



PORT ROYAL SATURDAY OCT. 25, 1862.

The Pocotaligo Expedition.

An expedition was dispatched from this place last Tuesday Oct. 21st, to a place called McKay's Point, at the junction of the Broad and Pocotaligo rivers, twenty miles from the mouth of the Broad river, for the purpose of penetrating inland as far as the line of the Charleston and Savannah R. R., and destroying the bridges at Coosawhatchie, Pocotaligo and Salkahatchie—although the destruction of the bridges was not accomplished, still the expedition was not entirely without important results and cannot be said to be a failure. The force employed for the work consisted of nine gun-boats under command of Capt. Chas. Steedman and seven transports carrying troops. The land force consisted of 4500 men commanded by Gen. J. M. Brannan. Following is a list of the vessels and the number of troops each transported:—

Paul Jones, Flagship, CHARLES STEEDMAN, Commanding.	350 men
Connemaugh.....	250 "
Wissahickon.....	50 "
Patroon.....	50 "
Uncas.....	50 "
Marblehead.....	230 "
Vixen.....	70 "
Water-witch.....	130 "
Ben Deford, (transport).....	900 "
Boston.....	880 "
Darlington.....	300 "
Relief and Schooner.....	200 "
Flora.....	300 "
Geo. Washington.....	250 "
Planter.....	300 "

The land force was composed as follows:

47th Pennsylvania, 600 men, Col. Good,	
55th " " " " White,	
6th Connecticut, 500 " " " Chatfield,	
comprising 1st Brigade and commanded by Gen. BRANNAN,	
76th Pennsylvania, 430 men, Col. Strawbridge,	
7th Connecticut, 500 " " " Hawley,	
3d New Hampshire, 480 " " " Jackson,	
Volunteer Engineers, 250 " " " Serrell,	
3d B. I. Artillery, 300 " " " Brown,	
comprising the 2d Brigade and commanded by Gen. TERRY.	
There was in addition to this force a battery of four 10	
pounder Parrot Guns (1st U. S. A.) under command of Lieut.	
Henry, and three Howitzers from the Wabash.	

The expedition sailed soon after midnight and the troops were all landed at McKay's Point the next morning, with the exception of 300 men of the 48th New York Vols. under Col. Barton, together with 50 men of the 3d R. I. Artillery, who proceeded on the Steamer *Planter* to the mouth of the Coosawhatchie River.

Capt. Gray of the 7th New Hampshire Regiment with a small force of men in boats, had been sent in the night to surprise and capture the rebel pickets stationed at McKay's Point. He failed to accomplish his purpose, however, and the picket fled to give the alarm of our approach. This rendered Gen. Brannan anxious to push forward before the rebels could muster sufficient force to frustrate his designs. The next morning our forces commenced to land at McKay's. The landing commenced at 7 o'clock and by 10 o'clock Gen. Terry's brigade was on the march and following Gen. Brannan who was in the advance. The day was fine and the road good, but our progress was slow, frequent stoppages being made while the scouts reconnoitered in front. The greater portion of our road was through open fields—cotton fields overgrown with rank weeds and tall grass—while the country through which we passed and the few houses we saw appeared utterly deserted. Everything appeared dead and going to decay; not a human being was to be seen, nor a living animal to give animation to the dreary landscape. After three hours' marching, we had penetrated some five miles into the country, when upon emerging from a wood into an open space, we were open-

ed upon the advance by a battery, in good position, and hidden by the tall, rank grass which fringed the road.

The 47th Pennsylvania Regt., Col. Good, which was in the advance, immediately formed in line and after delivering a well directed volley, charged upon the enemy, cheering in gallant style; while the 4th New Hampshire regiment, Col. Bell, which followed them, deployed on either side as skirmishers. The rebels made but a short stand here, retiring after slight resistance to the woods just in their rear, where they took up a still stronger position. Here, protected by the trees and the thick brush, and having in their favor all the advantages of the ground and position, they made a bold and determined stand; but they were soon obliged to give way before the impetuous bravery of our troops, who again charged upon them and drove them slowly before them. While retreating they kept up a brisk and continuous firing, taking advantage of every good position for their artillery while their sharpshooters, protected by the trees and their knowledge of the ground, kept up an irregular, but harassing fire of musketry. Our troops successively charging upon them and dislodging them, in this way drove them a distance of nearly four miles, to the bridge which crosses the Pocotaligo river, but a short distance from the village, the rebels doggedly contesting every inch of ground. Here they managed to make good their retreat across the river and destroy the bridge after them, thus rendering the passage of the river, which, though narrow, is some fifteen feet deep, impracticable to our troops. The opposite shore being steep and high offered peculiar advantages, and they were able to hold their position until reinforcements came to their aid. The shrill whistle of the locomotive was heard amid the booming of the cannon, the hursting of the shells and the ring of the musketry,—and sixteen cars loaded with troops were seen coming into the village of Pocotaligo, only a short distance beyond the scene of the conflict. The rebels were reinforced, but our brave troops held their ground with admirable bravery, until nightfall, when their ammunition being all expended, they were ordered to retreat.

