

The following are the official published reports of the Engagement at Honey Springs, Indian Territory by Major General Blunt and the subordinate Federal commanders and by Brigadier General Cooper; unfortunately no reports from the subordinate Confederate officers were included in the official record.

No. 1

*Report of Maj. Gen. James G. Blunt, U. S. Army,
commanding District of the Frontier*

HEADQUARTERS DISTRICT OF THE FRONTIER,
In the Field, Fort Blunt, C. N., July 26, 1863

GENERAL: I have the honor to report that, on my arrival here on the 11th instant, I found the Arkansas River swollen, and at once commenced the construction of boats to cross my troops.

The rebels, under General Cooper (6,000), were posted on Elk Creek, 25 miles south of the Arkansas, on the Texas road, with strong outposts guarding every crossing of the river from behind rifle-pits. General Cabell, with 3,000 men, was expected to join him on the 17th, when they proposed attacking this place. I could not muster 3,000 effective men for a fight, but determined, if I could effect a crossing, to give them battle on the other side of the river.

At midnight of the 15th, I took 250 cavalry and four pieces of light artillery, and marched up the Arkansas about 13 miles, drove their pickets from the opposite bank, and forded the river, taking the ammunition chests over in a flat-boat. I then passed down on the south side, expecting to get in the rear of their pickets at the mouth of the Grand River, opposite this post, and capture them, but they had learned of my approach and had fled. I immediately commenced crossing my forces at the mouth of Grand River in boats, and, by 10 p.m. of the 16th, commenced moving south, with less than 3,000 men, mostly Indians and negroes, and twelve pieces of artillery. At daylight I came upon the enemy's advance about 5 miles from Elk Creek, and with my cavalry drove them in rapidly upon their main force, which was formed on the south side of the timber of Elk Creek, their line extending 1½ miles, the main road running through their center.

While the column was closing up, I went forward with a small party to examine the enemy's position, and discovered that they were concealed under cover of the brush awaiting my attack. I could not discover the location of their artillery, as it was masked in the brush. While engaged in this reconnaissance, one of my escort was shot.

As my men came up wearied and exhausted, I directed them halted behind a little ridge, about one-half mile from the enemy's line, to rest and eat a lunch from their haversacks. After two hours' rest, and at about 10 a.m., I formed them in two columns, one on the right of the road, under Colonel [William R.] Judson, the other on the left, under Colonel [William A.] Phillips. The infantry was in column by companies, the cavalry by platoons and artillery by sections, and all closed in mass so as to deceive the enemy in regard to the strength of my force. In this order I moved up rapidly to within one-fourth of a mile of their line, when both columns were suddenly deployed to the right and left, and in less than five minutes my whole force was in line of battle, covering the enemy's entire front. Without halting, I moved them forward in line of battle, throwing out skirmishers in advance, and soon drew their fire, which revealed the location of their artillery. The cavalry, which was on the two flanks, was dismounted, and fought on foot with their carbines. In a few moments the entire force was engaged. My men steadily advanced

into the edge of the timber, and the fighting was unremitting and terrific for two hours, when the center of the rebel lines, where they had massed their heaviest force, became broken, and they commenced a retreat. In their rout I pushed them vigorously, they making several determined stands, especially at the bridge over Elk Creek, but were each time repulsed. In their retreat they set fire to their commissary buildings, which were 2 miles south of where the battle commenced, destroying all their supplies. I pursued them about 3 miles to the prairie south of Elk Creek, where my artillery horses could draw the guns no farther, and the cavalry horses and infantry were completely exhausted from fatigue. The enemy's cavalry still hovered in my front, and about 4 p.m. General Cabell came in sight with 3,000 re-enforcements. My ammunition was nearly exhausted, yet I determined to bivouac on the field, and risk a battle in the morning if they desired it, but the morning revealed the fact that during the night they had retreated south of the Canadian River. The enemy's loss was as follows: Killed upon the field and buried by my men, 150; wounded, 400; and 77 prisoners taken, 1 piece of artillery, 1 stand of colors, 200 stand of arms, and 15 wagons, which I burned. My loss is 17 killed, 60 wounded, most of them slightly.*
 [* But see revised statement, p. 449 (see below).]

My forces engaged were the First, Second, and Third Indian, First Kansas (colored), detachments of the Second Colorado, Sixth Kansas, and Third Wisconsin Cavalry, Hopkins' battery of four guns, two sections of Second Kansas Battery, under Capt. E. A. Smith, and four howitzers attached to the cavalry.

Much credit is due to all of them for their gallantry. The First Kansas (colored) particularly distinguished itself; they fought like veterans, and preserved their line unbroken throughout the engagement. Their coolness and bravery I have never seen surpassed; they were in the hottest of the fight, and opposed to Texas troops twice their number, whom they completely routed. One Texas regiment (the Twentieth Cavalry) that fought against them went into the fight with 300 men and came out with only 60. It would be invidious to make particular mention of any one where all did their duty so well.

I am indebted to Col. Thomas Moonlight, chief of staff; Capt. H. G. Loring, acting assistant adjutant-general, and Captains Cox and Kinter, of the Fourth and Fifth Indian Regiments, acting aides-de-camp, for valuable aid rendered during the engagement.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES G. BLUNT,
Major-General

Maj. Gen. JOHN M. SCHOFIELD,
Commanding Department of the Missouri,

P.S.--I have designated this engagement as the "Battle of Honey Springs," that being the headquarters of General Cooper, on Elk Creek, in the immediate vicinity of the battle-field.

