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Edwin C. Bearss

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The Battle of Pea Ridge

by EDWIN C. BEARSS

RESEARCH HISTORIAN, VICKSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

Part III

Continued from the Summer, 1963 Issue

Soon after passing the northwest point of Pea Ridge on the morning of March 7, General Pike was compelled to call a halt. The road ahead was blocked by Hébert's footsoldiers. To the left of the place where Pike's Indians and Texans stopped were several houses. Pike was perplexed by this development. Suddenly, the infantry regiments reversed their line of march. Pike had his horsemen move to one side so that the rugged soldiers could pass. Close behind Hébert's infantry came McIntosh's cavalry.

Since McIntosh's troopers had constituted McCulloch's vanguard, most of them did not know that the Army of the West had been reinforced by the Indians. One of the Texans recalled, "En Route to the field of battle, we passed the Indian Brigade of General Pike, all of whom were painted in conformity to the horrid custom of their people." Colonel William B. Sims' 9th Texas Cavalry, which had served with the Indians in the Territory, was recognized as it passed.¹

About this time a staff officer rode up. He told Pike that he was to countermarch his unit, falling in behind McIntosh's brigade. Within a few minutes, Pike had turned his brigade around.

When he first received orders to move against the Federals in the Leetown area, McCulloch sent several of his aides racing to the rear. They were to turn the heads of the countermarching columns into a country lane which led southward from the Bentonville Detour. Taking position, these officers pointed out the route as each column approached. After leav-

¹ *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 287, 289; Victor M. Rose, *Ross' Texas Brigade*, (Louisville, 1881), 57. A Confederate surgeon recalled, "on the morning of the battle he observed almost three hundred Indians daubing their faces black with charcoal. A chief informed him that 'the Indians when going into a fight, painted their faces red; but when suffering from hunger they color black.' They had been without food for two days." Curtis, "The Army of the Southwest and the First Campaign in Arkansas," *Annals of Iowa*, Vol. VI, No. III, 151.

ing the Bentonville Detour, the Confederates marched southward. The lane along which the troops moved was bounded by scrub oak and hickory. Immediately to east of the line of march was the western escarpment of Pea Ridge.²

Shortly after Pike's troopers turned off the Bentonville Detour, Captain L. L. Lomax of McCulloch's staff joined the general. Lomax informed Pike that the Federals had fortified "Leetown, about 4½ miles to the south, which we were marching to attack." Before riding on, Lomax explained to Pike McCulloch's plan of attack.

The Confederates were to advance against the Leetown Federals in three waves. Upon reaching the Leetown area, Hébert was to deploy his infantry into line of battle. McIntosh's cavalry would be formed in rear of Hébert's troops; Pike would mass his brigade behind McIntosh. As soon as the infantry opened fire, McIntosh's and Pike's troops "were to dismount and charge together."³

The distant rattle of musketry from the fighting near Elkhorn Tavern was clearly audible to McCulloch's column as it pushed southward. About 11 o'clock, the distant road of artillery came rolling in from the east. There was a buzz of excitement; the soldiers knew that Price's Missourians had found the common foe.

McCulloch now altered his plan of attack. Instead of pushing for Leetown, he would march to Price's assistance. McCulloch, being familiar with the area, decided to turn Hébert's brigade into the Bentonville-Sugar Creek road. (This road which passed south of Pea Ridge joined the Telegraph road about one-fourth mile south of Elkhorn Tavern.) McIntosh's and Pike's cavalry brigades would be employed to screen Hébert's march from attack by the Leetown Federals. Upon entering the prairie west of Round Top, the cavalry leaders were to advance and mass their troopers in parallel columns on the right of Hébert's line of march. The heads of the columns were to be aimed toward the Telegraph road.⁴

² *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 287, 289.

³ *Ibid.*, 287.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 289.

Captain William Hart's Arkansas Battery, followed by the 3d Louisiana, took the lead as Hébert's brigade swung to the east. South of the Bentonville-Sugar Creek road along which Hébert's column moved was a large field. Suddenly, the Confederate infantry was fired on by three Union guns unlimbered in a cluster of trees south of the road. Not looking for an attack from this quarter, a number of the footsoldiers panicked. Breaking ranks, they scattered into the nearby fields. Within a few minutes, the officers had re-formed their units. Colonel Hébert helped calm the Louisianians. The soldiers of his former regiment (the 3d Louisiana) asked the colonel not to leave them. Hébert replied, "I will not leave you my men, this day."

In the meantime, McCulloch had told Hébert to leave the battery to the cavalry. As soon as order had been restored, Hébert's column resumed its march toward the Telegraph road. A short distance beyond Mrs. Elizabeth Sturdy's, the infantry was fired on by a mountain howitzer which a Union patrol had emplaced on Round Top. At this, Hébert formed his brigade into line of battle on the road, facing south. After skirmishers had been advanced, the brigade moved into the timber and began to ascend Round Top.⁵

When the Union battery opened fire on Hébert's infantry, McIntosh was busy massing his five mounted units in the timber northwest of the prairie. With McIntosh at their head, the Confederate cavalry, riding along in column by fours, debouched from the woods.

General McCulloch was on the right of McIntosh's formation, near the 3d Texas. One of the Texans recalled that the general was just passing his regiment when "the first Yankee shell went crashing through our ranks." At this, McCulloch shouted at a nearby artillery unit, "Wheel that battery into line!"

Almost simultaneously, General McIntosh ordered his bugler to sound the charge. Brandishing his saber, McIntosh led

⁵ Tunnard, *History of the 3d Louisiana*, 133, 127, 140. The brigade was deployed from right to left: the 4th Arkansas Infantry the 2d Arkansas Mounted Rifles (dismounted), the 14th and 21st Arkansas Infantry, and the 3d Louisiana Infantry.

his wildly cheering horsemen toward the Union Guns. Much to their disappointment, the troopers of the 3d Texas did not participate in the attack. As Colonel Elkanah Greer was getting ready to wave his men forward, one of McCulloch's aides rode up. Greer was told to halt his regiment, and cover the Confederate battery which had just gone into position.⁶

Pike's Indians and Texans were passing along a narrow road with the woods to their left and a fenced field to their right, when they discovered the Federal battery to their front. Pike knew his Indians' limitations. Consequently, he realized it would be unwise to expose them to artillery fire. He had them take position in the woods. He deployed his men behind a fence on the left of the 9th Texas of McIntosh's brigade. Watie's regiment was dismounted, while Drew's Cherokees remained on their ponies.

While the officers were forming their men, Pike reconnoitered the Federal position. Advancing to the edge of the timber, Pike spotted the guns and their supporting cavalry in a small field. East of where the Yankees had unlimbered their pieces was a large prairie field which extended as far as Round Top. To the Federals' rear was a dense belt of scrub undergrowth.

The Union artillery began to shell the woods where Pike's Indians and Texans were forming. Rejoining his command, Pike shouted for his men to throw down the fence. Teams of burly Indians and Texans quickly tore down the rails. Supported on the right by a detachment of the 9th Texas led by Lieutenant Colonel William Quayle, Pike's men both white and Indian, surged out of the woods and into the field.⁷

Colonel Bussey wasted little time getting his mounted column ready to take the field. It was after 10 o'clock when the Federal horsemen left the Pratt's Store area. Bussey rode at the head of his force as it rode rapidly westward toward

⁶ O. R., Series I, Vol. VIII, 298, 01; Rose, *Ross' Texas Brigade*, 57-58. From right to left McIntosh formed his command, the d, 6th, and 9th Texas Cavalry Regiments, the 1st Arkansas Cavalry Battalion, and the 11th Texas Cavalry Regiment.

⁷ O. R., Series I, Vol. VIII, 287-288. J. M. Scott, *Four Years' Service in the Southern Army* (Mulberry, 1897), 4; Gammage, *The Camp, the Bivouac, and the Battle Field*, 25-26. Pike placed Welch's squadron on the right Watie's regiment in the center, and Drew's on the left.

