

second Brigade consisting of the 13th, 20th, 36th, Wentworth Provisional Battalion, and six troops Cavalry; the 3rd or Rifle Brigade consisting of the 2nd, 37th, 38th, 39th, the Hamilton Field Battery and six troops mounted Rifles—this division called the 1st Ontario. The 44th was attached to the 1st Brigade. The Regular Brigade consisted of 3 Battalions, 1 Battery and a squadron of Volunteer Cavalry. As this distribution was adhered to during the continuance of hostilities, and as these Brigades will be frequently referred to in the course of my narrative, their formation should be well understood.

After two days of much needed rest varied a little by news of the most exciting character, on the morning of the 21st the whole Division moved on London; most of the Infantry by rail, while the Cavalry and Artillery with two regiments in wagons, went by the roads. A warm spring rain fell all the morning, and made the travelling much pleasanter than it would have been on a hot dusty day. We reached London about 10 a. m. on the 22nd, having marched the most part of the night, and were glad to find our tents pitched, and a supply of provisions and forage ready for issue. One great secret of our commanding officers success as a soldier, was that his commissariat were the hardest worked men in the army. You could hear them grumble, grumble, grumble, but the work was always done.

At about 3 a. m. the alarm was sounded, and at daybreak we marched on Komoka, here we were joined by the 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division consisting of 30th, 32nd, 33rd Battalions and Wellington field Battery, which arrived by train from Stratford, and shortly afterwards the 1st Brigade, consisting of the 7th, 27th, 28th, 29th, arrived by the Sarnia branch of the Great Western, having destroyed the bridges, and reporting the enemy at Strathroy. About 10 a. m. the 3rd Brigade 2nd Division were despatched down the line of the Great Western to keep up communication with the 2nd Brigade, which it was feared might be intercepted by the enemy's crossing from Strathroy and orders were sent to them to proceed to Komoka at once. They were found at the crossing of a stream near Longwood, preparing to dispute its passage with the enemy then momentarily expected, but at once withdrew.

As the numbers of the enemy were estimated at about 25,000, 10,000 having crossed at Sarnia, and 15,000 at Windsor, and our forces barely numbered 12,000 all told, our commanding officers determined to stand on the defensive, rather than risk an attack in detail on the enemy before they effected a junction. A position was taken, therefore, and earthworks thrown up. Our right rested on a heavily wooded height of land towards Lobo, our left on the River Thames about 1½ miles east of Komoka, advantage having been taken of the conforma-

tion of the ground. The 3rd Brigade, 2nd Division occupied the left, next the 2nd Brigade 1st Division, the regular Brigade occupied the centre, and the 3rd Brigade 1st Division the right. The 1st, 2nd, Brigades, 2nd Division in Reserve. In front, the Cavalry and mounted Rifles formed the advanced posts.

My position being on the extreme right, I had little opportunity of knowing what passed during the night, although I pushed my patrols as near as I dared in the direction of the enemy without discovery; but I heard afterwards that a sharp fight had taken place on the left between our picquets and some American regiments advancing on the river road, evidently not knowing where they were going to, and in which they lost a number of prisoners. Next morning about daybreak a sharp rattle of arms on the centre and left showed the contest had begun, and soon afterwards a rapid artillery fire, lasting for over an hour was commenced by the enemy, with a view of shelling us from our position.

About 8 o'clock the contest became general, the Americans deploying in three lines, and rushing on as before in extended, or I should say irregular order.

They attempted this twice, and failing to achieve success, concentrated their attack on the centre. Meanwhile, I had been sent out, to endeavour to flank their lines on the left, and to intercept any flanking parties they might have sent out, from that direction. We soon found that they intended this, as a strong column about 3,000 strong was already on the march. Selecting a favorable spot, I placed a number of my men in ambush, and with the others proceeded a short distance down the road, and waited until the enemy were quite close, then turned the corner suddenly and showed ourselves, wheeled round, and fled. Thinking we were a patrol, their Cavalry followed to the turning, and seeing no other troops in sight pursued us.

On arriving opposite our ambuscade, they were saluted with a volley that emptied half their saddles, and we turned upon them, and pursued the remainder until close upon the main body. Had we continued the charge, I believe we might have ridden through the whole body, so great was the panic, but prudence prevailed, and we retired, before they could bring their guns into action. They deployed into line, and I extended my men in skirmishing order in the woods keeping up a scattering fire for about an hour, when they retired hoidly, without again trying our strength.

In this little skirmish we had a good opportunity of judging of the usefulness of mounted Rifles. Using their horses merely as a means of transport from one position to another, and acting as infantry skirmishers, our little force possessed the double advantage of deceiving the enemy as to our numbers, and of being able, at once, to fol-

low up any success they might achieve. Again, in flanking parties, they were particularly useful. Devoid of the traditions of the regular cavalry-man, and which renders that dashing individual useless without his horse, and clad in an unobtrusive and serviceable uniform—with no clashing sabres, or gaudy attire to reveal their approach—they were able to move with celerity, and act with promptitude, in any situation, and with their horses near them, as a means of flight if necessary; they would hold positions considered untenable by an unmounted man.

In the re-construction of the Active Force long neglected in Canada, this branch of the service had received special attention, and justly so, at the hands of the Adjutant General. The mounted force of the Dominion was now constituted about equally of mounted Rifles and Hussars.

Finding that the enemy were retreating we mounted our horses and following them up steadily soon came within the area of the general conflict, when to my great surprise and delight, I found our right swung round almost parrallel with the river, and apparently victorious. Suddenly a confusion rose in the ranks of the enemy, and our centre pressing forward, we divided them in two parts. Immediately after the left broke and fled in great disorder.

This circumstance, we afterwards found, was owing to the attack of some 200 or 300 Indians from Muncey and Moravian Town, exaggerated to thousands by the fears of the enemy, in flank and rear. We were ordered in pursuit, and ceased only at night fall; the inhabitants and Indians continuing it, however, up to the very frontier. We learned on returning, that after a desperate resistance, in which some Michigan regiments made themselves conspicuous, the whole right, to the number of some 5,000 had been taken prisoners. Who shall paint the scene of that night? Men seemed literally drunk with joy, and praises of our General, and self-glorification were heard from every mouth.

Being despatched to London as escort for our prisoners I heard little of this; but that our victory was hardly won, the wagon loads of wounded, and heaps of dead, sufficiently attested. Having delivered my prisoners, I found it necessary to go into Hospital for a few days, a splinter of shell having struck me in the thigh, producing a painful if not a serious wound. While there, I had an opportunity of learning the chief events that had transpired outside of our sphere of operations.

Battles had occurred at Prescott and Huntingdon, in which the superior numbers of the enemy had caused our forces to retreat on Ottawa and Montreal. A naval demonstration had been made on Toronto, but was defeated by our Gun boats. A fleet of Iron clads had arrived from England, three of which were destined for the Upper Lakes.