*Return of Casualties in the Union forces in the Engagement
 at Elk Creek; near Honey Springs, Ind. T., July 17, 1863.
 [Complied from nominal list of casualties, returns, &c.]*

		Wounded	
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Command	E M K i l l e d	O f f i c e r s	E n l i s t e d	A g g r e g a t e
2nd Colorado	5	14	19
1st Indian Home Guards	2	6	8
	*3	....	3	6
2 nd Indian Home Guards	....	....	2	2
3d Indian Home Guards	2	1	29	32
1st Kansas (colored)	....	....	1	1
2nd Kansas Battery	1	....	1	2
Hopkins' Kansas Battery	....	....	5	5
6th Kansas Cavalry	....	....	....	....
3rd Wisconsin Cavalry +	....	....	....	....
TOTAL	13	1	61	75

[* Drowned while crossing the Arkansas River, *en route* to field of battle.]
[+ No loss reported.]

No. 2.

*Report of Lieut. Col. John Bowles,
First Kansas Colored Infantry, Judson's Brigade*

FORT BLUNT, C. N., July 20, 1863

COLONEL: I have the honor to submit the following report of the First Regiment Kansas Colored Volunteers at the battle of Honey Springs, July 17, 1863:

Previous to forming a line of battle, Colonel [James M.] Williams was informed that his regiment would occupy the right and support Captain Smith's battery. Colonel Williams then called "attention," and said to the men, "I want you all to keep cool, and not fire until you receive the command; in all cases aim deliberately and below the waist. I want every man to do his whole duty, and obey strictly the orders of his officers." We then moved in column, by company, to the position assigned us, and formed in line of battle, when the engagement was opened by the battery. After the lapse of ten minutes, during which time the fire from the battery was incessant, General Blunt came in person to Colonel Williams, and said, "I wish you to move your regiment to the front and support this battery (which was already in motion); I wish you to keep an eye to those guns of the enemy, and take them at the point of the bayonet, if an opportunity offers." Colonel Williams then made some remarks to the men, intimating that we had work to do, and ordered them to "fix bayonet." We then moved to the front and center, forming to the right of a section of Smith's battery, consisting of two 12-pounder field pieces, that had already taken position within 300 yards of the enemy's lines, which was only apparent by the smoke from the frequent firing of their battery, so completely were they concealed by the brush in their position. Quite a number of rounds of shell and canister had been fired from our

guns, when our gallant colonel gave the command "forward," and every man stepped promptly and firmly in his place, advancing in good order until within 40 paces of the concealed foe, when we halted on the right of the Second Colorado. Colonel Williams then gave the command, "Ready, aim, fire," and immediately there went forth two long lines of smoke and flame, the one from the enemy putting forth at the same instant, as if mistaking the command as intended for themselves, or as a demonstration of their willingness to meet us promptly.

At this juncture Colonel Williams fell, he and his horse at the same instant; Colonel Williams badly wounded in the right breast, face, and hands. Being on the right, and partly shut out from view of the left by the thick brush, I was, therefore, ignorant of the fact that Colonel Williams had fallen, and could not inform myself until it was too late to give the command "charge bayonet," for which every man seemed so anxiously awaiting. In the mean time the firing was incessant along the line, except on the extreme right, where some of our Indians had ridden in the brush between us and the enemy. I immediately ordered them to fall back, and to the right. The enemy, which has since proven to have been the Twenty-ninth Texas Regiment, commanded by Colonel De Morse in person, who was badly wounded in the right arm, supposed from the command that we were giving way in front, and, like true soldiers, commenced to press, as they supposed, a retreating foe. They advanced to within 25 paces, when they were met by a volley of musketry that sent them back in great confusion and disorder. Their color-bearer fell, but the colors were immediately raised, and again promptly shot down. A second time they were raised, and again I caused a volley to be fired upon them, when they were left by the enemy as a trophy to our well-directed musketry.

As soon as I learned of Colonel Williams having been severely wounded and having left the field, I assumed command, our right pressing the enemy back to a corn-field, where he broke and fled in confusion. Further pursuit being impossible on account of the nature of the ground, I ordered the right back to our original line of battle. At this time Lieutenant-Colonel [F.W.] Schaurte, of the Second Indian, sent an orderly informing me of the near approach of his command, and that he wished to pass to the front, and I would please inform my command of the fact, to prevent accident. Some of his command passed to our front and carried off the colors we had three times shot down and driven the enemy from in defeat and loss. Some of my officers and men shouted out in remonstrance, and asked permission to break ranks and get them. I refused permission, and told them the matter could be righted here-after.

Lieutenant-Colonel Moonlight, chief of staff, ordered us to the front. We advanced in line for a distance of 3 miles, skirmishing occasionally with the enemy from the high bluffs in front and to the left. The enemy being completely routed and defeated, we were ordered to fall back to the Springs, rest the men, and cook supper.

At 7 p.m. we were ordered to take position on the battle-field, near the ford, on Elk Creek, and bivouac for the night.

Our total on entering the battle was 500 men, including the commissioned officers. Our total in killed and wounded was 2 killed and 30 wounded.* [* But see revised statement, p. 449 (above, this appendix).]

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In conclusion, I feel it but justice and my duty to state that the officers and men throughout the entire regiment behaved nobly, and with the coolness of veterans. Each seemed to vie with the other in the performance of his duty, and it was with the greatest gratification that I witnessed their gallant and determined resistance under the most galling fire. Where all performed their duty so well it would be hard to particularize.

J. BOWLES,
Lieut. Col., Comdg. First Regiment Kansas Colored Vols.

Col. WILLIAM R. JUDSON,
Commanding First Brigade, Army of the Frontier.

No. 3.