Leeton. Three James rifles manned by the cannoneers of the 1st Missouri Flying Artillery rumbled along behind Bussey's lead unit, a battalion of the 1st Missouri Cavalry.⁸

After helping organize the infantry-artillery portion of his task force, Osterhaus hastened on ahead. Colonel Nicholas Greusel, the officer Osterhaus left in charge of the infantry column, was directed to march to Leetown. Greusel's column consisted of three infantry regiments (the 36th Illinois, the 22d Indiana, and the 12th Missouri) and two batteries of artillery (six guns of the 4th Battery Ohio Light Artillery and three 12-pounder howitzers manned by Captain Martin Wel-fley's Independent Missouri Battery).⁹

The head of Greusel's "Provisional Brigade" reached Pratt's Store, just as the rear of Bussey's column was moving out. Turning off the Telegraph road, Greusel's troops followed the Union horsemen. According to the historians of the 36th Illinois:

As yet, no hostile battalions disputed our progress or arrested the disposition that was being made of the forces. We saw no cannon crouching open-mounted and looking threateningly down upon us. Except the continuous sound of slowly moving columns, the grinding of artillery wheels over the gravel-strewed paths, the braying of mules and the sharp notes of command, all was peaceful and calm. Hills, fields and forests basked in the morning sunshine or were gently swept by the shadows of passing clouds.¹⁰

At Leetown, Bussey, in accordance with Osterhaus' instructions, took the road leading northward. About one-fourth mile beyond the hamlet, the head of the Federal column entered a large cleared area. The withered and whitened corn stalks helped hide the fences which divided the large field into several smaller ones. The field first entered by Bussey's troopers was bounded on the north, east,

⁸ O. R., Series I, Vol. VIII, 232, 244-245. Besides the three guns of the 1st Missouri Flying Artillery, Bussey's striking force included: a battalion of the 3d Iowa Cavalry (Companies A, B, C, D, and M), four companies of the 1st Missouri Cavalry, a like number of units from the 5th Missouri Cavalry, and two companies of the 4th Missouri Cavalry on February 14, 1862. The 5th Missouri Cavalry had been organized on the same date by consolidating the Benton Hussars with three companies of the Hollan Horse. Frederick H. Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion* (Des Moines, 1908), 1306, 1312.t

⁹ O. R., Series I, Vol. VIII, 217.

¹⁰ L. G. Bennett and W. H. Haigh, *History of the Thirty-Sixth Regiment Illinois Volunteers, During the War of the Rebellion* (Aurora, 1876), 145-146.

and south by a thick growth of small oaks and underbrush. Bussey detailed two companies of the 1st Missouri Cavalry to reconnoiter the surrounding woods.¹¹

About two miles west of his position, Bussey sighted a Confederate supply train rolling along the Bentonville Detour. While Bussey was debating his next move, he was joined by Colonel Osterhaus. Up to this moment neither Osterhaus nor Bussey had any idea of the Confederates' whereabouts. Osterhaus decided to push across the corn fields. Before continuing the march, Osterhaus told Bussey to have the gunners of the 1st Missouri Flying Artillery take the lead.

As soon as the guns had moved to the head of the column, the advance was resumed. Crossing the fields, the Federal horsemen entered the woods beyond. After pushing northward along a narrow wood road about one-fourth mile, the bluecoats emerged into a small field. Bounding the prairie which lay north and west of the field was a dense belt of timber and underbrush. Marching eastward along the Bentonville-Sugar Creek road, the Federals observed a Confederate infantry column—Hérbert's.¹²

Osterhaus shouted for the gunners of the 1st Missouri Flying Artillery to throw their three James rifles into battery. Thundering forward, the artillerists unlimbered their pieces near the Foster house, about 200 yards north of the timber from which they had just debouched. Within moments of when the trails struck the ground, the rifles had been loaded, pointed, and fired. At first, the cannoneers hurled their projectiles at Hérbert's infantry. There were loud cheers and excited exclamations in German as the shells fell and exploded on their targets. As soon as the smoke cleared, the Confederate infantry could be seen scrambling for cover. One company of the 1st Missouri Cavalry was posted on the left of the guns, a second on the right.¹³

Bussey massed the battalion of the 3d Iowa in rear of the

¹¹ *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 232. The large field was a quarter section in width and extended from east to west for three-quarters of a mile.

¹² *Ibid.*, 217, 233; Tunnard, *History of the 3d Louisiana*, 133, 137, 140.

¹³ *Ibid.*

battery. Orders were given for the 4th and 5th Missouri to take position on the right of the 3d Iowa.¹⁴

At this time, Osterhaus called to Bussey and told him to have two companies of the 3d Iowa prepare for a sortie. The Iowans, who would be led by Lieutenant Colonel Henry H. Trimble, were to attack a mounted Confederate patrol which Osterhaus had spotted hovering near where a country lane left the prairie and entered the woods.

Led by Colonel Trimble, the Hawkeyes held their horses to a trot as they advanced up the lane in column by fours. Approaching the timber, Tremble quickened the pace. Just as Trimble's troopers entered the woods, they encountered a

¹⁴*O. R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 217, 233. The 3d Iowa Cavalry was raised under the authority contained in a proclamation signed by President Lincoln on July 23, 1861. As soon as each of the 12 companies slated to constitute the regiment was organized, it was ordered to Keokuk. The companies were mustered into Federal service between August 30 and September 14. When the muster was completed, the rolls showed an aggregate strength of 1,096 officers and men. Cyrus Bussey was commissioned a colonel and placed in charge of the newly organized regiment.

On November 4, the 3d Iowa was ordered to board the steamboats which would carry the units to St. Louis. Disembarking at St. Louis on the 6th, the Iowans marched to Benton Barracks. At Benton Barracks, the Hawkeyes were armed with sabors and revolvers. Unfortunately for the Iowans, the Ordnance Department was unable to provide the regiment with carbines or revolving rifles.

The 2d Battalion commanded by Major H. C. Caldwell was transferred to Jefferson City, Missouri, on December 12. When Colonel Bussey left Benton Barracks for Rolla on February 4 with the eight companies composing the 1st and 3d Battalions, Caldwell's troopers remained on duty in central Missouri. Bussey reached Rolla two days later. Before joining Curtis' Army of the Southwest, Bussey's command was reduced still further. In accordance with instructions from Major General Henry W. Halleck, Bussey ordered two companies (I and K) to garrison the post at Salem, 25 miles southeast of Rolla.

Bussey marched from Rolla on the morning of February 14, with six companies of his regiment. The weather was cold, the road bad, and forage scarce. Knowing that General Curtis was hounding Price's retreating Missourians, Bussey pushed his men to the limit. The troopers spent many long, hard hours in the saddle. Brief halts were made to allow the men to procure food for themselves and forage for their mounts.

On reaching Springfield, Bussey was disappointed to learn that Curtis had pushed on. After detaching Company I to help garrison Springfield, Bussey ordered his troopers to remount. After a gruelling march of over 200 miles in four days, Colonel Bussey and Companies A, B, C, D, and M overtook the Army of the Southwest at Little Sugar Creek on February 18. *Roster and Record of Iowa Soldiers*, IV, 419-423.

strong force of McIntosh's cavalrymen.

Upon observing the oncoming Federals, the Confederates had dismounted and taken cover. As soon as he sighted the Rebels, Trimble wheeled his combat patrol into line. At this, the Southerners opened fire. A large number of the Iowans were cut down. Colonel Trimble was severely wounded in the head. Drawing their pistols, the Hawkeyes blazed away. Seeing that they were hopelessly outnumbered, the blueclads fell back in confusion.¹⁵

Concurrent with the repulse of Trimble's sortie, Pike's and McIntosh's commands charged. Pike's Indians, supported by Quayle's and Welch's Texans, raced ahead. Wild and terrifying yells rent the air as the Confederates emerged from the timber and surged toward the Union guns. The troopers of the 1st Missouri, who were stationed to the artilleryists' left and right, were swept aside by this Rebel tide. To try and smash this terrible onset, Bussey shouted for the 5th Missouri to counterattack. This, the Missourians refused to do. Instead, they retreated into the woods as fast as their horses could carry them.

Most of McIntosh's greyclads passed to the left of the guns. Bussey used the remainder of his Iowa battalion in a futile effort to slow McIntosh's advance. A deadly, running battle ensued. A number of riders in blue and in grey were unhorsed.

By this time, Pike's Indians and the two detachments of Texans had captured the three James rifles. In the fight for the guns, a number of the artilleryists lost their lives. Within a few minutes, the contest was over. Bussey's column had been routed and sent fleeing from the field by McIntosh's and Pike's brigades.

When they inspected the captured guns, Pike and his officers were disappointed to discover that all the battery horses except four had been killed or had run off. Since they had neither spare teams nor harnesses, the Confederates were

¹⁵*O. R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 217, 233. An Indianian, Trimble had been commissioned lieutenant colonel of the 3d Iowa Cavalry on August 26, 1861. *Roster and Record of Iowa Soldiers*, IV, 441.

unable to remove the three James rifles. This was very distressing, because the Union retreat had been so rapid the Federal cannoneers had not had time to spike their pieces.¹⁶

After passing through the woods, the panic-stricken Union horsemen re-entered the corn fields they had crossed en route to their date with disaster. Here, they encountered Greusel's infantry and artillery. As they did so, they ran over Welfley's Battery.

