

of cavalry, and one battery of artillery. Colonel Potter was at the time about leaving, in obedience to my orders, for Plymouth, N. C., with Colonel Mix, in command of five companies of cavalry and one battery of artillery, to co-operate with the Navy in attacking Hamilton, on Roanoke River. The attack of the rebels was made suddenly, and it appears they surprised the outer line of pickets, killing and wounding them, and, dashing into town, surprised the company of foot artillery in the barracks, stationed for garrison at the new field works, capturing from them four old brass 6-pounders, that were captured by us at New Berne.

Colonel Mix and Colonel Potter, hearing the firing, halted, and immediately returned into town, attacking the rebels vigorously, and after two and a half hours' hard fighting drove them from the town and beyond Tranter's Creek, 8 miles from town, taking 20 prisoners, many muskets, and about 30 horses.

The rebels left 12 dead and 12 wounded in the streets, carrying off many killed and wounded, some of which they had to leave by the roadside. It is reported that 30 dead bodies have been found up to time of last dispatch.

Our loss was 7 killed and 47 wounded, most of them slightly. Lieutenant Everett, adjutant of the cavalry, was shot in the knee. Colonel Potter had his horse shot under him.

An unfortunate disaster happened to the army gunboat Picket, causing her destruction. Just as the men were called to quarters the magazine blew up, undoubtedly from carelessness or accident, tearing the boat to pieces, instantly killing Capt. [Sylvester D.] Nicoll, the commander, and 19 men, and wounding 6 others.

The gunboat Louisiana, Captain Renshaw, U. S. Navy, rendered most efficient aid, throwing her shells with great precision, and clearing the streets through which her guns had range.

Our whole force in the fight at the time of the attack consisted of four companies of infantry, two of artillery, and five of cavalry, and was considerably outnumbered by the enemy.

I shall leave for Washington immediately to take such measures as may be necessary, and will send detailed list of the killed and wounded on my return.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. G. FOSTER,

Major-General, Volunteers.

Major-General HALLECK,

Commander-in-Chief, U. S. Army, Washington, D. C.

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HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF NORTH CAROLINA,
New Berne, N. C., September 12, 1862.

GENERAL: I have the honor to state, in addition to my brief report of the 7th of the attack on Washington, N. C., that, upon careful investigation of the circumstances and of the reports, that the affair, although undeniably a surprise at the outset, proves to have terminated in a very creditable display of gallantry by our troops. I find that all the men, infantry, cavalry, and artillery, recovering from their first surprise, drove the enemy from the town and 8 miles beyond.

We have knowledge of the loss of the enemy of 33 killed and about three times that number wounded. Our loss was 8 killed, 36 wounded,

and 12 missing (as will be seen by list appended *), exclusive of those lost by the unfortunate blowing up of the army gunboat Picket. Owing to the death of the captain of the Picket, who was the only officer attached to the vessel, the list of killed and wounded has not been as yet made out.

I find that the explosion of the magazine of the Picket will not even-tuate in the total loss of the vessel. The guns have already been re-covered; the machinery can certainly be saved, and possibly the hull raised and repaired. If this be found impossible the machinery can be transferred to a canal-barge, and fit up a second gunboat as effective as the Picket.

The five companies of the Third New York Cavalry, and Battery H, Third New York Artillery, were very effective in driving the enemy from the streets. The two companies of the Twenty-fourth Massachusetts Volunteers and two companies of the First North Carolina Union Vol-unteers, under command of Col. E. E. Potter, First North Carolina, fought well and held their position.

I shall have the honor, in my next communication, to solicit the medal of honor for three most gallant men of the rank and file.

I have the honor to remain, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. G. FOSTER,

Major-General of Volunteers, Commanding.

Maj. Gen. H. W. HALLECK,

General-in-Chief, U. S. Army, Washington, D. C.

No. 2.

Report of Lieut. Col. Edward E. Potter, First North Carolina Infantry (Union).

HEADQUARTERS,

Washington, September 5 [6], 1862—12 m.

SIR: I have the honor to report that this town was attacked this morn-ing at 4 o'clock by a force consisting, according to the reports of pris-oners, of from 600 to 1,000 infantry, six companies of cavalry, and one battery of artillery. I had just started with Colonel Mix and his com-mand for Plymouth, when the attack was made. A halt was ordered and we moved back into the town. A heavy firing of musketry was going on at the upper end of the town. As we turned into the main street some of the enemy's cavalry came charging down, using sabers and pistols freely. Some of them were knocked over and others turned back. The artillery was placed at the intersection of the streets, with the cavalry supporting it. I advanced up the main street with one piece of artillery and a squadron of cavalry to the infantry quarters, where a desultory firing was going on. The enemy had surprised the artillerymen at their quarters in the school-house, at the corner of Second and Bridge streets, and were there in very strong force. I placed the 12-pounder at the intersection of Main and Bridge. All the infantry, North Carolina and Massachusetts, supported the artillery. The firing here was very sharp. Nothing but a small lot separated our men from theirs, each firing from behind fences. Our piece did good execution, but the gunners were all shot, and I had to withdraw the gun and the

*Nominal list omitted.

infantry to give the Louisiana's guns a chance. The Louisiana opened at once, at my request, and did excellent service.