*Report of Lieut. Col. Frederick W. Schaurte,
Second Indian Home Guards.*

FORT BLUNT, C.N., *July 20, 1863.*

SIR: I have the honor to forward to you the following report of the battle on Elk Creek, Creek Nation, July 17, 1863, in which my regiment was engaged:

I was ordered to get all my available force in readiness to march on Thursday, July 16, 1863. My command consisted of field and staff officers, Major [M.B.C.] Wright, Surg. A. J. Ritchie, Adjutant [Ezra W.] Robinson, Chaplain J. B. Jones, and Sergt. Maj. Ed. Baldrige; of line officers, 4 captains, 9 first lieutenants, and 5 second lieutenants; of enlisted men, 345, 10 of whom were mounted. Total, 368.

My command crossed the Arkansas River, below the mouth of Grand River, at 11 p.m. on the 16th instant. Three privates of Company F. Second Regiment Indian Brigade, were drowned while attempting to swim the river--Privates Huston Mayfield, Key Dougherty, and To-cah-le-ges-kie. We moved forward on the Texas road (course west of south), and arrived at camp, to the north of and near Elk Creek timber, at 8.45 o'clock, July 17, 1863. About an hour afterward I received orders to get my command in readiness, and take position in close column of companies in rear of the First Kansas Colored Regiment. The First Brigade, of which my regiment formed a part, moved forward in close column of companies, on the right of the Texas road, and formed in line of battle near and in front of Elk Creek timber. About 10.20 a.m. Blair's battery, consisting of four pieces, commanded by Capt. E. A. Smith, commenced firing. Soon afterward the right section changed position from the right to the left of the brigade, supported by the First Kansas Colored Regiment. As soon as the artillery ceased firing I was ordered to deploy my command as skirmishers, and enter the timber. My command continued to act as skirmishers during the entire engagement, which lasted about four hours. The enemy were repulsed from the field, and pursued till pursuing became useless, they being well mounted and our men worn down with fatigue. A little after 2 o'clock my command was ordered back to camp on Elk Creek, where it remained until 5 p.m., July 18, 1863, when we were ordered to march for Fort Blunt, on the same route pursued in going to the scene of action. We camped about 12 p.m., on the prairie 2 miles south of the Arkansas River. My command left camp soon after sunrise, and arrived at Fort Blunt at 11 a.m., July 19, 1863.

A stand of colors was captured by my men; also a quantity of arms; the number I could not ascertain, as the men threw them in a pile whenever they found them.

The casualties of my command are as follows: Private Huston Mayfield, Company F, drowned in the Arkansas; Private Key Dougherty, Company F, drowned in the Arkansas; Private

Tocah-le-ges-kie, Company F, drowned in the Arkansas; Private Grass, Company B, wounded in left side, severely; Private Backwater, Company A, right thigh broken, wound mortal; Private Leach Rice, Company I, right hand wounded slightly.

I feel it my duty to state that the officers and men of my command behaved nobly and gallantly. They were the first who charged through Elk Creek and took position in the farther edge of the timber, opposite to where the enemy had massed their forces for the time.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

FRED. W. SCHAURTE,
Lieut. Col. Second Regiment Indian Brigade, Comdg. Regiment.

ACTING ASSISTANT ADJUTANT-GENERAL,
Brigade, Army of the Frontier

No. 4.

*Report of Lieut. Col. William T. Campbell,
Sixth Kansas Cavalry.*

CAMP NEAR FORT BLUNT, C. N., *July 19., 1863.*

SIR: I have the honor to report the part taken by my command, consisting of Companies A, C, F, and H, commanded, respectively, by Lieutenant [Thomas J.] Darling, Lieutenant [Richard L.] Phillips, Captain [William] Gordon, and Captain [David] Mefford; also section of mountain howitzers, under Lieutenant [John P.] Grassberger, in action on the 17th instant, at Honey Springs, Creek Nation.

My command left camp at 4 o'clock on the morning of the 16th instant, with a section of Second Kansas Battery, crossing the Verdigris and Arkansas Rivers without loss. After a halt of a few hours, I, with my command, was ordered to take the advance, Company F, Captain Gordon, being advance guard. About daybreak the advance came up with the enemy in considerable force, posted on a rise of ground, and near the timber. The captain immediately formed his men and opened a brisk fire on the enemy, but was compelled by superior numbers to fall back. I brought the rest of my command forward at a gallop to the support of the advance, and, after a sharp skirmish, drove the enemy from his position, with a loss of 1 killed and 3 wounded. Private Banks, of Company C, and Allingham, of Company F, were slightly wounded; also had 1 horse killed. I then advanced and came up with the enemy, posted in force under cover of timber at Elk Creek. Here I came to a halt, and sent a company forward to reconnoiter; found the enemy strongly posted in the woods, their line extending on the right and left of the road. I kept up a brisk fire on them; they, however, kept under cover. Private White was here shot through the shoulder. At 7 o'clock I was transferred from the command of Colonel Judson to that of Colonel Phillips (Colonel Judson retaining the section of howitzers), and assigned to the extreme left of our line of battle. Shortly after the general engagement commenced, I discovered the enemy endeavoring to flank us, under cover of timber. I immediately dismounted Companies C, F, and H, and sent them into the woods as skirmishers, and after sharp work of about an hour and a half succeeded in driving the enemy back, and turning his right flank, with slight loss.

During this time, Colonel [S.H.] Wattles, First Indian Regiment, made a gallant charge, driving the enemy from his position, which relieved my flank. I immediately recalled my men, and, after obtaining a supply of ammunition, mounted and started in pursuit. Shortly after crossing the creek, I charged into a large body of rebels, whom I took to be Stand Watie's Indians and Texans. They retreated to the woods, where they made a stand. My men dismounted and opened a vigorous fire, which together with a section of Hopkins' battery and the mountain howitzers, soon put them to flight. I followed on until ordered to cease pursuit, the enemy retreating in great disorder. Hospital Steward Holdeman was badly wounded while on the field.

