

War of the Rebellion

Series I, Vol XLIII, Part I

Headquarters Middle Military Division, Charlestown, Aug 20, 1864

Maj. Gen. C.C. Augur, commanding department of Washington

I have 100 men who will take the contract to clean out Mosby's gang. I want 100 Spencer rifles for them. Send them to me if they can be found in Washington. There is no news here. The enemy are about Winchester; they have not gone toward the Potomac, although I left the roads open

P.H. Sheridan, major general commanding

War Department, Aug. 21, 1864.

Indorsement: Approved by order of the Secretary of War Assistant Secty of War, C.A. Dana.

Washington D.C. Aug 20, 1864

General Augur:

The chief of ordnance has been directed to issue Spencer rifles to detachments from regiments already armed with them. A Massachusetts regiment of 100-days' men should be sent tomorrow to Fort Delaware to relieve an Ohio regiment there. Notify commanding officer at Fort Delaware when it starts and also General Wallace, to prevent straggling into Baltimore.

H.W. Halleck, major general and chief of staff.

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War of the Rebellion, Series I, Vol XLIII, Part I

Pittsburgh, Aug 26, 1864

Brig. Gen. Thomas A. Rowley, commanding district of the Monogahela
General: I have the honor to furnish you with the following report

Agreeably with orders I left this city on Saturday morning, the 20th instant for the purpose of visiting Erie, in this State, and other points on the Lake and Canadian shore, to ascertain the facts connected with apprehended disturbances on the Canadian line

Robert Taggart having been placed under my directions I sent him to Cleveland for the same object.

On arriving in Erie I presented a letter to one of the leading citizens, to whom I communicated my mission. I was kindly introduced to other prominent persons, and was offered assistance and cooperation.

From these interviews I ascertained that no trouble was really anticipated in that quarter, although such was not impossible.

I got a good knowledge of the harbor, as there is but one entrance it could be easily defended from marine invasions. Erie being the port of the Michigan, the only government vessel on the lake, an attempt to capture her might be made, but she was at Johnson's island and fully prepared for any such attack.

Many Canadians were coming over seeking work, but though this occasioned suspicion it was capable of easy explanation, labor commanding a higher price in the States than in Canada. I was informed that considerable smuggling is carried on between the two shores in fishing vessels. During the former draft many enrolled men crossed the lake at this point and tarried in Canada till their personal apprehension subsided. The provost-marshal of the district

has made his headquarters at Waterford, a little town about fifteen miles distant. The people complained of the inconvenience thus occasioned and I was required to lay the matter before you, and if possible have his office removed to Erie, I made inquiries as to the means of defense in Erie and ascertained that there are six heavy guns belonging to the Michigan in the government warehouse which are on trucks; these could be placed on the wharf, and, if needed, do effective service; there is plenty of shot, but no powder; there are also two six pounder brass pieces in the town.

A Mr. William Lutz, who has been a first lieutenant of artillery and was discharged on account of wounds, is anxious to have a company of artillery under his control; he might be a careful person if such an organization was deemed advisable. I remained in Erie two days and on being informed that the provost-marshal at Buffalo had taken measures to investigate the extent of the rumored danger I deemed it advisable to proceed thither and consult with him. Mr. Taggart reported to me that all was quiet at Cleveland; but as he had obtained information from the authorities there that the consul at Toronto had advised them to look out for a suspicious person who had left that city I directed him to proceed to the Clifton House, Canada, and try and obtain some clue to the individual.

On arriving at Buffalo I called upon the provost marshal who brought me in communication with an officer who had been appointed for the purpose of investigating affairs connected with the rumored troubles in that locality.

He gave me a statement of what he knew. He had intercepted letters which indicated the holding of meetings for the purpose of forming secret organizations etc. He had detectives at different places who informed him that there are a number of rebel officers

in Canada who allege they were then under orders. In all cases these were educated, reticent and shrewd men. They held secret meetings but admitted no Canadians to their deliberations, excluding even those who expressed sympathy and friendship. Many of these wore the rebel uniforms, and were not mere convalescents as some supposed. The provost-marshal had been unable to detect any alarming organizations. He did not fear any trouble unless it might be from a few hundred bold men who would seize a vessel in the night, cross the river, burn the city and then scatter.

He said the Canadians would not permit any open act of hostile organization. It was believed that a demonstration was to have been made some time ago for the purpose of drawing our available forces to that quarter in order to enable raiding parties to invade Pennsylvania in the absence of our troops.

I was assured that if any information of importance could be obtained the facts would be immediately communicated to me.