Cavalry skirmishing was going on in the mean time on the outskirts and in different streets. The enemy after a time began to retreat, taking with them, I am sorry to say, the four brass pieces which were in the yard of the academy. The cavalry pursued them several miles, but did not come up with them.

The most unfortunate event connected with the affair was the loss of the gunboat Picket. According to the report of the engineer her magazine exploded just as Captain Nicoll had ordered the men to quarters. It must have arisen from carelessness in opening the magazine. Captain Nicoll and 19 men were killed and 6 wounded. Our loss in the affair is as follows:

Company B, First North Carolina, Lieutenant Lyon: Two killed and 7 wounded.

Company D, Twenty-fourth Massachusetts: Two wounded.

Company B, Twenty-fourth Massachusetts: Four wounded.

Company G, Third New York Artillery: Two killed, 2 wounded, 4 missing.

Third New York Cavalry: Two killed and 25 wounded, slightly.

Company H, Third New York Artillery: One killed and 7 wounded.

The rebels left behind 12 killed and as many wounded, several mortally. We have also some 20 prisoners, and have taken several horses and a good many muskets.

The conduct of the men was generally good. In this hurried report I can make no mention of individual good conduct. Colonel Mix, with his cavalry, did excellently. Lieutenant Garrard made a very handsome charge. Lieutenant Lyon, of the North Carolina Volunteers, displayed great courage. Lieutenants Pendleton and Strong were with Colonel Mix during the fight. No casualties occurred among the officers, with the exception of Adjutant Everett, of the cavalry, shot in the knee. Several horses were shot from under their riders, among them my own.

Captain Murphy has returned after pursuing the enemy to Tranter's Creek. He reports that they carried off many dead and wounded. They have left some at a short distance from town. I shall make proper disposition for the defense of the town to-night. The Plymouth expedition is postponed.

Your obedient servant,

EDWARD E. POTTER,
Commanding Post.

Capt. SOUTHARD HOFFMAN,
Assistant Adjutant-General.

No. 3.

Report of Lieut. Col. John Mix, Third New York Cavalry.

SIR: I have the honor to report, for the information of the general commanding, the operations of my command on the 4th, 5th, and 6th instant:

In compliance with my instructions I shipped, on the 4th, one company (D) of the Third New York Cavalry and one battery (H) of the Third New York Artillery. They left this post at 11 p. m. and de-

barked at Washington, N. C., at 3 p. m. on the 5th. At 4 a. m. on the 6th a command, consisting of Companies D, G, I, and L, Third New York Cavalry, and Battery H, Third New York Artillery, with an aggregate of 263 men, formed for the expedition I had been ordered to make, and at 4.15 broke into column. Scarcely were the troops in column, the head of it having just reached the outskirts of the town, on the Plymouth road, when a rapid and continuous firing was heard to our left and rear. The column was counter-marched at the gallop, and the cavalry, in column of eights, ordered to charge and clear the different streets, which were now apparently full of small parties of the enemy's cavalry. The night was intensely dark, and between the darkness, fog, and dust it was impossible in many cases to distinguish friend from foe at half a dozen paces. The order to clear the streets was in each case most gallantly obeyed. Company L, Captain Garrard, charged First street, driving back a considerable body of cavalry to Bridge street, where he came upon a large body of infantry, and was compelled to retire; in doing this he cleared the cross-streets to his left. Company D, Captain Murphy, performed the same operation on Second street. Company G, Captain Hall, charged the length of Third street, driving back several small parties of cavalry, and, upon reaching the fence around the academy, found a large force of the enemy's infantry in position unfavorable to attack. Company H, Captain Willson, which was not to accompany the expedition, and consequently not out at the commencement of the fight, turned out and was in saddle and ready for action in an incredibly short space of time. The captain, hearing firing and loud cheers in direction of the academy, promptly proceeded with his company to ascertain the cause thereof, and found a large force of the enemy in possession of four brass guns, which had been left in park near the hospital, and over which accidental capture the rebels were giving vent to their exuberance of spirits in loud, continuous cheers and demoniac yells of "Death to the damned Yankees"; "No prisoners"; "No quarters," &c. The captain, nothing daunted by these friendly salutations, made a most gallant but unsuccessful attempt to recover the guns; dismounted a number of his men, under a severe fire, within 60 yards of the enemy, and attempted to tear down a fence to enable him to charge them, but could not succeed in making a sufficient opening for that purpose. Company I, Captain Joçknick, in the mean time had succeeded in driving a number of detached and very troublesome parties of enemy's cavalry from Third and Fourth streets, and had gone to the support of one of the guns of Battery H.

During the first hour of the *mêlée* the convalescents and sick men turned out largely, considering the number in hospitals. These were united with small scattering parties, who had become temporarily detached from their companies, by officers who were without commands, and did good service in clearing the cross-streets. Lieutenant Everett, acting adjutant, while conveying an order to a distant part of the command, encountered alone a party of the enemy's infantry on a side street, dashed past them, emptying, as he did so, the contents of his pistol among them. He was, in turn, fired into, receiving a serious wound in his right leg. The guns of Battery H, Captain Riggs, were promptly placed in position upon several cross-streets, and held in readiness to fire the moment that the enemy could be distinguished from among the confused mass in every direction. And I would here mention as an extraordinary fact, and as due entirely to the coolness and intrepidity of the officers and men of this battery, that in no instance did occur the