I state with great pleasure that the officers and men under my command behaved, without exception, coolly and bravely.

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

W. T. CAMPBELL,
Lieutenant-Colonel, Commanding Regiment.

Col. WILLIAM R. JUDSON,
Commanding Troops in the Field, &c.

No. 5.

*Report of Capt. Edward R. Stevens,
Third Wisconsin Cavalry.*

CAMP NEAR FORT BLUNT,
July 19, 1863.

SIR: I have the honor to make the following report on the part taken by the battalion of the Third Cavalry Wisconsin Volunteers in the action at Honey Springs, on the 17th instant:

My command was formed in battle order on the right about 10 a.m., in accordance with your orders, and moved forward toward the enemy, posted in the edge of the timber. A portion of my battalion was sent further on to the right, for the purpose of flanking the enemy. The howitzers, which we were supporting at this point, opened upon the enemy, posted behind a rail fence, in the edge of a corn-field. These two movements forced the enemy to fall back upon their center. Dismounting a portion of my command, I skirmished the woods, capturing 98 prisoners, with their arms, and, following the enemy through the timber, I encamped on the prairie beyond.

I am highly gratified to speak in terms of praise of the conduct of officers and men under my command, and of their bravery and promptness in obeying orders. The able manner in which our force was handled in other parts of the field drew the attention of the enemy in such a manner that they inflicted no loss upon my command.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

E. R. STEVENS,

Capt. Third Wisconsin Volunteer Cavalry, Comdg. Battalion.

Col. WILLIAM R. JUDSON,
Commanding Brigade.

No. 6

*Report of Captain Edward A. Smith
Second Kansas Battery.*

CAMP NEAR FORT BLUNT, C. N.,
July 19, 1863.

SIR: I have the honor to make the following report of the part taken by the Second Kansas Battery in the battle of Honey Springs, on the 17th instant:

My command consisted of two 12-pounder brass guns and two 6-pounder iron guns, manned by 77 officers and men. At 3 a. m. of the 16th instant, my two 6-pounder guns, under Lieutenant [Aristarchus] Wilson, were ordered out to assist the Sixth Kansas Volunteers in forcing a passage at the upper ford of the Arkansas. This was effected without opposition, and that portion of the command proceeded to the ford at the mouth of Grand River, where I rejoined it at 5 p. m. of the same day with the 12-pounder guns. The march was continued during the night in the direction of Honey Springs, Creek Nation, and at 8 a. m. of the 17th we came in sight of the enemy's line on Elk Creek. After a rest of two hours, I was ordered forward, preceded by the Third Wisconsin Cavalry, and supported by the First Regiment Kansas Colored Volunteers and the Second Regiment Indian Home Guards. Changing direction to the right of the road. I continued in that direction about 600 yards, when I wheeled the battery into line, and moved down upon the left of the enemy's line, which could be faintly discerned through the timber and brush. At this moment the rebel batteries on their right opened upon Captain Hopkins' battery, in Colonel Phillips' brigade. By direction of General Blunt, I came forward at a trot, and went into battery facing the rebel guns on my left. A single shot from one of their rifled guns flew over my head as I went into position. I opened with spherical-case shot, shell, and solid shot on the rebel batteries, which were soon silenced, as rebel prisoners report, by my 12-pounder guns. The commanding general then ordered me to move my 12-pounder guns to the left, near the road, go up within 300 yards of the rebel line, and open with canister. I did so, passing through and 100 yards in front of the line of the Second Colorado Regiment, and going into battery almost at the edge of the brush, I fired 3 or 4 rounds of canister and 10 or 12 of shell at the rebel position on the hill, when we could see them retreating in the direction of a small corn-field in my immediate front. Before I had time to open on this position I was ordered to cease firing, and the infantry charged the timber. I limbered up and moved forward, in rear of the infantry, which was soon hotly engaged with the enemy. For a few moments the firing was terrific, and I was compelled to dismount my drivers, and, our own men being directly in front of me, was compelled to remain a silent spectator of the contest, which, fortunately, was soon ended by the rout of the foe. Our infantry lines had now disappeared in the timber, across which the rebels were being driven rapidly and with severe loss, and I orders to follow. This order was countermanded soon after I reached the timber, and I moved back and encamped on the prairie, north of the creek.

My officers and men behaved throughout with great coolness and courage, a fact worthy of notice, as it was the first time they had ever been under fire. My losses were as follows: Private William C. Caskey, wounded severely in the thigh; 3 horses slightly wounded.

All of which is respectfully submitted, by your obedient servant,
E. A. SMITH,
Captain, Commanding Second Kansas Battery.

Colonel WILLIAM R. JUDSON.

No. 7.

*Report of Maj. J. Nelson Smith,
Second Colorado Infantry, Phillips' brigade*

FORT BLUNT, July 19, 1863.

COLONEL: I have the honor to transmit the following report of the part taken by the battalion of the Second Regiment Colorado Volunteers at the battle of Honey Springs, after having been put in command by Colonel [Theodore H.] Dodd, he going to the rear with prisoners:

I was ordered by General Blunt to rally two companies of my command to support Hopkins' battery, which was to cross the creek in pursuit of the enemy. After rallying my companies, we crossed the stream, and discovered the enemy on a hill, or rise of ground in the advance. Here Hopkins' battery, supported by my infantry, opened upon the enemy, who fled in confusion after the second fire. I was here ordered by Colonel [William A.] Phillips, commanding brigade, to have the rest of my command brought forward, which order was promptly obeyed, I at the same time moving my two companies forward in support of the battery, until we occupied the enemy's former position. Here the remainder of my command came up. After halting a short time we were ordered into camp.

