

Head Quarters

Fort Strother

Major Genl Thos. Pinkney

January 1814

Sir

I had the honor of informing you in a letter of the 31st ulto forwarded by Mr. McCandless (Express) of an excursion I contemplated making still further into the enemy's country, with the new raised Volunteers from Tennessee. I had ordered those troops to form a junction with me on the 10th Inst. but they did not arrive untill the 14th, their number (including officers) was about 600; & on the 15th I marched them across the river to graze their Horses, on the next day I followed with the remainder of my force, consisting of the artillery company with one six pounder, one company of Infantry of forty eight men, two companies of spies commanded by Captains Gordon & Russell of about thirty men each, & a company of Volunteer officers headed by Gen'l Coffee who had been abandoned by their men, & who still remained in the field, awaiting the order of the government - making my force exclusive of ^{the} Indians about 930 -

The motives which influenced me to penetrate still further into the enemy's country with this force, were many and urgent- The term of Service of the new raised Volunteers was short & a considerable part of it had expired - They were expensive to the government & were full of ardor to meet the enemy - The ill effects of Keeping soldiers of this description long stationary and idle, I had been made to feel too sensibly already - other causes concurred to make such a movement not only justifiable, but absolutely necessary - I had received a letter from Captain McAlpin of the 5th Instant, who commanded at Fort Armstrong, in the absence of Colo. Snodgrass, informing me that fourteen or fifteen towns of the enemy situated on the waters of the Tallipoose, were about uniting their forces and attacking that place, which had been left in a very feeble state of defence - You have in your letter of the 24th ulto. informed me that Gen'l. Floyd was about to make a movement to the Tallipoose near its junction with the Coose & in the same letter had recommended temporary expeditions against such of the enemy towns or settlements as might be within striking distance, as well to prevent my men from becoming discontented, as

Happy in the opportunity of Keeping my men engaged - of distressing the enemy, & at the same time of making a diversion that was calculated to facilitate the operations of Gen'l. Floyd. Determined by these and other consideration, I took up the line of march on the 17th Inst.- & on the night of the 18th encamped at Talidega fort, where I was joined by between two and three Hundred friendly Indians - Sixty five of whom were Cherokees - the balance creeks. Here I received your letter of the 9th Ins't. stating that Gen'l. Floyd was expected to make a movement from Coweta, the next day & in ten days thereafter he would establish a firm position at Tusabatchee: & also a letter from Col'o. Snodgrass, who had returned to fort Armstrong, informing me that an attack was intended to be soon made on that fort by nine hundred of the enemy - If I could have hesitated before I could now hesitate no longer. I resolved to lose no time in meeting this force, which was understood to have been collected from New Yeusah, Oakfuska, and Bufawia towns, & was then concentrated in a bend of the Talipoose, near the mouth of a creek called Imuck'a, & on an Island below New Yeusah - on the morning of the 20th your letter of the 10th Ins't. forwarded by Mr. McCandless reached me at the Hillibee creek & on that night I encamped at (one of the Hillibee villages) about twelve miles from Imuck'a. Here I began to perceive Very clearly, how little Knowledge my spies had of the country - of the situation of the enemy - or of the distance I was from them. The insubordination of the new troops, & the want of skill in most of their officers, also became more and more apparent. But their arder to meet the enemy was not diminished & I had a sure reliance upon the guard - the company of old Volunteer officers & upon the spies - in all about one Hundred and twenty five -. My wishes and my duty remained united & I was determined to effect, if possible, the objects for which the excursion had been principally undertaken. On the morning of the 21st. I marched from Enotchopee, as direct as I could for the bend of the Talipoose, & about 2 oclk P.M. my spies having discovered two of the enemy, endeavoured to overtake them but failed - In the evening I fell in upon a large trail which led to a new road, much beaten & lately travelled.

Knowing that I must have arrived within the neighbourhood of a strong force,

top line:

to harrass the enemy - Your ideas corresponded exactly with my own, and I was

& it being late in the day, I determined to encamp & reconnoitre the country in the night. I chose the best scite the country would admit - encamped in a hollow square sent out my spies & Picquets - doubled my centinels & made the necessary arrangements before dark for a night attack. About 10 Oclock at night one of the picquets fired at three of the enemy & Killed one but he was not found until the next day. At 11 Oclock the spies whom I sent out returned with the information that there was a large encampment of Indians at the distance of about 3 miles who from their whooping and dancing seemed to be apprized of our approach. One of those spies an Indian in whom I had great confidence, assured me that they were carrying of their women & children, and that the warriors would either make their escape or attack me before day. Being prepared at all points, nothing remained to be done but to await their approach if they meditated an attack, or to be in readiness if they did not to to pursue and attack them at day light. While we were in this state of readiness, the enemy about six oclock in the morning commenced a vigorous attack on my left flank which was as vigorously met. The action continued to rage on my left flank and on the left of my rear for about half an hour. The Brave Gen'l. Coffee, with Cols. Suttler the Adjutant General & Col. Carroll the Inspector Gen'l the moment the firing commenced mounted their horses & repaired to the line encouraging & animating the men to the performance of their duty. So soon as it became light enough to pursue them, the left wing having sustained the heat of the action & being somewhat weakened, was reinforced by Capt. Firrills company of Infantry & was ordered and led on by Gen'l. Coffee who was well supported by Col. Higgins and the Inspector Gen'l & by all the officers & privates who composed that line. The Enemy was completely routed at every point & the friendly Indians Joining in the pursuit they were chased about two miles with considerable slaughter.