I went from Buffalo to Niagara Falls, having previously dispatched Mr. Taggeret home. I remained but one day and a half spending much of the time at the Clifton House, where disloyalty is outspoken. I paid attention to conversations but learned nothing to excite suspicion of overt acts of invasion. I then determined to proceed to Cleveland in a steamer in order to glean what information I could from Canadians and others who I ascertained were going over in the boat on their journey to the Chicago Convention. As I did not wear my uniform there was much said in my presence during the voyage that otherwise would probably not have been spoken. I was surprised and pained to hear the sentiments of many of the persons on board; the vindictive expressions of these men against the administration of the

government was mortifying to a lover of his country, and how much more so to the ears of an officer in its service.

Open treason we can repel with force , but the malignity of men who traduce and do all in their power to weaken faith in the Government and yet profess to be loyal, is hard to be borne with in silence.

I fear we will have some trouble with rebel sympathizers before the coming winter. At Cleveland I could hear nothing of importance, and so returned immediately to ~~xxxxx~~ this city, arriving last evening at 9 o'clock.

I am , general, v very etc.

WMO A.M. Harper

First lieut and special aide-de- camp , acty. asst. adjt. gen.

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weapons

war of rebellion: Series I, Vol XLIII Part II p 51

General Orders No. 10 Hdqrs. Cavalry, Middle Military Div.

Sept. 8, 1864

Hereafter the carbine will be habitually carried on the person or in the hands of the men, and under no circumstances will they be allowed to be strapped on the saddle. Many horses are rendered unserviceable by sore backs caused by this practice; it is a grievous error, and must be corrected at once. Commanding officers will be held responsible that this order is strictly complied with, and that any violation of the same is properly punished. This order will be read at once to every company in this command

By order of Brig General Torbett

Wm. Russell Jr. Major and assistant
adjutant general.

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Johnson's Island

War of Rebellion records Series I, Vol XLIII Part II P. 129

New York Sept . 20, 1864

Hon E.M. Stanton, Secty of War

Col. Hill commanding at Johnson's Island, telegraphs the provost marshal at Buffalo at 8 a.m. as follows:

Rebels from Canada captured the steamers Parsons and Island Queen near the Bass Islands yesterday afternoon, and have gone down on across the lake. Disappeared from the islands between 10 and 11 o'clock last night. Probably gone for re-enforcements, guns and ammunition. The capturing party were about thirty with abundance of revolvers and bowie knives; no other arms noticed. At Middle Bass Island captors took wood enough to last two days. Warn all vessels and steamships, and send all important information here. We have one of the principal conspirators under arrest. The last telegram from Detroit says rebels returned to Detroit River early this morning. Have been foiled in design which is supposed to have been the capture of the U.S. steamer Michigan and to release prisoners on Johnson's Island. Crew of steamer Parsons were put ashore on Fighting Island this morning after being robbed of everything valuable. Furniture of boat destroyed and feed-pipe cut leaving her in a sinking condition. Vessel seized by Canadian authorities. Two of rebel crew arrested and now in jail at Sandwich.

The following telegram received here this p m

Headquarters Buffalo, Sept. 20

General J.A. Dix: The rebels are capturing our steamers on the lakes and burning them, to destroy our commerce. Captain Ottinger, revenue cutter service, is building here a steam revenue cutter, nearly finished. By an additional expense and working night and day she can be ready for service in a few days--say ten days.

The Treasury Department would so order at your request. I could arm two or three strong propellers for temporary service as gun boats if you see proper to so order. E.C. Wilson, assistant quartermaster

I have asked for ~~xxxxxx~~ further information from Detroit, Sandusky, and Buffalo. When received, will forward to you.

Anson Stager.

(September 20, 1864, for correspondence between Secretary Stanton, General Heintzelman, Governor Brough and others relative to seizure of steamers Island Queen and Philo Parsons on Lake Erie see Vol XXXIX Part II, pp 426-428.)

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Weapons:

War with Mexico.

Army skeletonized in 1842 . Infantry and ~~artillery~~ artillery companies had forty-two privates instead of 64.

Cavalry companies 50

Company strength 10 to 20 per cent below number authorized.

Most of the infantry carried Flintlocks, preferred by General Scott

Laws recognized three categories of troops:

Regulars

militia, which could be called for three months

Volunteers, who enlisted for 12 months or duration.

Ordinary range, effective combat range of ordinary flintlock musket was about 100 yards.

The Model 1841 rifles made for Ordnance Dept by Eli Whitney Jr.

and Robins and Lawrence, Windsor, Vermont, were good for three times

that distance, but in the Old Mexico War, although 10,000 were

issued, only one complete regiment really advertised them, Davis'

Mississippians.

Cold steel--bayonet

Flintlock single shot "horse pistols" carried by officers and mounted men.

Some American officers and some Texas rangers carried a new hand weapon called a Repeating Pistol, used in experimental numbers in the Seminole War in Florida.

Samuel Colt and No. 5 Paterson "Repeating Pistol."

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