Captain Welfley, accompanied by the gunners manning his three 12-pounder howitzers, had followed the cavalry across the corn fields. Entering the timber beyond, the Missourians drove their teams up the narrow wood road. Suddenly, Welfley's artillerists found themselves engulfed by a mass of frightened, fleeing horsemen.

As the cavalymen came pounding down the road, Welfley shouted for his drivers to wheel their "pieces left about." The three howitzers were turned around. Just as one of the guns was re-entering the corn field, one of the horses was shot. Falling, the stricken beast broke the tongue. Since the greyclads were rapidly closing in, Captain Welfley shouted for his gunners to cut the team loose. Abandoning the howitzer, Welfley's Missourians retreated across the corn field.¹⁷

* * *

Before riding north to join Bussey, Osterhaus had directed Colonel Greusel to form his "brigade" into line of battle in the corn fields north of Leetown. As Greusel's troops passed through Leetown, the soldiers observed that the surgeons were already on the scene. Red hospital flags fluttered "from the gables of every house in the hamlet of Leetown."

Shortly after the troops turned northward, they "heard the rattle of musketry, the cheers and yells of opposing forces, the whirr of shrieking bullets and the awful din of battle." Passing through a belt of woods, the soldiers entered a corn field. The 36th Illinois was still in column of companies when the cry, "look out for the cavalry!" rang out.

¹⁶ *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 217, 233-234, 245, 288, 301, 303.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 218, 228, 236, 245.

According to the regimental historians of the 36th Illinois, Greusel's infantry was about to witness a horrifying sight. First, came a dozen maddened and riderless steeds, closely followed by "squadrons of terrified cavalry, without hats or arms, in the utmost confusion and dismay." Some were heard to shout as they thundered past, "Turn back! Turn back! They'll give you hell!" Unmindful of this admonition, the grim infantry pressed on.¹⁸

When he formed his "brigade" into line of battle near the rail fence on the south side of the corn fields, Greusel placed the 36th Illinois on the left, the 12th Missouri in the center, and the 22d Indiana on the right. The gunners of Captain Louis Hoffmann's 4th Ohio Battery were directed to unlimber their six guns in the interval between the 36th Illinois and the 12th Missouri. Major Hugo Wangelin and his 12th Missouri was given the task of protecting the Ohioans' guns.¹⁹

Before Greusel was able to complete his dispositions, Confederate skirmishers were sighted on the opposite side of the corn fields. As soon as these sharpshooters had thrown down the fence, a large number of McIntosh's dismounted troopers pressed forward, working their way through the dry and deadened corn stalks. This was especially disconcerting to the artillerists of the 4th Ohio Battery, because they had not yet placed their guns in battery. Fortunately for the cannoneers, Greusel's infantry was able to hold the Confederates at bay, while they unlimbered their pieces. Upon retiring across the fields, Welfley's Missourians emplaced their two remaining 12-pounder howitzers in the interval between the 12th Missouri and the 22d Indiana.²⁰

As soon as they had placed their guns in battery, the Federal artillerists opened fire. The well-aimed volleys of the blueclad infantry, plus the fire of the eight Union guns (two of Welfley's and six of the 4th Ohio Battery), checked

¹⁸ Bennett and Haigh, *History of the 36th Illinois*, 146.

¹⁹ O. R., Series I, Vol. VIII, 226, 228, 237; *Atlas to Accompany the Official Records*, Plate X, Figures 5, 8.

²⁰ O. R., Series I, Vol. VIII, 218, 236; *Atlas to Accompany the Official Records*, Plate X, Figure 8.

the advance of McIntosh's dismounted Confederates.²¹

Covered by this bombardment, the Union infantry withdrew into the timber which bounded the fields on the south. Osterhaus, who had succeeded in eluding the Rebel horsemen, had the footsoldiers take cover behind a rail fence.²²

The well-directed fire of the Union artillery forced the Confederates to pull back into the dense underbrush. Captain Welfley determined to see if he could recover the gun which his battery had abandoned. Accompanied by two companies from the 12th Missouri and Company A, 5th Missouri Cavalry, a detachment of artillerists advanced across the corn fields. The infantrymen, deployed as skirmishers, moved into the woods beyond. Covered by the footsoldiers the cannoneers and troopers reached the 12-pounder howitzer. It required a great deal of hard, hazardous work to repair and remove the piece from its exposed position between the lines. Having accomplished their mission, the Federals rejoined their units. The gun was emplaced alongside Welfley's other two howitzers.

By this time, Colonel Bussey had succeeded in rallying part of his mounted command. Troopers from the 1st Missouri and 3d Iowa were posted in the woods to the left of Greusel's main line of resistance. Detachments from the 4th and 5th Missouri were held in reserve to the left and rear of Osterhaus' artillery. Bussey cautioned his troopers to be on the alert in case the Rebels tried to turn Greusel's left.²³

* * *

General Pike established his command post at the capture guns, while his officers sought to re-form their units. Here and there a "ward of the nation," might be seen with the harness of an artillery horse on, the trace chains clanging at his heels and a collar over his neck, exclaiming, "me big, In'gen, big as horse."

²¹ *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 218, 228, 236, 245.

²² Bennett and Haigh, *History of the 36th Illinois*, 147.

²³ *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 218, 228, 236, 245.

Scattered about the field were the bodies of between 30 and 40 blueboats. After about 20 minutes, Colonel Watie rode up. He informed Pike that another Union battery (actually two) was in position south of the dense growth of underbrush which bounded the field. This battery, he said, was supported by a heavy force of infantry. Pike didn't know what to do, General McIntosh's brigade had disappeared into the underbrush to the south. Looking to the east across Mrs. Sturdy's field, Pike could see Hébert's infantry taking position on Round Top. Drew's regiment of Cherokees was in the field to the right of the captured battery. Around the captured guns "was a mass of Indians and others in the utmost confusion, all talking, riding this way and that, and listening to no orders from any one."

Pike called to Captain Roswell W. Lee and told him to take charge of the captured guns. They were to be faced south, so that they could be employed against the batteries which Watie had discovered. Lee was unable to find any men to assist him in carrying out his task. Suddenly, two shells (probably fired by the 4th Ohio Battery) landed in the field and exploded with a deafening roar. At this, the Indians scattered. They fled into the woods from which they had charged.

Satisfied that his Indians could not be made to stand up against artillery in an open field, Pike directed his officers to have them dismount. The ponies were sent to the rear; the men took cover behind trees. Here, the troopers of Watie's and Drew's regiments remained for most of the next two and one-half hours. All this time, the Union batteries (the 4th Ohio and Welfley's) continued to send projectiles crashing into the area.²⁴

Before advancing into the timber and underbrush south of the prairie, McIntosh had dismounted all his units except the 6th Texas Cavalry. Covered by a strong skirmish line, McIntosh's battle line forged ahead. Beating their way through the thick undergrowth, the greyclads reached the

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 288; John W. Noble, "Battle of Pea Ridge, or Elk Horn Tavern," *War Papers and Personal Reminiscences* (Hollus-Missouri), Vol. I, 228.

edge of the corn fields where Greusel was forming his "brigade." After throwing down the fence, the Rebels started across the fields. The crashing volleys of the Union Infantry and the fire of the blueclad artillery threw McIntosh's battle line into confusion. Recoiling, the Confederates retreated into the timber to re-form.

McIntosh sent the 6th Texas to the rear. The Texans were to establish a straggler line north of the woods. At the same time, McIntosh ordered Colonel Greer to take his regiment, the 3d Texas, and hold Round Top.

Captain Hart's cannoneers had emplaced their four 6-pounder guns on top of this commanding elevation. When Hébert's brigade had pushed on, it had left the Arkansas artillerists without any support. Leaving their mounts and horse-holders at the bottom of the hill, Greer sent his Texans scrambling up Round Top with orders to hold the position "at all hazards."

As soon as he had completed his dispositions, McIntosh led his dismounted troopers back into the fight. This time, McIntosh's attack would be supported by several infantry units. One of these was Colonel John F. Hill's 16th Arkansas.²⁵

In the meantime, General McCulloch saw that his batteries were unlimbered. McIntosh's attacking troopers would have artillery support. Captain John J. Good's Texans emplaced their six guns on the prairie, to McIntosh's right and rear.