Killed or wounded, none.* [* But see p. 449 for casualties in remainder of regiment (page this appendix).]

I have no one to censure or praise, as every officer and soldier tried to do his duty.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. NELSON SMITH,
Major Second Regiment Colorado Volunteers

Col. WILLIAM A. PHILLIPS,
Third Indian Volunteers, Commanding.

No. 8.

*Report of Col. Stephen H. Wattles,
First Indian Home Guards*

HDQRS. FIRST REGIMENT OF INDIAN HOME GUARDS.

Fort Blunt, C. N., July 18, 1863.

COLONEL: On the morning of the 17th of July, 1863, we came upon the enemy at Elk Creek. My command was ordered to the left, in support of Hopkins' battery, and then ordered to charge the enemy out of the timber. I advanced, under a destructive fire from the enemy, after hard fighting, gained a position in the timber, and finally drove them across the stream, on the left of the bridge, the enemy forming several times, and desperately contesting every foot of ground.

Too much praise cannot be awarded to both officers and men for their gallant conduct in the battle. Among the former who did efficient service were Lieut. Col. George Dole, who had command of the left wing, and was the first to cross the stream, which he accomplished, under a most galling fire from the enemy, who were formed on the opposite side; Actg. Adj. E. C. Lowe, Captains No-ko-so-lo-chee and So-nuk-mik-ko, and Lieuts. R. T. Thompson, Fred. Crafts, Ferd. R. Jacobs, and Charles N. Rix. Of the latter who deserve honorable mention are O. P. Willetts, A. Flanders, and Thompson Overton.

My loss was: Killed, 2; wounded, 6; missing, none. Number of guns captured, 24.

I am, colonel, very respectfully, &c.,

STEPHEN H. WATTLES,
Colonel, Commanding First Indian Regiment.

Col. WILLIAM A. PHILLIPS,
Commanding Fort Blunt.

No. 9.

*Report of Capt. Henry Hopkins,
Kansas Battery*

FORT BLUNT, C. N., *July 21, 1863.*

COLONEL: I would submit the following as a report of the part taken by Hopkins' battery in the engagement of July 17, 1863, at Honey Springs, Ind. T., between the forces under Major-General Blunt and the rebels under Cooper:

Receiving orders to be in readiness to march at 6 a.m. on the 16th instant, with six days' rations, at 12 m. of the same day orders were received to cross the Arkansas, at the mouth of Grand River. Effecting a crossing at dark, marching 2 miles south, and resting for three hours, we again took up line of march in a southwest direction, coming upon the enemy's outposts at daylight. Line of battle was formed, but discovering the enemy had fled, we were again ordered forward. Moving forward 6 miles, the enemy, under command of Cooper, was discovered in force, occupying a strong position, in a thickly wooded ravine. Moving up in line of battle to within 300 yards of the enemy's position, we were ordered by yourself to commence firing and shell the woods in the immediate front, which continued for one hour and a quarter. Immediately after our fire opened, the enemy's battery was discovered occupying a position to our right and front, which opened fire upon us with shot, shell, and canister, wounding 1 sergeant, mortally (left leg shot off above the knee), killing 1 private, killing 4 horses, and wounding 4 others, totally unfitting them for service.

Discovering one of their guns occupying an open space in the woods, an order was given to direct the fire of the two guns upon it, and, if possible, dismount it, which was soon effected. By the explosion of one of our shells, the cannoneers belonging to that piece and all their horses were killed or wounded. Orders were given to cease firing, limber up, and move forward to the edge of the woods, the position the enemy's battery first occupied, and halt until one section of Captain Smith's Second Kansas Battery should pass and cross the ravine.

One of the teams being disabled, I ordered Lieutenant [John F.] Aduddell forward, with three pieces, and as quickly as the disabled horses were replaced I followed with the other piece, and rejoined the other three. The section of Captain Smith's battery not passing, orders were received to move forward on double-quick, and occupy a position on the prairie beyond the ravine. Lieutenant Aduddell moving to the left of the road with one section, opened upon the enemy's cavalry, upon a hill beyond, causing them to fall back quite precipitately, the shell bursting in their immediate vicinity. Again moving forward one-quarter of a mile, a line of the enemy's cavalry was discovered and driven back after the firing of a few rounds of shell. At this point the sections were divided and ordered to move forward to the right and left of the road, the right section under command of First Lieut. John F. Aduddell and the left under Sergeant [C.M.] Greve. Firing now almost entirely ceasing, excepting a few rounds from the left section, and moving forward about 1½ miles, we were ordered to halt, as the enemy had retreated, and our stock was too much exhausted to follow them farther. Immediately after fighting had ceased, and we were selecting a camp-ground, we discovered at the edge of the woods, in their old camp, nearly the entire camp-equipage of one regiment, cooking utensils, tents, &c., which we destroyed.

Casualties: One killed and one mortally wounded, since died.

The sections and pieces were commanded as follows: Right section by Lieut. J. F. Aduddell; left section by Sergeant Greve, acting first sergeant; first piece, Sergeant [J.G.] Pettigrew; second piece, Sergeant [Daniel] Sayre, mortally wounded; third piece, Corporal [J.R.] Rice; fourth piece, Sergeant [O.F.] Fahnestock. Sergeant [J.F.] McKibben, on detached service, recruiting, not being assigned to any duty, assisted, and much credit is due him for his services rendered during the action. Great credit is due Lieutenant Aduddell for his coolness and bravery during the entire action, moving to any part of the battery when necessary, and directing the fire of the pieces with good effect; also Sergeants Greve, Fahnestock, Pettigrew, Corporals, Rice, [J.S.] Payne, [T.] McCain, and Farrier [Joseph] Ibbatson, acting gunner to second piece. The fire of the enemy's artillery being directed at us, and taking considerable effect among both men and horses, great praise is due the men for their coolness and courage during the entire fight, and [they] proved themselves worthy of promotion.

