

December, 1813, a troop of the 19th Light Dragoons accompanied the First Royals on their punitive expedition from Niagara Falls on the United States side, to Fort Niagara, when they destroyed every building en route in retaliation for the wanton destruction of Newark and other outrages during the time the Americans maintained themselves in Canadian territory.

Mounted men came to notice on both sides in connection with Fitzgibbon's daring adventure at Beaver Dams, June 24th, 1813. Boerstler's column, which fell such an easy prey to the cool daring of the young British subaltern, was preceded by a party of mounted riflemen, who ran into some of Fitzgibbon's Indian outposts soon after the alarm had been given by Laura Secord, the heroine of the war. During the cessation of the fighting, which was caused by the parley between Boerstler and Fitzgibbon, Captain Hall, with twenty men of his troop of Chippewa Dragoons, joined Fitzgibbon's small and greatly outnumbered force. This little reinforcement had considerable influence in the result of the negotiations. Fitzgibbon had been slyly negotiating for the surrender of the American force as the subordinate of a mythical general of an equally mythical army, and Colonel Boerstler demanded that he be granted an interview with the lieutenant's superior. The subaltern, with ready Irish wit, seized upon the opportune arrival of Captain Hall as a way out of the difficulty. He induced Captain Hall to impersonate "the officer in command," Boerstler's pride was appeased, and the appearance of the Chippewa Dragoons, judiciously introduced, had no little effect on the negotiations.* The trophies of this smart affair were two field pieces, two ammunition waggons, the colors of the 14th U. S. Infantry and 542 men. Included among the latter were fifty "dragoons" and thirty "mounted militiamen." The United States army operating in the Niagara district was understood to include 250 or 300 dragoons.

The one occasion during the war when in the open field the United States troops succeeded in out-manceuvring and routing a British army was the only occasion upon which they used mounted troops in considerable numbers. When Proctor, with his little army of 500 British and 890 Indians began the poorly-managed retreat from Amherstburg, the United States general, Harrison, started in pursuit with a well-found army of 3,500 men, of whom no less than 1,500 were mounted riflemen, principally from Kentucky. The retirement was most leisurely conducted, and badly executed in every way. His strength in mounted men (mobility) gave Harrison a great advantage in the pursuit, and when streams, unfordable by infantry, were come to, each horseman took up an infantry soldier behind him. When Tecumseh's Indians and the remnant of the 41st finally stood at bay, Harrison's mounted men made short work of their resistance. Harrison in his report wrote:—"The mounted men received the fire of the British line and were ordered to charge. The horses in front of the column retired from the fire; another was given by the enemy, and our column at length getting in motion, broke through the enemy with irresistible force. In one minute the contest in front was over, and our mounted men, wheeling upon them and pouring in a destructive fire, they immediately surrendered."

Proctor had a few mounted men in his force, but they appear to have been in the advance of his retreat, probably on escort duty. A couple of days after the action Proctor reported that he had with him fifty-three mounted men.

At Chrysler's Farm, where, November 11th, 1813, Colonel Morrison with 900 men and three field pieces so crushingly defeated General Boyd's United States division of 2,500 men and six guns, the whole cavalry force at the disposal of the victorious British commander was six "provincial dragoons," a situation probably accounted for by the fact that Morrison's little force

* Kingsford's History.