

No. 6.

Report of Lieut. Parish B. Johnson, Second California Infantry.

FORT ANDERSON, August 23, 1862.

ACTING ASSISTANT ADJUTANT-GENERAL,
Humboldt Military District:

SIR: I have the honor to herewith transmit the official report of Second Lieut. P. B. Johnson, Second Infantry California Volunteers, of a skirmish with Indians on Light Prairie, August 21, 1862.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. D. DOUGLAS,

Captain, Second Infantry California Volunteers, Commanding Post.

FORT ANDERSON, CAL., August 23, 1862.

SIR: I have the honor to report that while on detached service with my pack train at Arcata, Cal., on the evening of the 20th instant, the citizens informed me that the camp of a band of Indians had been discovered about six miles from town on what is known as Light Prairie, and that a company of the citizens proposed to attack them at daylight. I immediately volunteered my services with Sergeant Tuttle and Privates Ensign, Shepherd, Stewart, and Weaver, and our guide, Sam Overlander, to operate in conjunction with the militia under the command of George W. Ousley. At 11.30 o'clock we started from town. The expedition consisted of thirty citizens, twelve men of Company D, Third Infantry California Volunteers, under charge of Lieutenant Anderson, and myself and command. About daylight we separated into four parties and proceeded to surround the Indian camp. Myself and men were stationed about 250 yards from the camp. When it became light enough to see the sights on our guns the party of citizens, called the attacking party, numbering eighteen men, with double-barreled shotguns, commenced firing. The Indians, who were packing up their things, broke and ran down the prairie across the line of sight of my men. My men and self fired and ran after them. The Indians only fired once or twice in return. The engagement lasted about thirty minutes, and I am happy to state that my men killed or wounded every Indian that attempted to run past them. One of the citizens—James Brock, our former guide, an honest, brave, and good man—was shot through the heart while engaged in a scuffle with an Indian, the powder from the revolver burning his flesh. Of Indians it is reported that six were killed. I saw two killed by my own men, and saw their bodies in the afternoon. Five guns were captured; also two bows and a lot of arrows. One of the guns was a Yager, captured by us last spring from the Indians, and retaken by the Indians when Whitney's place was burned. The Indian camp was a new and temporary one—a provision camp. They had killed a large steer the day before and were drying the beef. The Indians did not number to exceed, at the very largest estimate, twenty-five bucks and squaws. The camp was located on a small spring stream in the edge of the prairie, which is covered with a high and dense growth of fern.

During the afternoon of the same day I returned with a party of citizens to the prairie and found evidence to lead us to the belief that the Indians had returned during our absence and carried off all the wounded and dead save two. One of the citizens says he recognized the language of the Indians as that of Mad River. Mr. Ousley says that he heard the Hoopa language while spying out their camp the evening before.

I cannot speak too highly of the coolness, gallantry, and daring of the five men of Company F, Second Infantry California Volunteers, with me on that morning.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

P. B. JOHNSON,

Lieutenant, Second Infantry California Volunteers.

Capt. C. D. DOUGLAS,

Second Infantry California Vols., Comdg. Fort Anderson, Cal.

No. 7.

Reports of Capt. Thomas E. Ketcham, Third California Infantry.

FORT BAKER, CAL., April 14, 1862.

SIR: I have the honor to report that on the morning of April 3, 1862, I left the post with thirty enlisted men for a scout against the Indians. Having received information from Mr. Reed through Faulkner, the Government packer, that there was a band of Indians in the Redwoods near his (Reed's) ranch, I directed my march to a secluded point on what is known as Abbott's ranch, between the North Fork of the Yager and another small stream which empties into it from the east, and about three miles north of Reed's ranch, behind a high mountain. From thence I sent out a small scouting party in charge of the guide for the purpose of tracing the Indians if possible. The scout was out all day and returned in the evening, reporting an abundance of old signs, ten deserted rancherias, but no sign less than a week old. At an early hour on the morning of the 6th, left camp with twenty-five men of the command, determined to thoroughly examine the Redwoods in the neighborhood of the Main and South Yager Creeks, the men carrying their rations in their haversacks. At 7 a. m. crossed over to the west bank of the Yager, and after marching about four miles discovered fresh Indian tracks coming toward us. We followed the trail and found that the Indians had crossed the Yager about half a mile below the mouth of the South Yager. Not seeing any tracks of squaws or children, I concluded that it would be well to try and take their camp, and then meet the Indians on their way back and surprise them. We then took up the march for their camp, which we discovered about one mile distant, but entirely deserted. The ground around the camp was covered with tracks, big and little, giving evidence that a large band had been encamped there but the day before. We felled a tree across the Yager and passed over with the intention to cut them off if possible. After marching about two miles through the brush and timber struck the trail going east. We followed it up across the South Yager and up and along the mountain side, in many places so steep that the men could scarcely maintain their footing, until we came to a small prairie, where I halted the men for a few moments to allow them to take breath. The guide had scarcely stepped out of the timber before he was observed by a squaw, who ran to give the alarm. We endeavored to intercept her, but without success. The majority of the men, with myself, pushed on as fast as we possibly could, but did not get a glimpse of an Indian with the exception of the squaw, and of her all that was seen was her head and basket, and that but for a moment. The guide with a number of the men pursued down the mountain side to the creek, whilst a number of the men with myself deployed forward in pursuit, but without success. They fled, leaving everything behind them that could embarrass their flight. There were 17 parts of sacks