To soften up Greusel's position, Good's and Hart's cannoneers hammered away at the Federals with shot and shell. The Confederates focused their attention on the two Union batteries. Captains Hoffmann's and Welfley's gunners gave as good as they received. Observing that the Rebels had occupied Round Top, Colonel Greusel directed two of Welfley's guns to shell that commanding position. A fierce duel ensued between Welfley's cannoneers and Hart's gunners, while Hoffmann's fought Good's.²⁶

²⁵ O. R., Series I, Vol. VIII, 298, 299, 303; Wiley Britton, *The Civil War on the Border*, 1861-62, Vol. I (New York, 1890), 252-253; Rose, *Ross' Texas Brigade*, 58-59.

²⁶ O. R., Series I, Vol. VIII, 218, 236, 237.

According to the historians of the 36th Illinois:

Then the opposite forest became vocal with the thunder or artillery, and rebel batteries sent back a responsive tempest of shot. The greater part of the rebel fire was concentrated upon the batteries and supporting infantry, including Company E of the 36th, who stood exposed to the pitiless storm upon that unprotected field. The men lay down and closely hugged the earth while shells went shrieking over their heads into the woods beyond, some, indeed, striking uncomfortably near, causing a little excitement among those under fire for the first time.

A shell killed John H. Harris and tore an arm from William Gibson, both of Company C. He [Gibson] started to find the hospital alone, and when asked by Col. Greusel if he should not send some one to help him along, heroically replied, "No, Colonel, the men are needed here; I can find my way alone," and pale and bleeding he tottered to the rear to seek the surgeon's aid. A shell shattered a leg . . . [of] Ira Fuller, of Company I, and in a dying condition he was borne off the field. Not a soldier flinched. The ranks of the brave closed up, and still the rendering storm went on.

But if their shot flew fast and furious, our batteries hurled an answering response of . . . [canister], shell and shot, which mowed down their ranks as with a whirlwind of fire.²⁷

A sergeant in the 12th Missouri handed his captain a picture of his wife. As he did so he

asked him to send it to her in St. Louis, with his dying declaration that he thought of her in his last moments. "You are not wounded, are you?" asked the captain.

"No," was the reply, "I know I shall be killed today. I have been in battle before, but I have never felt as I do now. A moment ago I became convinced that my time had come; but how, I cannot tell. Will you gratify my request? Remember, I speak to you as a dying man."

The Captain complied, but told the Sergeant that he would live to a good old age.

"You will see," was the response.

The Sergeant entered the fight, and the captain saw him no more. At night he appeared not at the camp fire. Three hours before he had been killed by a grape shot.²⁸

Lieutenant Henne of Company F, 12th Missouri had his right leg torn off by a cannon ball. Henne had previously lost his left arm in the Hungarian revolt. When carried from the field, he passed General Curtis. Forgetting his suffering, the lieutenant "with a smiling face, waved his hand to the General in that triumphant enthusiasm which [eventually] won the battle."

As soon as the bombardment slackened, Colonel Greusel deployed as skirmishers and threw forward two companies

²⁷ Bennett and Haigh, *History of the 36th Illinois*, 147-148.

²⁸ Curtis, "The Army of the South-West; and the First Campaign in Arkansas," *Annals of Iowa*, Vol VI, No. III, 153.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 150.

of the 36th Illinois—B and G. Advancing across the corn fields, the bluecoats took position behind the rail fence which bounded them on the north.

About the same time, General McCulloch called to Colonel Hill. He told the regimental commander to throw out two of his companies as skirmishers. The rest of the 16th Arkansas would follow a few yards behind the skirmish line. Hill was to have his men charge as soon as his skirmishers encountered the Union snipers, reportedly ensconced behind the rail fence.³⁰

General McCulloch, mounted on his bay horse, rode just behind the skirmish line and in front of Hill's regiment. Since the general had sent off all his staff with various instructions for his unit commanders, he rode alone. One of the Arkansans recalled that McCulloch wore "a dove-colored coat that looked like corduroy, and sky-blue pants, and had a Maynard rifle slung from his shoulder."

Approaching the fence, the Rebel skirmishers were fired on by the men of Companies B and G, 36th Illinois. Several of the soldiers in Company B spied a mounted officer making his way through the brush toward them. Private Peter Pelican took aim and shot the officer from his horse. Accompanied by several of his comrades, Pelican leaped the fence. Searching the body, Pelican rifled the dead man's pockets and took his watch. Another of the boys was in the act of securing his belt and brace of pistols, when a volley tore through the brush overhead. Springing to their feet the bluecoats fled back into the field and took position alongside their companions.³¹

When fired upon by the Union sharpshooters, Colonel Hill ordered a charge. According to Lieutenant James H. Berry:

The Sixteenth Arkansas Infantry charged as ordered, and when within sixty to seventy yards of the fence ran over the lifeless body of General McCulloch, who had just been shot by the Federal skirmishers. The body of the General was found and recognized by Lieutenant Joseph M. Bailey and several other members of

³⁰ Bennett and Haigh, *History of the 36th Illinois* 148; *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 226; Britton, *Civil War on the Border*, I, 252-253.

³¹ Britton, *Civil War on the Border*, I, 253; Bennett and Haigh, *History of the 36th Illinois*, 148.

Company "D." The General had been shot through the heart, and died instantly. Lieutenant Bailey reported his death to Adjutant [L. W.] Pixley, who was afterwards Lieutenant-Colonel of the Sixteenth Arkansas, and he ordered a detail of men to take the body to an ambulance in the rear.³²

Pressing ahead, Hill's Arkansans reached the fence. Companies B and G, 36th Illinois were forced to abandon their position and retire across the corn fields. On doing so, they rejoined their regiment. McIntosh's dismounted troopers advanced to the left and right of Hill's infantry. Within a few minutes, the Confederate skirmishers pushed out into the corn fields.

McIntosh, on learning of McCulloch's death, had assumed command of all the Confederate troops fighting in the Lee-town sector. Staff officers were sent to communicate this news to Van Dorn, Pike, and Hébert. As soon as the troops were ready, McIntosh would send them sweeping across the corn fields against Greusel's main line of resistance.³³

Following the retreat of his skirmishers, Colonel Greusel had his artillerists turn their guns on the Confederate infantry and dismounted cavalry. Round after round was sent crashing into the woods where McIntosh was marshaling his troops. The Rebel artillery replied. McIntosh was killed by a Union sharpshooter.

News of McIntosh's death caused dismay to spread through the ranks of the troops which he was forming for the attack. None of the regimental commanders seemed willing to come forward to take charge. If a staff officers were sent to tell Colonel Greer (the next ranking officer in the brigade) of McIntosh's death, he failed to carry out his assignment. No orders were given. Deprived of their generals, the units commanders operated on their own.³⁴

Colonel Greusel anxiously watched the effect of the bombardment. It was soon apparent to the colonel that the Confederates were in trouble. The Rebels seemed unable to make up their minds. Greusel called for the soldiers of the 36th Illinois to fix bayonets. Placing himself at the head of

³² Britton, *Civil War on the Border*, I, 253.

³³ *Ibid.*; *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 293, 299, 303.

³⁴ *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 226, 293, 299, 303; Bennett and Haigh,

his old regiment, Greusel led his cheering bluecoats across the corn fields.

The regiment "advanced across the field in splendid order, [there was] no flinching or falling out of line."

The Confederate skirmishers fell back before the onrushing Federal. Within a few moments, the units which McIntosh had been massing in the edge of the woods gave way. A number of greyclads panicked. Greusel decided against following the retreating Southerners into the thick undergrowth. As soon as he could recall his troops, the colonel led them back across the corn fields. Following his return from the sortie, Greusel redeployed the 36th Illinois on the left of the 12th Missouri.

Throughout the remainder of the afternoon, only a few Confederates were seen on this part of the field. An occasional puff of smoke was observed arising above the trees followed by the muffled roar of a cannon and the shriek of a projectile. Each time, the Rebel artillery was answered by some of Welfley's or Hoffmann's guns.³⁵

* * *

At first, General Curtis had planned to use Colonel Davis' division to reinforce Carr at Elkhorn Tavern. News that Colonel Bussey's column had been cut to pieces caused Curtis to change his mind. An aide was sent galloping off with instructions for Davis to support Osterhaus' task force north of Leetown.³⁶

Preparatory to taking the field, Davis ordered Colonel Julius White's brigade out of the earthworks overlooking Little Sugar Creek. A soldier in the 59th Illinois, Charles A. Mosman, noted in his diary that on the 7th he had been detailed to work on the breastworks that were being constructed near the old camp. Between 10 and 11 o'clock in the morning, we were ordered to return to quarters and get our dinners. On arriving there, we were not given time to get dinner, but ordered to pack up. Got my traps into knapsack hurriedly, and the bugle sounded for the regiment to fall in; and we moved double quick

History of the 36th Illinois, 149.