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

H. HOPKINS,
Captain, Commanding Hopkins' Battery

Col. WILLIAM A. PHILLIPS,
Commanding Brigade.

No.10.

Report of Brig. Gen. Douglas H. Cooper, C. S. Army,

commanding Confederate Forces.

HEADQUARTERS FIRST BRIGADE, INDIAN TROOPS,
Imochiah Creek, near Canadian, August 12, 1863.

GENERAL: My official report of the affair at Elk Creek, on the 17th ultimo, has been delayed in consequence of the movements of the troops under your command and the difficulty of getting correct reports from subordinate officers of the killed and wounded. Referring to my notes of the 18th ultimo, I now have the honor to submit the following:

On July 15, reports were sent to me from the officer in charge of the pickets on the Arkansas River that it had become fordable above the mouth of Verdigris; that Federal officers were seen examining the fords; that the two spies, Clark and Lane, formerly employed in the quartermaster's department at Forts Arbuckle and Cobb, who imposed themselves upon you, and thereby obtained permission to enlist in this brigade, had reached Gibson; that they had been at the agency examining that ford, &c. Believing there was a probability that the attack might be made upon me before General Cabell arrived, whose movements were known to these spies, or at all events that a heavy scout might be sent across to capture the pickets on the Arkansas, I directed their concentration on Coody's Creek, with instructions to send vedettes to the different fords.

Early on the 16th ultimo, information reached me that the Federals were crossing in force at the Creek Agency. Col. Tandy Walker, commanding First Cherokee and Choctaw Regiment, and Captain [L.R.] Gillett, commanding squadron Texas cavalry, with their commands, accompanied by Lieutenant [T.B.] Heiston, aide-de-camp and acting assistant adjutant-general, were ordered out in the direction of the Chimney Mountain, where the roads to Creek Agency and to Gibson intersect, with orders to send out small parties of observation on both roads and to withdraw the pickets from Coody's Creek. Up to this time I had been unable to determine whether the force which crossed at the Creek Agency was merely a heavy scout or the advance of the main body of the enemy. About 200 or 300 had been reported moving from the Creek Agency down the river toward Nevins' and Rabbit Fords, near Frozen Rock, to capture or drive off our pickets, who were supposed, no doubt, still to be there.

About daylight on the morning of the 17th, the advance of the enemy came in sight of the position occupied by the Choctaws and Texans; commenced a brisk fire upon them, which was returned and followed by a charge, which drove the enemy back upon the main column. Lieutenant Heiston reported the morning cloudy and damp, many of the guns failing to fire in consequence of the very inferior quality of the powder, the cartridges becoming worthless even upon exposure to damp atmosphere. Soon after the Federals had been driven back, it commenced raining heavily, which rendered their arms wholly useless. These troops then fell back slowly and in good order to camp, for the purpose of obtaining a fresh supply of ammunition and preparing for the impending fight. A few remained with Lieutenant Heiston at Prairie Mountain, about 3 miles north of camp on the Gibson road, and were so disposed as to create the impression on the enemy that a large force was there awaiting them. Accordingly, their advance halted until the main body came up and formed in line of battle, thus affording my aide opportunity to form an estimate of their strength. He reported their force to be probably 4,000, which I found nearly correct, though some 500 under the mark. After ascertaining that the enemy were advancing in force, orders were issued to the officers commanding corps to prepare for immediate action and take their positions, all which had been in anticipation of an attack,

previously defined by General Orders, No. 25, to copy of which, marked A, herewith, reference is made. Captain [R.W.] Lee's light battery had been moved up on the Gibson road the evening previous, intending it to go with the scout under Colonel Walker, but, owing to some misunderstanding or neglect in delivering the order, the scout left without it. Colonel [T.C.] Bass, with his regiment, was ordered forward to support Lee's battery. [John] Scanland's squadron and Gillett's squadron were directed to support the creeks [*sic.*] at the upper crossing of Elk Creek, and Colonel Walker to hold his regiment in reserve at their camp near Honey Springs, sending pickets out on the road across the mountain in the direction of Prairie Springs. Having made these arrangements, I rode forward to the position north of Elk Creek, where Captain Lee's light howitzer battery had been posted, and found it supported by Colonel Bass' regiment (Twentieth Texas dismounted cavalry), by a portion of the Second Cherokee Regiment, and a body of skirmishers to the right, under command of Capt. Hugh Tinnin, of the First Cherokee Regiment, the remainder of the Cherokee regiments being near the creek.