The chase being over I immediately detached Gen'l. Coffee with four hundred men & all the Indian force to burn their encampment; but as it was said by some to be fortified, I ordered him in that event not to attack it until the artillery could be sent forward to reduce it. On viewing the encampment and its strength, the General thought it most prudent to return to my encampment & guard the artillery thither. The wisdom of this step was soon discovered. In half an hour after his

return to camp, a considerable body of the enemy made its appearance on my right flank & commenced a brisk fire on a party of men, who had been on the picquet guard the night before, & were then in search of the Indians they had fired upon - some of whom they believed had been killed. General Coffee immediately requested me to let him take two hundred men, & turn their left flank, which I accordingly ordered - But through some mistake which I did not then observe, not more than fifty four followed him, among whom were all the old Volunteer officers - with these however he immediately commenced an attack on the left flank of the enemy - at which time I ordered two Hundred of the friendly Indians to fall in upon the right flank of the enemy, & cooperate with the General. This order was promptly obeyed- & in the moment of its execution, what I expected was realized. The enemy had intended the attack on the right as a feint, & expecting to divert all my attention thither, meant to attack me again & with their main force on the left flank, which they hoped to find weakened and in disorder - They were disappointed. I had ordered the left flank to remain firm to its place, & the moment the alarm gun was fired in that quarter I repaired thither and ordered Capt. Ferrill to support it. The whole line met the approach of the enemy with astonishing intrepidity, & having given a few fires, they forthwith charged him with great vigor. The effect was immediate and inevitable. The enemy fled with precipitation, & were pursued a considerable distance by the left flank & the friendly Indians, with a galling and destructive fire - Colo. Carroll who ordered the charge led on the pursuit - & Colo. Higgins & his Regt. again distinguished themselves - In the mean time Genl. Coffee was contending with a superior force of the enemy. The Indians whom I had ordered to his support, & who had set out for this purpose, hearing the firing on the left had returned to that quarter - & when the enemy were routed there, entered into the chase. That being now over, I forthwith ordered Jim Fife, who was one of the principal commanders of the friendly creeks with one Hundred of his warriors to execute my first order - So soon as he reached Genl. Coffee the charge was made & the enemy routed - They were pursued about three miles; & forty five of their slain who were found. Genl. Coffee was wounded in the body; & his aid de camp, A. Donelson Killed, together with three others -

Having brought in & buried the dead, & dressed the wounded, I ordered my camp to be fortified, to be the better prepared to repel any attack which might be made in the night - determining to commence a return march to Fort Strother the following day- Many causes concurred to make such a measure necessary- As I had not set out prepared, or with a view to make a permanent establishment, I considered it worse than useless to advance and destroy an empty encampment- I had indeed hoped to meet the enemy there, but having met & beaten them a little sooner, I did not think it necessary or prudent to proceed any further:- not necessary because I had accomplished all I could expect to effect by marching to their encampment, & because if it was proper to contend with & weaken their forces still farther, this object would be more certainly obtained by commencing a return, which having to them the appearance of a retreat would inspirit them to pursue me:- not prudent because of the number of my wounded - of the reinforcements from below which the enemy might be expected to receive - of the starving condition of my Horses, they having had neither corn nor cain for two days & nights - of the scarcity of supplies for my men - the Indians who joined me at Talidega having drawn none & being wholly destitute, & because if the enemy pursued me, as it was likely they would, the diversion in favor of Genl. Floyd would be the more complete & effectual. Influenced by these considerations I commenced my return march at half after ten on the 23rd & was fortunate enough to reach Enotochopco before night - having passed, without interruption, a dangerous defile occasioned by a hurricane. I again fortified my camp, & having another defile to pass in the morning across a deep creek & between two hills, which I had viewed with attention as I passed on - & where I expected I might be attacked, I determined to pass it at another point & gave directions to my guides & fatigue men accordingly. My expectation of an attack in the morning was increased by the signs of the night, & with it my caution. Before I moved my wounded from the interior of my camp, I had my front and rear guards formed, as well as my right & left columns, & moved off my centre in regular order - leading down a handsome ridge to Enotochopco creek at a point where it was clear of reed, except immediately on its margin- I had previously issued a General order, pointing out the manner in which the men should be formed in the event of an attack on the front or rear or on the