³⁵ Bennett and Haigh, *History of the 36th Illinois*, 149; *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 226, 236, 237.

³⁶ *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 199.

down to the breastworks upon which I had been at work. We were soon ordered to move from there and then it dawned upon us that the rebels had flanked our position, passing by on our right flank, and were now in our rear between us and Springfield.³⁷

Colonel Thomas Pattison followed White's troops out of the earthworks with one of his three regiments—the 18th Indiana. After leaving the bluffs overlooking Little Sugar Creek, Davis' column turned into the Telegraph road.³⁸

As Davis rode toward Leetown, he encountered a number of troopers from the 3d Iowa returning to their camp. The appearance of the horsemen was anything but reassuring. A soldier in the 59th Illinois grimly recalled:

Several horsemen were seen coming down the road from the right, at break-neck speed, some had lost their hats, some their coats, some their guns, and nearly all of them had lost their wits. "The rebels — the rebels are coming in the rear!" was their war cry, as they charged along the road toward some place of safety. They received and deserved the jeers of the soldiers, as they passed.³⁹

It was about 2 p. m. before the head of Davis' column reached Leetown. The full-throated roar of artillery and the rattle of small-arms came rolling down from the north. Smoke clouds rising above the trees served to pinpoint the action. Before proceeding any farther, Colonel Davis called a brief halt to allow his soldiers to load their weapons. Before pushing on, the soldiers stripped off their knapsacks and stacked them.

As soon as the men had been detailed to guard the knapsacks, the march was resumed. The column turned into the narrow road leading northward from Leetown. A short tramp brought the head of White's brigade into the southeast corner of the corn fields in which Greusel's had formed his command. The newcomers could see the guns of the 4th Ohio and Welfley's batteries emplaced in the edge of the timber to their left. At this time, the Union guns were firing on the Confederates on the opposite side of the fields. Round shot could be seen "skipping along . . . the field." Mosman

³⁷ George W. Herr, *Episodes of the Civil War, Nine Campaigns in Nine States* (San Francisco, 1890), 369.

³⁸ O. R., Series I, Vol. VIII, 249.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 246; D. Lathrop, *The History of the Fifty-Ninth Regiment Illinois Volunteers* (Indianapolis, 1865), 92.

confessed in his diary, "To a 'green horn' who had never heard hostile cannon, and had but a slight acquaintance with the whistle of the minié-ball; things had taken a decided serious turn."⁴⁰

At this moment, several badly frightened cavalymen rode up. They reported a strong Confederate battle line (Hébert's) beating its way through the thick woods and dense underbrush east of the corn fields. Davis shouted for White to deploy his brigade.

Throwing down the rail fence which paralleled the road, White's leading regiment—the 7th Illinois—moved into the timber. Here, the regiment was formed into line of battle, perpendicular to the road. Passing behind the 37th Illinois, the 59th Illinois took position on the right. The cannoneers of Battery A, 2d Illinois artillery unlimbered their six guns in support of White's infantry.

It was a few minutes before the Federals sighted any troops. Soon a column of men was seen filing through the timber and coming into line to their front. The soldiers of the 59th Illinois hesitated. It was whispered that the soldiers to the front were friends. To make matters more confusing, the 59th Illinois was clad in grey uniforms, which were difficult to distinguish from those worn by the Rebels.

Major P. Sidney Post of the 59th Illinois rode out to investigate. The regiment was not too well disciplined. As Post rode to the front, a number of the boys expressed their opinions on what ought to be done. Some wanted to fire, others insisted that if they did, they would be shooting their friends. A volley ended the argument. The Confederates sent a volley crashing through the underbrush. Post reappeared with the blood from a wound in his shoulder staining his coat and shirt. Calling to his men, the major told them to open fire.⁴¹

* * *

⁴⁰ Herr, *Nine Campaigns in Nine States* 72, 368; O. R., Series I, Vol. VIII, 246.

⁴¹ O. R. Series I, Vol. VIII, 246; Lathrop, *History of the 59th Illinois*, 92; Herr, *Nine Campaigns in Nine States*, 72, 368.

Shortly after Hébert's infantrymen had taken possession of Round Top, they were shelled by Welfley's Battery. Hébert and his officers who had congregated on top of the hill were compelled to take cover. Leaping off their horses, they threw themselves on the ground, while the shot and shell passed "harmlessly over them with their shrill, ugly scream."

One of McCulloch's staff officers soon arrived with orders to advance and capture the Union batteries (Welfley's and the 4th Ohio). Surveying the scene before him, Hébert saw that the Union guns were unlimbered south of the corn fields in the verge of the woods. A thick belt of timber, almost two-thirds of a mile across, separated Hébert's brigade from the Union battle line.

As soon as he had relayed this information to his regimental commanders, Hébert led his rugged footsoldiers to the attack. Moving off Round Top, the greyclads entered a jungle. Besides trees, they had to cope with thick underbrush (blackjack and sumac) and fallen timber. These obstacles quickly threw Hébert's battle line into hopeless confusion. The Confederates' troubles were compounded when the Union artillery began to hurl shells into the area. Hébert called for his officers to halt and re-form their regiments.

Unable to see the sun, the Rebels had trouble telling direction. It was some time before the brigade was ready to renew the advance. When it did, several of the regiments forged ahead in columns by companies. As they pressed on, the units obliqued to the left, so as to avoid the corn fields. Hébert was maneuvering his brigade so as to fall on Greusel's right flank.

The thick woods and the projectiles from the Union guns continued to plague the greyclads. Soldiers from an unidentified unit, advancing in column, broke through the 4th Arkansas, separating the two and one-half companies on the right from the rest of the regiment.

Quite unexpectedly, Hébert's soldiers established contact with White's Yankee brigade. A crashing volley from the 59th Illinois threw the 3d Louisiana into confusion. The

Louisianians being combat veterans did not panic easily. Urged on by Colonel Hébert, the officers quickly rallied their men. For the next half hour, Hébert's and White's troops were locked in a deadly contest. Because of the thick woods and underbrush, the fighting was at very close quarters.

A number of soldiers in the 37th Illinois were armed with revolving rifles. When they opened fire, one of the men recalled, they "had to turn on the steam; they threw the throttle valve wide open and 'let her go Gallagher.' These rifles, with the successive volleys of the other regiments, and the immense bass of the cannon," caused a stupendous roar. It was cyclonic in sound and effect.⁴²

According to one of the Yankees, the "firing now became incessant. Volley after volley in quick succession, was sent by our brave boys into the falling ranks of the enemy."⁴³

When they saw the 3d Louisiana recoil, the soldiers of the 59th Illinois pressed ahead a few steps. Mosman recalled, "We halted to load. Sitting there on my knees, in line of battle, I could distinctly see the rebels deploying in the brush within seventy-five yards of us. We gave them another volley and they answered with a perfect shower of bullets, killing Henry Sphon, Eugene Crandall and Newton Palmer of our company [D]."⁴⁴

While the struggle was taking place in the jungle east of the corn fields, Colonel Pattison reached the area with the 18th Indiana. Here, Pattison was rejoined by the 22d Indiana which was posted to the left and rear of Battery A.

The roar of battle convinced Davis that White's brigade was hard-pressed to hold its own in the face of Hébert's slashing attack. Summoning Pattison to his command post, Davis told him to reinforce White. Pattison was to take his two regiments and pass to the rear of White's

⁴² O. R., Series I, Vol. VIII, 295; Gammage, *The Camp, the Bivouac, and the Battle Field*, 25-26; Tunnard, *History of the 3d Louisiana*, 133, 138, 140; Nobel, "The Battle of Pea Ridge, or Elk Horn Tavern," *War Papers and Personal Reminiscences*, Vol. I, 231.

⁴³ Lathrop, *History of the 59th Illinois*, 93.