This they did by degrees, and in excellent order, taking with them the dead and wounded, which on account of the want of ambulances and indeed all means of transportation, were carried on stretchers to the point of debarkation a distance of fully 8 miles. The 47th Pennsylvania and the 6th Connecticut regiments protected the retreat, and displayed undaunted heroism and bravery throughout the whole affair. The 47th Penn. regiment being in the advance, suffered severely, but their excellent behavior on the field drew forth general admiration. The 76th Pennsylvania and the 7th Connecticut also acted with exceeding bravery and coolness. The 3d New Hampshire though not actively participating in the fight, were under a hot fire, and departed themselves with coolness and bravery. The retreat was made by our troops in excellent order, and reflects credit, not only on the troops, but also on Gen. Brannan. The rear guard did not leave the field until midnight, and gained McKay's point towards morning. In the morning the troops were embarked, under cover of the gun-boats—the wounded being first to receive attention. During the embarkation the rebel pickets made their appearance at the edge of the woods, in the rear, but were soon driven back by a few shells from our gun-boats, and the troops were embarked in good order.

We are unable to state with certainty what was the strength of the enemy; but from all we can learn, we are inclined to think the force first engaged consisted of about one thousand men, with a strong battery of not less than five pieces of artillery, and a small force of cavalry. This force, however, was subsequently reinforced by at least three thousand fresh men. Our loss in killed and wounded, is severe, but not nearly so heavy as was at first estimated,—probably not more than fifty killed, and two hundred and fifty wounded.

During the progress of these operations at this

point Col. Barton, of the Forty-eighth New York Regiment, with 300 of his men and 50 men of the 3d Rhode Island Artillery, under Capt. Gould, made his way, on the steamer *Planter*, up the Coosawhatchie river, and landed at 2 o'clock on the left bank of the river, within two miles of the town of the same name, with the intention of creating a diversion at that point, and destroying the bridge there if possible. They were accompanied, for several miles up the river, by the gun-boats *Patroon*, and *Uncas*; and in addition to this protection the *Planter* carried an armament of four heavy guns. Having landed his small force, together with one small howitzer, Col. Barton made his way through the woods to the main road and pushed forward to Coosawhatchie. Upon approaching the railroad the whistle of a locomotive was heard, and they hurried forward and reached the line of the railroad, just as a train loaded with troops was passing. They delivered a volley with musketry and with their howitzer at the cars, killing the engineer, and creating great confusion and consternation among the passengers. They were unable to stop the progress of the train, however, and immediately set to work to tear up the track and cut the telegraph wires. After doing a slight damage to the road, they endeavored to make their way to the bridge, in order to destroy it, but they found it so strongly protected with three pieces of artillery, that they were obliged to return. Col. Barton, now fearing that a longer delay would render him liable to have his retreat cut off by a force from Grahamville, made the best of his way back to his boat pursued by cavalry, who boldly followed them down to the bank of the river and fired upon them, severely wounding Lieut. J. B. Blanding, dr. I. Artillery. They were soon driven back however, with a broadside of canister and shell, which created great slaughter among them. Col. Barton succeeded in re-embarking his men and rejoining the fleet at McKay's point, without the loss of a single man—bringing with him one prisoner, 30 muskets and the colors of the Whippy Swamp Guard, (S. C. V.) taken from the color-bearer, who was shot, and fell from the cars. They also destroyed fifteen muskets which they were unable to carry, being so closely pursued by the enemy.

Before completing this rather hasty account we would state that Lieutenant Henry's battery did most efficient service and Lieutenant Henry himself displayed signal heroism and intrepidity. During the engagement his horse was shot under him, but he fortunately escaped without injury. One of his pieces was struck by a well directed shell of the enemy, which exploded killing one man instantly and wounding four others. This gun however was not damaged and was subsequently worked by three men only, who did their duty nobly. All unite in testifying to the coolness and presence of mind displayed by both Generals Brannan and Terry, who were continually on the field, and often in the thickest of the fight. Lieut. Loyd Phoenix, of the *Wabash*, who was in command of the howitzers, together with Ensigns Wallace and La Rue Adams, did good duty and distinguished themselves.

Col. L. S. Chatfield and Lieut. Col. John Spidell of the 6th Connecticut Regt., were both wounded while bravely leading on their commands. We are happy to state, however, that their wounds are not of a dangerous nature. On the field we were constantly near Dr. Baily, and noticed that his attentions to the wounded were unceasing. The zealous manner in which he performed his duties is deserving of mention. We also noticed Dr. Merritt on the field, who performed his duties so faithfully as to call forth complimentary comments from Dr. Baily.

It may not be out of place, perhaps, to close this account with a short exposition of the original plan of the expedition. The force which landed at McKay's point, was to march to Pocotaligo, and there to separate, General Brannan, pushing forward to Salkahatchie, to destroy the railroad bridge which crosses the river at that point, while Gen. Terry did the same at Pocotaligo. In the meantime Col.