A movement on my right was discovered, and Captain Tinnin reported that the skirmishers would soon be engaged. One-half of Colonel Bass' regiment, under Captain [J.R.] Johnson, was then ordered to the right to support Captain Tinnin, and I rode over to their position and found, by movements of officers, that there was a body of troops on my extreme right. A part of Second Cherokee Regiment, just returned from a scout to Prairie Springs, who were getting breakfast at camp, were then ordered up and conducted by myself to the right, and a messenger sent for half of the Choctaw regiment, which soon arrived and were placed also on the right along the edge of the prairie. Upon reconnoitering the enemy from the high prairie, where I had a full view of them, then advancing upon the Gibson road, I found their force larger than reported by Lieutenant Heiston, and larger than I supposed they would bring from Gibson; and, seeing a heavy force wheeling off to their right and taking the road up the creek to the second crossing above the bridge--our weakest point, and from which the road continues up to the third crossing, where the Creeks were posted--I rode back to the main road, sent orders to the Creeks to move down and support Colonel [Charles] De Morse and [L.M.] Martin, who were directed to support Colonel Bass, and, if possible, flank the enemy on our left. I then rode to where I expected to find the Choctaws, in order to bring them to the support of Colonel Bass' command and the battery, which was engaged with that of the enemy. Colonel Walker, mistaking the order, had moved off on the mountain several miles with his whole force, instead of sending a picket. Messengers were sent after him and he returned promptly, but too late for the defense of the bridge. Riding back near the creek, I discovered our men in small parties giving way. These increased until the retreat became general. Colonel Bass' regiment and Captain Lee's battery, after a most gallant defense of their positions, were compelled to fall back; Colonel De Morse's regiment and Colonel Martin's, on the left, also retiring, except a few who were cut off from the main body.

We have to mourn the loss of many brave officers and men to fell here, sacrificing their lives in opposition to an overwhelming force to save our little battery, all of which was brought off, except one howitzer, dismounted by the heavy ordnance of the enemy.

Colonel Martin, who retired in good order across the creek when the line along the prairie near the battery gave way, was directed to hold the ford above the bridge; but seeing the whole right wing falling back from the bridge and below it, Colonel Martin was withdrawn and ordered to fall back to Honey Springs. Our forces were now in full retreat and the enemy pressing them closely. The Texans, under Scanland's and Gillett's command, were ordered to join me at Honey Springs, and the Creeks to withdraw from the extreme left and also to concentrate at the same

place. Colonel Bass' and Colonel De Morse's regiments, a part of which (under Major [J.A.] Carroll) had reached their horses, were directed also to rally at the same place. The remainder of this regiment, under Lieutenant-Colonel [O.G.] Webb, who bravely maintained his position on the north side of the creek too long to rejoin his [regiment], were cut off and compelled to make a circuit via North Fork to this camp. Captain Gillett's squadron, arriving promptly, was formed on the road, and for a short time held the advance of the enemy in check. The Choctaw, under Colonel Walker, opportunely arrived at this time, and under my personal direction charged the enemy, who had now planted a battery upon the timbered ridge about 1,000 yards north of Honey Springs. With their usual intrepidity, the Choctaws went at them, giving the war-whoop, and succeeded in checking the advance of the enemy until their force could be concentrated and all brought up. The Choctaws, discouraged on account of the worthless ammunition, then gave way, and were moved to fall back with the others in rear of the train, which had moved off in an easterly direction, covered by the same troops, who remained formed for hours in full view of the enemy, thus giving the train time to gain some 6 or 8 miles on the road to Briartown, which had been indicated by yourself as the route by which re-enforcements would be sent.

Too much praise cannot be awarded the troops for the accomplishment of the most difficult of all military movements--an orderly and successful retreat, with little loss of life or property, in the face of superior numbers, flushed with victory. The retreat of the forces under my command eastward instead of south completely deceived the enemy, and created, as I anticipated, the impression that the re-enforcements from Fort Smith were close at hand, and that by a detour in rear of the mountain east of Honey Springs our forces might march upon Gibson and destroy it while General Blunt was away with almost the whole Federal force. Under the influence of this reasonable fear, General Blunt withdrew forces and commenced a hurried march for Gibson. North Fork, where we had a large amount of commissary stores, was then saved, as well as the whole of the train, except one ambulance purposely thrown in the way of the enemy by the river. A quantity of flour, some salt, and sugar were necessarily burned at Honey Springs, there being no transportation for it.

Our loss was 134 killed and wounded and 47 taken prisoners, while that of the enemy exceeded 200, as I learned from one our surgeons who was at Gibson when General Blunt's forces returned.

I feel confident that we could have made good the defense of the position at Elk Creek but for the worthlessness of our ammunition. The Choctaws, who had skirmished with the enemy on the morning of the 17th, returned wet and disheartened by finding their guns almost useless, and there was a general feeling among the troops that with such ammunition it was useless to contend with a foe doubly superior in numbers, arms, and munitions, with artillery ten times superior to our, weight of metal considered. Notwithstanding all these untoward circumstances, the men of Colonel Bass' regiment stood calmly and fearlessly to their posts in support of Lee's battery until the conflict became a hand-to-hand one, even clubbing their muskets and never giving way until the battery had been withdrawn; and, even when defeated and in full retreat, the officers and men different command were readily obeyed orders, formed, falling back and reforming at several different positions, as ordered, deliberately and coolly. Their steady conduct under these circumstances evidently intimidated the foe, and alone enabled us to save the train and many valuable lives. The Creeks, under Col. D. N. McIntosh, at this juncture behaved admirably, moving off in good order slowly and steadily across the North Fork road in full view of the enemy. They contributed greatly to the safe retreat of the train and brigade.

Among the officers who were distinguished for gallantry and good conduct, Col. T. C. Bass and Captain Lee were particularly conspicuous. Col De Morse's conduct, though suffering under a sever wound, has been represented to me as all that should characterize a brave man. Colonel Martin, for his coolness and good management of his command, deceiving the enemy as to his real strength, and preventing our left from being turned, deserves great credit. Captain Gillett behaved with his usual gallantry. Major Carroll was active and prompt in bringing his men into line to cover the retreat. Colonel Walker and his Choctaws behaved bravely, as they always do. Captain [F.M.] Hanks, of Bass' regiment, was also distinguished for his gallantry, being dangerously wounded while carrying orders which I had sent to Colonel Bass to draw the right wing to his support. And the lamented [H.H.] Molloy, of the same regiment, fell, mortally wounded, soon after having delivered my order to his colonel to move De Morse's and Martin's regiments up on the right flank of the enemy, who were advancing upon the battery at the center.

