

SPECIAL REPORT OF THE ADJUTANT  
GENERAL OF MILITIA.

## APPENDIX N.

ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE,  
OTTAWA, June 6th, 1870.*The Honorable the Minister of Militia and  
Defence, etc.*  
(Copy.)

CAMP ECCLES HILL, May 28th, 1870.

SIR:—I regret that pressure of work, and the difficulty of correspondence from bivouack, has delayed until to day, my report of the proceedings of the force of active militia under my command.

Having been delayed in Montreal, it was nearly four o'clock, a.m., on the 25th inst., that I arrived at Stanbridge Station with the Montreal Troop of Cavalry, and a detachment from the 3rd Battalion "the Victoria Rifles," having en route detached to the posts ordered by you, the remainder of the force which I took from Montreal.

On arrival at Stanbridge, some eight miles from Stanbridge Station, I ascertained that the ground occupied by the Fenians in 1866 as their camp at Eccles Hill, near Cook's Corners, which position I have mentioned to you as being very strong, and of which information has been given as being a probable place of occupation again by Fenians, was being held by some of our farmers and other yeomen of the adjoining parishes, to whom I had requested Colonel Chamberlin to telegraph.

I also ascertained that Lieut.-Colonel Chamberlin, M.P., of the 60th, or Missisquoi Battalion, who had arrived on the previous evening at Stanbridge, had promptly supported these farmers with 24 men and an officer from one of the companies of his battalion, which I had ordered to muster at Stanbridge, and which was then assembling.

After an interview with Lieut. Colonel Chamberlin, I arranged a meeting with him at Eccles Hill, to which place I at once rode, accompanied by Capt. Gascoigne, your A.D.C., whose services you had kindly afforded me.

After having satisfied myself, from seeing a Fenian picket near the border line and from other circumstances, that an attack on the Eccles Hill was probable, I made up my mind, although disappointed in the numbers that the short notice had allowed to muster that I would hurry forward, as rapidly as possible, the companies then assembling at Dunham and Stanbridge, and that I would endeavour to hold the hill.

I gave a few directions relative to the occupation of the position to Lieutenant-Colonel Chamberlin, who, as senior officer present, remained in command, and then left for Stanbridge to bring up all the force I could, and make the requisite arrangements for the transport of the other Companies, Commissariat, &c. About two miles from Stanbridge, a mounted messenger, from Lieutenant-Colonel Chamberlin, overtook us, giving the information that the Fenians were on the point of attack, I therefore requested Captain Gascoigne to hasten on to Stanbridge and bring up every available man and at once rode back to Eccles' Hill.

On arrival, I found that the first attack of the Fenians, which was made along the road, to cross the boundary line, in column consisting of three divisions, an advanced party, a main body and a reserve had been repulsed by a handful of men at the outposts that Lt.-Col. Chamberlin had at his disposal, not exceeding, at the time of attack, fifty rifles.

The party actually attacking, thus repulsed,

Lieutenant Colonel Chamberlin estimates at 150 to 200 men, the total number which formed the column, the reserve of which was, however, not brought into action, was, according to the statements of the United States Officials and others subsequently fixed at about 350 to 400 men.

For the particulars of this first attack, and the very singular circumstances immediately preceding it, I beg to refer to the annexed report of Lieutenant Colonel Chamberlin.

The column having been repulsed, the men composing it broke into detached parties, some seeking shelter from our fire in the houses on each side of the road, some under cover of the fences, and some in a wooded and rocky knoll opposite to, and about 200 to 250 yards from the extreme front of our line, from which places they opened a desultory fire. At this time I arrived on the ground and assumed command.

Here it will be well I should explain the nature of the position. By referring to Map No 5, of the Government Survey, you will observe that immediately to the west of the road leading from Cooks Corner to the United States there extends to the south a long ridge of ground, this is very much serrated and rocky, is also in a great measure covered with maple trees and sparse undergrowth; it ends in a tongue of land steeply sloping to the south, and affording admirable cover for defence; from the bottom of this slope to the boundary line, it is low and marshy, but practicable ground, for about 200 yards, with a small fordable stream running through it parallel to, and on the Canadian side of the line of 45.