⁴⁴ Herr, *Nine Campaigns in Nine States*, 368.

line of battle. He would then deploy his Indianians and strike the left flank of the attacking Confederates. Re-forming his command, Pattison prepared to carry out Davis' orders. At a word from the colonel, the Hoosiers moved off on the double quick. As Pattison's blueclads were passing through the timber behind White's sector, they were dismayed to encounter the soldiers of the 59th Illinois retiring in disorder.⁴⁵

The rugged Confederate infantry had finally gained the upper hand. Pushing cautiously ahead, the Confederates compelled White's Illinoisans to pull back step by step. As soon as their comrades fell back and no longer screened their field of fire, the guns of Battery A, 2d Illinois Artillery roared into action. Hébert pinpointed the artillery about 200 yards to his front. Placing himself at the head of the 3d Louisiana and the 4th and 21st Arkansas, Hébert charged the guns.

The 59th Illinois gave way first. Unable to stem the Rebel tide, Davis issued orders for White to retire his brigade. As the brigade retreated it was "to change front to the rear on its right."

White was able to withdraw the 37th Illinois in good order. The regiment was re-formed along the rail fence, which separated the woods from the corn field. Hébert's cheering men pressed the Federals so hard that the gunners of Battery A had difficulty limbering up their pieces. According to the historian of the 3d Louisiana, "So close and hot was our pursuit that no opportunity was given to use the guns. As the men caught sight of these guns, they rushed upon them with deafening cheers . . . driving back the foe with irresistible fury. Around these guns the contest raged fearfully; the musketry was close, heavy and deadly."

Captain Peter Davidson called for his drivers to bring up the teams. At this, the Rebels started shooting at the artillery horses. A number of the beasts were cut down. Consequently, the cannoneers were unable to limber up two

⁴⁵ *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 246, 249-250.

of their six pieces. Abandoning the ground, Battery A retired down the road toward Leetown.⁴⁶

Hébert's Confederates were almost as disorganized by their success as White's troops were by their setback. The thick woods and the fierce fighting had caused the regiments to become badly intermixed. Confusion reigned around the captured guns. Unless order could be restored, Hébert would be unable to exploit his success. In addition, fresh Union units were at hand. The victory would belong to the side which struck the next blow.⁴⁷

* * *

Colonel Osterhaus was overjoyed to see Davis' division. A few minutes after White's soldiers disappeared into the timber and underbrush east of the corn fields, the sound of heavy firing reached Osterhaus. To Osterhaus this was a certain indication that White had found the foe and "a lively fight was going on." Osterhaus moved to support White. Orders were issued for Greusel to advance his skirmishers.

Covered by the skirmishers, Greusel's battle line left the verge of the woods and pushed into the corn fields. Greusel's bluecoats were about halfway across the fields, when White's brigade gave way. A number of Hébert's grey-clads emerged from the timber at the east side of the corn fields. A galling fire was opened on Greusel's right flank regiment—the 12th Missouri. Whereupon Osterhaus told Greusel to wheel his brigade to the right. The 12th Missouri supported by Welfley's guns quickly took position on the right of the 37th Illinois. The 36th Illinois was massed in close column by companies on the Missourians' left. Besides covering the 4th Ohio Battery, the soldiers of the 36th Illinois were to guard Greusel's left in case the Confederates resumed their efforts to fight their

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 246, 253, 295; Herr, *Nine Campaigns in Nine States*, 73; Tunnard, *History of the 3d Louisiana*, 133-134, 138, 140-141.

⁴⁷ Tunnard, *History of the 3d Louisiana*, 134, 138, 141.

way across the corn fields. The Union battle line which had faced north now looked east. As soon as they placed their three guns in battery, Welfley's cannoneers began to hammer Hébert's milling infantry with shot and shell.⁴⁸

In the meantime, Colonel Pattison, after allowing the frightened soldiers of the 59th Illinois to pass, had re-formed his line. Resuming the march, Pattison felt his way through the thickets. As he did, the colonel slowly wheeled his two regiments to the left. Satisfied that he had reached a position well to the east of the corn fields, Pattison pressed forward. He planned to strike Hébert's troops in the flank and rear.

Pattison's advance came at a most opportune moment for the Federals, because Hébert was having a difficult time regrouping his brigade following the capture of the guns.⁴⁹

Now to make matters worse for the Confederates, a number of their ranking officers were captured. A mounted patrol led by Captain Henry A. Smith had been sent by General Sigel to find out how Osterhaus' task force was faring. North of Leetown the Union horseman cut off and captured 38 Rebels, including several important officers. Among the prisoners were Colonel Hébert, Major William F. Tunnard and Captain John P. Vigilini of the 3d Louisiana, and Colonel H. C. Mitchell and an unidentified captain of the 14th Arkansas.⁵⁰

The sudden loss of so many officers hamstrung the Confederates' efforts to rally to meet Pattison's attack. A crashing volley from the 18th and 22d Indiana threw the Rebels "into utmost confusion." As they maneuvered to cope with this new threat, the Southerners were compelled to abandon the two guns of Battery A which they had captured.

⁴⁸ O. R., Series I, Vol. VIII, 218; Tunnard, *History of the 3d Louisiana*, 134.

⁴⁹ O. R., Series I, Vol. VIII, 250.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 231; Tunnard, *History of the 3d Louisiana*, 134, 138. Smith's patrol was composed of troopers from the 15th Illinois Cavalry. Jenks' and Smith's companies had been organized as a part of the 36th Illinois Infantry. Dyer, *Compendium of the War of the Rebellion*, 1030.

Counterattacking, the greyclads sought to cut their way through the Union lines which all but encircled them. The grim Confederates pressed the 22d Indiana very hard. Satisfied that his men could not stop the Southerners, Colonel John A. Hendricks shouted for his regiment to retire. This was the last order that the colonel gave. Struck by two minié balls, Hendricks was carried mortally wounded from the field.⁵¹

A musician in the 18th Indiana, Samuel M. Martin, was detailed to help carry the wounded from the field. While assisting a wounded comrade to the rear, Martin was struck by a minié ball. The projectile struck "the miniature of his lady love, was deflected from the breast, and passing around, the ribs, lodged in the back, thus saving his life." The case of the picture was indented by the bullet, and the glass was shattered, but the picture was uninjured.⁵²

To add to the Confederates' difficulties, Colonel White sent the 37th Illinois surging back into the woods. The Illinoisans reached the guns moments after the Hoosiers.

After brushing the 22d Indiana aside, the hard-fighting Rebel infantry pulled back out of the trap. Following Hébert's capture, Colonel Evander McNair of the 4th Arkansas (as senior officer present) assumed command of the brigade. As his greyclads retired before the sledgehammer-like-blows delivered by the Federals, McNair spotted a Union mounted force getting into position to strike his right. He gave to a detachment of Louisianians led by Captain W. L. Gunnels the task of dealing with the bluecoated troopers. The Confederates had barely taken cover behind a rail fence, when the cavalry charged. One well-aimed volley settled the issue. A number of men and horses were knocked down; the remainder veered to one side. When last seen, the horsemen were putting as much distance between themselves and the Rebel riflemen as possible.

⁵¹ O. R., Series I, Vol. VIII, 250.

⁵² Curtis, "The Army of the South-West, and the First campaign in Arkansas," *Annals of Iowa*, Vol. VI, No. 111, 152.

At the same time, a second detachment from the 3d Louisiana led by Captain J. F. Harris held the 18th Indiana at bay until the last of the organized portions of McNair's command had made their escape toward the Bentonville-Sugar Creek road. Besides their leaders, the Confederates left many dead and wounded on the field.⁵³

Reaching the Bentonville-Sugar Creek road, McNair reformed his battered brigade. Davis' infantry were glad to see the hard-fighting Rebels go. During the period following McNair's retreat, the Federal leaders did little to capitalize on their success. Valuable time was wasted, while the unit commanders re-formed and mustered their troops. Details were sent to gather up the litter cases. The wounded, whether Reb or Yank, were carried to the hospitals which the Federals had established in Leetown.

Except for the fire of the Union artillery, little was done to harass the Confederates' retreat. Indeed, the situation was so fluid that Osterhaus, fearing that Rebel horsemen might return to the area, directed Captain Hoffmann to have his battery (the 4th Ohio) return to Leetown. Limbering up their pieces, the Ohioans carried out Osterhaus' instructions.⁵⁴

* * *

From his command post in the timber north of the Bentonville-Sugar Creek road, Pike had watched the Confederate artillery take position in the fields to the south. Leaving his Indians in the woods, Pike rode forward. He hoped to learn how the battle was going. Shortly after the general reached the artillery, there was brisk flurry of small-arms fire in the woods to his front.

