, Commanding First Cavalry Brigade.

FORD AND DAVENPORT PLANTATION,
Saturday, June 27, 1863

SIR: I have been all the morning collecting together all the information relative to the situation and strength of the defenses of Donaldsonville. After traveling all night, we arrived here at sunrise this morning, 8 or 9 miles from Donaldsonville. I learn from citizens that the fort contains from 300 to 500 Yankees, and that there are five gunboats there now. The approach to the fort is through an open plain 900 yards, and the ditch around it is 16 feet wide and 12 feet deep, making it impossible to scale, except by having strong plan or suitable ladders. I have had a full consultation (which, by and by, is not the best thing to be governed by). They think that an attempt to storm will be attended with great loss and no adequate benefit, even if successful; and this is my opinion. The object of the expedition – being to annoy and take, if possible, the enemy's transports can be better and more safely done by taking a position below Donaldsonville. I am making a bridge of sugar-coolers at this camp to cross one regiment, intending to swim the horses. I will push that regiment down on this side near the fort, throwing pickets above, where the river can be seen. My pickets above and below will be able to see what number of gunboats there are at the fort, and I propose to fix the bridge during the day so that I can get artillery on the Mississippi. With one rifle section I can make the transports coming up retreat. Come down and take command. I want you badly, as I do not know fully what your views are, and would not like to take any steps in conflict with them. Until I came down her, I had no idea of the position, strength, or feasibility of taking the fort, of the value when taken. I think now the fort can be rendered nugatory by taking position below it. Adopting the latter view will induce the Yankees very probably to abandon the fort or come out and fight us. Come down as soon as you can.

Yours,

THOMAS GREEN.

General Mouton