On the United States side of the boundary line, the rocky ridge alluded to, again rises from the low lying intervening ground, the slope being somewhat similar to that opposite, on the Canadian side,—the road continues straight across the lines, at each side of which for three or four hundred yards, detached houses of wood and brick forms a straggling hamlet, whilst to the southward the course the road takes is through a deep gorge formed by the ridge to the west, and Minister's Hill to the east the Village of Franklin, Vermont, is distant about two miles and a quarter, and about half way to this Village the Fenian camp and stores were at a place called "Hubbard's Corner."

Beyond desultory firing from the Fenians, returned when any opportunity offered by our men, there was no movement of any important nature until 5 o'clock, p.m.; in the meantime, the Montreal Troop of Cavalry, a Company of the 3rd Battalion Active Militia, and a further detachment of 20 men from the 60th Battalion, were brought forward, these arrived at half past 2 p.m., and with this additional force, I was enabled to strengthen the skirmish line, and better secure the right flank of the position.

During the afternoon, a message was brought to me by a civilian from the United States who requested that a flag of truce might be permitted for the purpose of removing the dead and wounded of the Fenians, I declined to admit any flag, or hold any terms whatever with marauders. About 5 p.m., it was evident, from the slackness of the Fenian fire, that, with the exception of those who had taken shelter in the houses along the road, there were but few men left, and the fire from these houses was now restricted to a few dropping shots as they were carefully marked by the skirmish line and searched by a shower of bullets whenever a shot was fired.

A quarter to six, a countryman from the United States came round our skirmish line, and informed me that a gun was being brought into position by the Fenians. I

shortly after observed it about 1200 yards from the front of our position—at this time I determined on advancing my force to the boundary line, in order to drive out any lurkers in the houses near it before dark. I therefore rapidly advanced the men, composing the Home Guards, and those from the 60th Battalion in skirmishing order, the Victoria Rifles being posted on the right shoulder of the slope to cover the advance; this movement, which was well executed, had the effect of driving the Fenians in all directions from their cover in full and even ludicrous flight to the neighbouring woods—not above a dozen shots were fired by them to arrest our advance at this time, their arms, accoutrements and even clothing being thrown away by them as they ran. In their flight several dropped to the fire of our men.

I had, as may naturally be imagined, much difficulty to restrain pursuit over the boundary, but am happy to say that, aided by the exertions of the officers, not a simple militiaman crossed.

At nightfall three shots were fired by the Fenians from their field piece which had been retired to a position in the woods, but the fire was very ill-directed.

I laid the pickets for the night close to the lines, and the men not on duty bivouacked on the Hill.

Yesterday morning, I ascertained that the field piece alluded to had been brought into Canada about a mile and a half west of our position, I at once ordered it to be seized, which was accordingly done. The Fenians I am informed are utterly disorganized.

It is highly gratifying to be able to report that we have no casualties, the whole of the men, not only those who were actually engaged but those who have subsequently arrived, are in the highest spirits, and only anxious for further work, they are naturally elated at the fact that with far inferior numbers they have met the Fenians under their chief leader at the very boundary line of the Dominion and at once driven them back in disgraceful rout.

It is impossible, with any certainty, to arrive at the Fenian loss in killed and wounded; three of the former were at one time plainly in view whilst another was reported as dead in the brook at the foot of the hill—during the night lights were seen moving over the fields in search of the dead and wounded who were then taken away by the civilians of the U. S. From all the information I can gather, the Fenian loss may be set down as four or five killed, and fifteen to eighteen wounded; some accounts double and treble this number—we have buried one man inside our lines. Among the wounded is the so called "General" Donnelly. After the repulse at the boundary line the Fenian leader the so called "General" O'Neil, took refuge in a brick house, from which he was turned out by the owner. O'Neil then hastened to the rear, and gave himself up to, or was taken by the U. S. Marshal for breach of the neutrality laws. The Fenian command then devolved on one O'Riley, an escaped convict.

On the following morning, I ascertained that the Fenians were perfectly routed, and had broken up into small squads, abandoning their camp, and nearly all their stores of arms, ammunition, and clothing, which were very large, at Hubbard's Corners. Their rifles are of three patterns; the United States Government Springfield rifle, converted into a breech-loader of ingenious construction. The Spencer and a few Springfield muzzle loaders; the field piece is a rifled iron gun, breech loading about 6th calibre. These