About ten minutes later, a Confederate cavalry regiment (the 6th Texas) entered the field and formed into line facing the woods. Colonel Drew now rode out of the woods at the head of his regiment. Hailing Drew, Pike directed

⁵³ O. R., Series I, Vol. VIII, 250, 253, 295; Tunnard, *History of the 3d Louisiana*, 134-135, 138.

⁵⁴ O. R. Series I, Vol. VIII, 218, 238, 247.

him to mass his Cherokees behind the Texans. If the Texans advanced into the timber beyond, Drew was to follow. Upon reaching the woods, Drew would dismount his warriors "and let them join in the fight in their own fashion." Drew carried out Pike's instructions to the letter.

Within the next several minutes, Pike spied Sergeant Major West of Watie's regiment. He had West organize a detail and drag the three James rifles which the Indians and Texans had captured into the woods. A detachment of Cherokees was given the task of guarding the guns.

Hardly had West's detail secured the guns, before a large number of horsemen debouched from the woods to Pike's front. Crossing the field, they took position in front of the timber where Watie's regiment had taken cover. Several shells from the Federal artillery now fell in the area and sent the white cavalymen scampering into the timber. There, they took cover alongside the Indians. All this time, Pike was unable to discover anything concerning the whereabouts of his superiors.

Becoming very uneasy, Pike rode to his left. He wanted to see if he could find out how the fighting was going. Pike was unable to locate any Confederate cavalry, but he did encounter a column of infantry (the 16th and 17th Arkansas), and two dismounted cavalry units (the 4th Texas Cavalry Battalion and the 1st Arkansas Mounted Rifles). The footsoldiers were halted and standing in ranks on the Bentonville-Sugar Creek road.

From Major John W. Whitfield, Pike learned that McCulloch and McIntosh were dead. As if this were not bad enough, Whitfield reported that 7,000 Federals were in motion toward the Confederates' left. Pike, as senior officer, assumed command of these troops in addition to his Indians. He was appalled by his responsibilities. Besides having no knowledge of the geography of the area, Pike did not know where the other units belonging to McCulloch's wing were.

When Pike looked about, his eyes fell on Round Top. It looked like a good defensive position. After sending an

aide to recall Watie's and Welch's commands, Pike marched his men eastward across Mrs. Sturdy's field. Reaching the fence at the foot of Round Top, Pike dismounted his cavalry. Next, he deployed his men behind the fence. At the same time, Major Elias C. Boudinot was sent to carry the grim news to Van Dorn. The major was to tell the general that Pike "would try to hold his position."

Following Boudinot's departure, Pike scaled Round Top. The general was disappointed to see that the Bentonville-Sugar Creek road gave the Federals an ideal approach to his position. At the same time, the Confederate artillery emplaced on the prairie west of Round Top ceased firing. Bringing up their teams, the drivers limbered up their guns. Good's Texas Battery, escorted by the 6th Texas Cavalry, could be seen withdrawing toward the Bentonville-Sugar Creek road. This movement, Pike sadly realized, would uncover his right. Pike accordingly determined to withdraw his command and "lead them to General Van Dorn."

A staff officer was sent to order Good's Battery and the 6th Texas to report to Pike. Unable to learn anything concerning the fate of the other unit constituting the rest of the wing, Pike assumed they had retreated toward Camp Stephens.

As soon as he had recalled his troops and had been joined by the Texans, Pike started his column for the Bentonville Detour. As Pike's command moved off, Welch's squadron took the lead; the 6th Texas brought up the rear. Drew's regiment, despite Pike's orders, failed to rejoin the brigade. Consequently, the 2d Regiment of Cherokees remained in the woods when Pike's column left the field. It was several hours before Colonel Drew realized what had happened. He then recalled his men. Remounting, Drew's Cherokees headed for Camp Stephens.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 288-290. Good's Battery marched behind Welch's squadron, while Watie's Cherokees covered the flanks of Pike's column on its march to rejoin Van Dorn, *Ibid.*, 289.

In addition to guarding the rear of Pike's column, the 6th Texas was given the task of providing for the security of the division train. About the time that the 6th Texas reached the Bentonville Detour, a report reached Colonel B. Warren Stone that a force of Union infantry was striking cross-country with the object of cutting off the train. Stone determined to escort the wagons to Camp Stephens. The 6th Texas and the train reached Camp Stephens without encountering any bluecoats.⁵⁶

Pushing rapidly northeastward along the Bentonville Detour, Pike's command reached the Telegraph road. Darkness had blanketed the area for a number of hours before Pike was able to report to General Van Dorn.⁵⁷

Like Pike, Colonel Greer was deeply troubled as the hours slipped by without any news from General McCulloch. Although he had established his command post on Round Top, Greer was unable to gauge the ebb and flow of the battle. Several runners were sent to see if they could locate McCulloch. They returned with the news that they had been unable to learn the whereabouts of either McCulloch or McIntosh. Shortly after the return of the messengers, the division adjutant rode up. In response to Greer's inquiry as to how things were going, the adjutant replied, "if the troops down on the right did not do better than they had done for the last few moments . . . [Greer] had best move . . . [his] command."⁵⁸

Within the next several minutes, Colonel Dandridge McRae passed to the left of Round Top at the head of his regiment—the 21st Arkansas. McRae informed Greer that Hébert's footsoldiers had met with a repulse and were falling back.

Greer now sighted large numbers of Confederates moving to the rear. After discussing the situation with his officers and still unable to find out what had happened to McCulloch and McIntosh, Greer recalled his troopers. As soon as the Texans had secured their horses, Greer returned to the field

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 290, 301, 303-304.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 290.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 299; Rose, *Ross' Texas Brigade*, 59.

where he had formed his regiment prior to the capture of the guns of the 1st Missouri Flying Artillery.

Leaving his second in command (Lieutenant Colonel Walter P. Lane) in charge of the regiment, Greer went to look for the two generals. Before going very far, Greer encountered a number of horsemen whom he recognized as belonging to McCulloch's staff. They informed Greer that McCulloch and McIntosh were dead and that he was senior officer on the field. Greer shook his head. He asked for General Pike. The officers reported that Pike had left the area. At this, Greer assumed command of all the forces remaining on the field.⁵⁹

Greer, as his first order of business, sent one of his staff officers to recall the units which could be seen moving westward along the Bentonville-Sugar Creek road toward the Bentonville Detour. Immediately thereafter, one of Van Dorn's aides galloped up on a sweat-lathered horse. The messenger handed Greer a dispatch addressed to McCulloch. Opening the communication, Greer learned that Price's Missourians were gaining ground on the left.

A second staff officer soon arrived with another message from Van Dorn. The commanding general wanted McCulloch's wing to hold its ground. This barrage of messages disconcerted Greer. Besides being in strange surroundings, he knew nothing of Van Dorn's plan of attack.

Greer decided to make a reconnoissance. Before going very far, the colonel discovered that Hart's four guns were still in position on Round Top. A strong force of bluecoats was closing in on the battery. Unless something was done quickly, the Federals might capture the guns. Greer sent the 3d Texas Cavalry to help the artillerists. Covered by the Texans, the Arkansans succeeded in removing their pieces from Round Top just ahead of the onrushing Yankees (Knobelsdorff's command).

⁵⁹ O. R., Series I, Vol. VIII, 293, 299.

Hardly had the guns been saved, before Greer received another report which required prompt action on his part. He was notified that the 6th Texas was en route to protect the wing's train. Fearful lest the Federals send a "flying column" to destroy the wagons, Greer detached the 1st Arkansas Cavalry Battalion with instructions to report to Colonel Stone.⁶⁰

Greer now withdrew his command north along the country lanes down which the Confederates had advanced seven short hours before. The troopers of the 3d Texas screened the rear of the column as it left the prairie. Reaching the Bentonville Detour, Greer halted. As soon as outposts had been established, the Confederates were allowed to bivouac. Some of the greyclads camped in a corn field, others on the northwestern slopes of Pea Ridge. To ward off the "chilling mountain air," many of the soldiers burrowed into "heaps of dry forest-leaves."⁶¹