Captain Johnson, who commanded a detachment from Colonel Bass' regiment, came under my immediate notice. His conduct was, at the most trying time, cool and collected--that of a brave man and good officer. The nature of the ground precluded the possibility of personally observing all the movements of our troops and the conduct of the men and officers. Among those who are mentioned with praise by the immediate commanding officers are Capts. Hugh Tinnin, James L. Butler, and James Stewart, First Cherokee Regiment; Adj. L. C. De Morse, Twenty-ninth Texas Cavalry; Lieut. Henry Forrester and Sergt. J. Riley Baker, Lee's light battery; Lieut. A. G. Ballenger, Second Cherokee Regiment (killed), and Acting Sergt. Maj. J. H. Reiersen, of Bass' regiment, and Sergt. Henry Campbell, of same regiment, were particularly distinguished, &c.

Mr. P. N. Blackstone was particularly distinguished for his courage on the field. After being severely wounded, he succeeded in repulsing three of the enemy who attacked him, killing one of them and taking his gun, which he brought off with him, together with his own, closely pursued by the enemy, after the greater portion of our troops had left the field.

Of my personal staff, Lieut. T. B. Heiston, aide-de-camp and acting assistant adjutant-general, all speak in the highest terms. He was on this, as on all former occasions, wherever duty called him, conspicuous for his gallant bearing.

My son, Douglas H. Cooper, jr., additional aide-de-camp, is mentioned favorably by Colonel Bass in his report for his good conduct while conveying my orders amid the thickest of the fray.

I am also indebted to Mr. S. A. Robinson for valuable assistance in conveying orders.

Referring to accompanying reports for further details, and to list of killed and wounded, I am, general, respectfully,

DOUGLAS H. COOPER,
Brigadier-General.

Brig. Gen. WILLIAM STEELE,
Commanding Department of Indian Territory.

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[Inclosure A.]

GENERAL ORDERS, } HDQRS. FIRST BRIG., INDIAN TROOPS,
NO. 25. } *Elk Creek, July 14, 1863.*

I. The First and Second Cherokee Regiments will constitute the right wing of the brigade, Col. Stand Watie, senior colonel, commanding.

II. The left wing will be composed of First and Second Creek Regiments, Col. D. N. McIntosh commanding.

III. The center will consist of Twentieth Texas dismounted cavalry, Twenty-ninth Texas Cavalry, Fifth Texas Partisan Rangers, and Lee's light battery, Col. Thomas C. Bass, senior colonel, commanding.

IV. Scanland's squadron, [L.E.] Gillett's squadron, and First Choctaw and Chickasaw Regiment, Col. Tandy Walker commanding, will be attached to headquarters and constitute the reserve, to which such other troops belonging to this brigade as may report will be added until further orders. Captain [John] Scanland will fall back to a position which will be assigned him near headquarters, Honey Springs.

The right wing will encamp convenient to the two lower crossings on Elk Creek; the center near or at such places as may be convenient to the middle ford, and the left wing at or near the upper ford; the reserve near headquarters, Honey Springs Depot. Commandants of each wing will see that necessary ways are opened along the front and near Elk Creek to enable the troops to move with facility from point to point, and also that proper roads from the camps perpendicular to the way along the bank of the creek are opened. Each regiment will occupy a front at least equal to the number of files, minus one-fifth. For example: If the total of a regiment be 1,000 men, or 500 files, the front will be 400 yards. The proper intervals between squadrons and regiments will be observed, and kept free from obstruction, to allow the passage of the troops. These intervals may be increased where the ground is obstructed, and in timbered places the line may be extended. In case of attack there should be an advance party thrown out to and along the skirt of the prairie in front (north side of the creek), with adequate supports formed near the creek. The enemy must, if possible, be prevented from gaining the cover of the timber on the north side. Commandants will examine the ground in front of them, and especially creeks, bayous, or wooded ways leading from the prairie north and west of camp down southward and connecting with the main bottom of Elk Creek. These smaller creeks will be used in case of attack by the enemy to penetrate to Elk Creek, and thus flank the different positions near the fords. These can be used by our troops to advantage in gaining a position in advance of the general line of the prairie to flank the columns of the enemy while advancing on the roads leading to the fords. It is necessary that commanding officers should examine and understand the ground in front of their own positions, and also those occupied by other corps.

By order of Brig. Gen. D. H. Cooper:

THORNTON B. HEISTON,
Lieutenant and Acting Assistant Adjutant-General

Source: Scott, Robert N., *et al.*, Editors. *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. Series I—Volume XXII—In Two Parts. Part I: Reports. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1888), pp. 447-462.

No. 1,

Report of Maj. Gen. Henry W. Halleck, U. S. Army, General-in-Chief, of operations in the Departments of the Missouri and of the Northwest, November 25, 1862–November 15, 1863.

* * *

On the 15th of July, Major-General Blunt crossed the Arkansas River near Honey Springs, Ind. T., and on the 16th [17th] attacked a superior force of rebels under General Cooper, which he completely routed the enemy having

been killed and wounded on the field. Our loss was 77 killed and 46 wounded, while that of the enemy was 133 killed, wounded, and 77 prisoners taken, besides 1 piece of artillery, 200 stands of arms, and 11 regiments.

Source: Scott, Robert N., *et al.*, Editors. *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. Series I—Volume XXII—In Two Parts. Part I: Reports. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1888), p. 10.