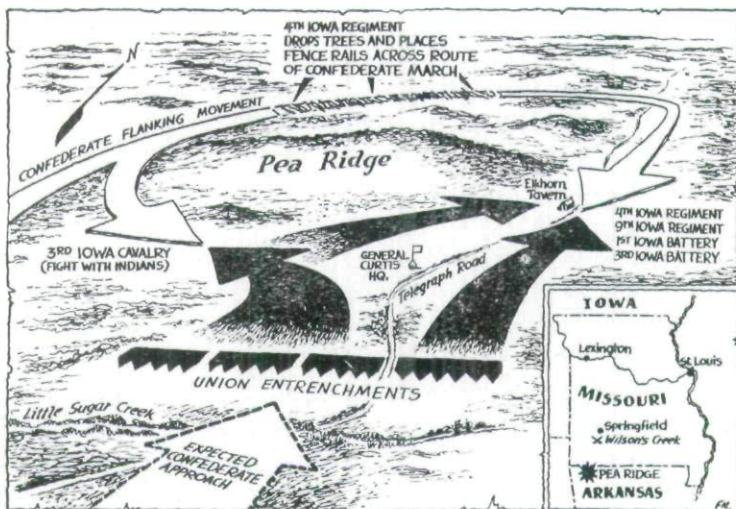
Soon after Greer had stopped his column, Captain William R. Bradfute informed the colonel that in his hurry to get away, Pike had abandoned the three captured James rifles. Bradfute felt that a detail ought to be sent to spike the guns. Greer agreed. Two companies were assigned to carry out this task. Returning to the field, the Rebel horsemen reached the captured pieces ahead of the Federals. A nearby fence was ripped down, the rails were piled around the guns, and the torch applied.⁶²

About 10 p. m., Greer called a staff meeting. At this gathering, the ranking officers discussed what their next move should be. Some wanted to join Van Dorn at Elkhorn; others felt that they ought to return to Camp Stephens. A few be-

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 293.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 293, 300; Tunnard, *History of the 3d Louisiana*, 135, 138. Greer's command included, the 4th, 14th and 21st Arkansas Infantry Regiments, the 3d Louisiana Infantry, the 2d Arkansas Mounted Rifles (dismounted), the 3d, 9th, and 11th Texas Cavalry Regiments, and Hart's Arkansas Battery. *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 293-294.

⁶² *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 293. During the mopping up operations, a Union patrol stumbled upon and recovered the fire-blackened tubes. Subsequent to the battle, as soon as new carriages were received from the Ordnance Department, the gunners of the 1st Missouri Flying Artillery remounted the three tubes.



lieved that they had better remain where they were. If they gave up their position, they argued, the Federals could send a column along the Bentonville Detour to attack Van Dorn from the rear. It was finally decided to push on and report to Van Dorn. When he dismissed his officers, Greer told them to have their troops ready to march at 1 a. m.

A messenger, Private John N. Coleman of the 3d Texas, was detailed to carry news of Greer's plan to Van Dorn. Coleman made the difficult night ride to Van Dorn's headquarters and was back at Greer's command post by the designated hour.

Van Dorn had approved Greer's plan of action. The troops were turned out. At 1:30 the column moved off. Pushing ahead rapidly, Greer's troops reach the Telegraph road before daybreak. Here, Greer halted his command while he sent an aide ahead to find out Van Dorn's intentions.⁶³

* * *

About 3 p. m. one of General Curtis' aides, Captain Jason M. Adams, returned to army headquarters following a visit to the Little Sugar Creek line. He informed Curtis that he

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 294; Rose, *Ross' Texas Brigade*, 59-60

had seen Sigel and Asboth. They had told the captain that there was no fighting in that section, and except for a few scouts, they had not seen any Confederates.

Shortly thereafter, news reached headquarters that the tide had turned north of Leetown; the greyclads were said to be falling back in confusion. Satisfied that his left and center were now secure, Curtis sent a messenger to notify Carr that "he would soon be re-enforced." Curtis resolved "to bring up the left and center to meet the gathering hordes near Elkhorn Tavern." Accompanied by his staff, Curtis started for Little Sugar Creek.⁶⁴

When Colonel Davis had marched to the Leetown sector to reinforce Osterhaus' task force, he had left a regiment (the 8th Indiana) and the 1st Battery, Indiana Light Artillery to hold the earthworks. Riding up to Colonel William P. Benton, who commanded the 8th Indiana, Curtis directed him to rush a battalion and three guns to Elkhorn Tavern. Lieutenant Colonel David Shunk would command this force. Benton with his right battalion and Captain Martin Klaus's three remaining guns would continue to hold the rifle pits overlooking Little Sugar Creek.⁶⁵

Leaving Benton's command post, Curtis rode westward. He found Sigel and Asboth with their troops on the bluff near where Winton's Spring Branch flows into Little Sugar Creek. All was quiet on Sigel's front. His troops were "fresh and anxious to participate in the fight." In addition, the firing from the direction of Leetown seemed to be receding. This was a clear indication to the generals that the reports they had been receiving that the tide had turned in that sector were correct.⁶⁶

Turning to Asboth, Curtis informed him that Carr's troops at Elkhorn Tavern were "hard pressed." Asboth was told to take four companies of the 2d Missouri (Union) and the four 6-pounder guns manned by the 2d Battery, Ohio Light Artillery and hurry to Carr's support marching via the Tele-

⁶⁴ *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 200.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 200, 249-250, 252.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 200, 212; Sigel, "The Pea Ridge Campaign" *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, I, 325.

graph road. The other section of the Ohio battery, covered by the remaining six companies of the 2d Missouri, would be left to guard the Bentonville road.⁶⁷

Sigel would march to Carr's assistance with the remainder of his wing, going by way of Leetown. If Colonel Davis had the situation in that area under control, Sigel would "press on to re-enforce Carr."⁶⁸

Before starting for Leetown, Sigel called for Major August H. Poten of the 17th Missouri. Poten was placed in charge of a small task force. With this command, Poten was to make a forced reconnaissance along the Bentonville road toward Camp Stephens. He was to threaten the rear of the Confederate column which had advanced up the Bentonville Detour.⁶⁹

Moving down from the bluffs, Major Poten turned his task force into the Bentonville road, which paralleled Little Sugar Creek. After proceeding about four miles, Poten's scouts spotted a strong force of Confederates on the hills north of the stream. These Confederates belonged to Martin E. Green's division.

* * *

Earlier in the day, General Green had received orders from Van Dorn to park the trains. After doing so, Green was to take his infantry and artillery and reconnoiter the Little Sugar Creek valley as far east as the point where the Bentonville Detour branched off to the left. Reaching the designated position, Green found the 19th and 22d Arkansas. These two units would assist Green in holding the junction. Shortly thereafter, Green was reinforced by another command—the 1st Texas Cavalry Battalion.

During the afternoon, Green was notified that his scouts had sighted a mounted Union patrol moving down the Bentonville road. Major R. P. Crump of the 1st Texas Cavalry Battalion was told to take 100 of his troopers and check out

⁶⁷ *O. R.*, Series I, Vol. VIII, 200, 241.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 200.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 212, 280. Besides the 17th Missouri, Poten's command included: two companies from the 3d, a like number from the 15th Missouri Infantry, two companies of the 4th Missouri Cavalry, and two guns of the 1st Missouri Flying Artillery.

this report. Before going very far, Crump's Texans encountered Major Poten's task force. Observing that they were outnumbered, the Texans fell back. They were followed by the Federals.

When Crump reached Green's command post, he warned the general of the bluecoats' approach. Green ordered the "long-roll" beaten.

The Confederates did not have long to wait. First, Poten's calvary and then his infantry popped into view. Green cautioned his men to hold their fire. If it were at all possible, he wished to lure the Yankees into an ambush. But when the Federal horsemen started feeling for his flanks, Green became worried and gave the word for Capatin J. W. Kneisley to have his cannoneers open fire. Poten's infantry recoiled, deployed, and took cover behind a fence.

Poten called up his artillery. The gunners of the 1st Missouri Flying Artillery threw their guns into battery and returned Kneisley's fire. The artillery duel lasted for several minutes. Breaking off the engagement, the Yankees limbered up their pieces and retired. Returning to their camp, Poten's soldiers picked up 8 or 9 Confederate stragglers. Following the retreat of Poten's task force, Green's command returned to Camp Stephens.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 280, 317.

About The Author And The Cover Picture

Edwin C. Bearss is National Research Historian for the National Park Service at Vicksburg, Mississippi. He has intensively studied and published several articles on the Civil War in the West. Among these are *The Battle of Wilson's Creek*, which appeared in the Fall, 1961 and Winter, 1962 issues of the *Annals*, and *the Iowans at Fort Donelson*, which appeared in the Spring and Summer, 1962 issues of the *ANNALS*.

Part four of the *Battle of Pea Ridge* by Mr. Bearss will appear in the Winter, 1964 issue of the *Annals of Iowa*.

The picture on the front cover by Frank Miller is a sketch of the picturesque Elkhorn Tavern about which the *Battle* swirled and thundered.

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