the flanks; & had particularly cautioned the officers to halt and form accordingly, the instant the word should be given. The front guard had crossed, with part of the flank columns, the wounded were over & the artillery in the act of entering the creek, when an alarm gun was heard in the rear. I heard it without surprise, & even with pleasure, calculating with the utmost confidence on the firmness of my troops, from the manner in which I had seen them act on the 22nd. I had placed Colo. Carroll at the head of the centre column of the rear guard - its right column was commanded by Colo. Perkins & its left by Colo. Stump. Having chosen the ground I expected there to have entirely cut off the enemy, by wheeling the right and left columns on their pivots - recrossing the creek above and below, & falling in upon their flanks and rear. But to my astonishment & mortification, when the word had been given by Colo. Carroll to halt & form, & a few guns had been fired, I beheld the right & left columns of the rear guard precipitately give way.

This shameful retreat was disastrous in the extreme - It drew along with it the greater part of the centre column leaving not more than 25 men, who being formed by Colo. Carroll maintained their ground as long as it was possible to maintain it, & it brought consternation & confusion into the centre of the army - a consternation which was not easily removed, & a confusion which could not soon be restored to order. There was then left to repulse the enemy the few who remained of the rear guard - the artillery company, & Capt. Russells company of spies - They however realized my highest expectations. Lieutenant Armstrong who commanded the artillery company, in the absence of Capt. Deadrick, confined by sickness, ordered them to form & advance to the top of the hill whilst he & a few others dragged up the six pounder. Never was there more bravery displayed than on this occasion. Amidst a most galling fire from the enemy, more than ten times their numbers, they ascended the hill & maintained their position untill their piece was halled up, when, having levelled her, they poured upon the enemy a fire of grape - reloaded & fired again - charged & repulsed them- The most deliberate bravery was displayed by Constant Perkins and Gran Jackson of the Artillery, acting as gunners, in the hurry of the moment, in seperating the gun from her limbers,- the rammer & picker of the cannon was left tied to the limber - as soon as they were about to fire,

this was discovered - Jackson amidst the galling fire of the enemy, pulled out the iron ramrod of his musquet, used it as a picker, primed with a cartridge & fired the cannon- Perkins pulled off his bayonet used his musquet as a rammer, drove home the lead with the muzzle of his musquet.- Jackson again used the ramrod as a picker- the cartridge as a powder horn & fired her again- The brave Lieutenant Armstrong just after the first fire of the cannon with Capt. Hambleton of East Tennessee, Bradford and McGavock all fell. The Lieut. exclaimed as he lay "My brave fellows some of you may fall but you must save the cannon- A number about this time crossed the creek & entered into the chase. The brave Capt. Gordon of the Spies who had rushed from the front endeavoured to turn the left flank of the enemy, in which he partially succeeded and Col Higgins Col Carroll & Capts Elliot & Pipkin pursued the enemy for more than two miles ~~ago~~ fled in consternation throwing away their packs & leaving twenty six of their warriors dead on the field. This last defeat was decisive & we were no more disturbed by their yells. I should do injustice to my feelings if I omitted to mention that the venerable Judge Cocks at the age of sixty five entered the engagement & continued the pursuit of the enemy with youthful ardor & saved the life of a fellow soldier by killing his Savage antagonist.

Our loss in this affair was five killed (sic) wounded. Among the former was the brave Capt. Hambleton from E. Ten., who had with aged father & two others of his company after the period of his engagement had expired Volunteered his service for this excursion & attached himself to the artillery company. No man ever fought (more) bravely or died more gloriously; & by his side fought & fell with equal bravery & Glory Bird Ewins of the same Company. Capt. Quarles who commanded the center column of the rear guard preferring death to the abandonment of his post having taken a firm stand in which he was followed by twenty five of his men received a wound in the head of which he has since died. In these several engagements Our Loss was twenty killed & Seventy five wounded four of whom have since died. The loss of the enemy cannot be accurately ascertained. One hundred and Eighty Nine of their warriors were found dead but this

must fall considerably short of the number really killed. Their wounded can only be guessed at.

Had it not been for the unfortunate retreat of the rear guard in the affair of the 24th Inst. I think I could safely have said that my army of Militia never (?) acted with more cool & deliberate bravery. Undisciplined & inexperienced as they were their conduct in the several engagements of the 22nd could not have been surpassed by any regulars. No men ever met the approach of an enemy with more intrepidity or repulsed them with more energy. On the 24th after the retreat of the rear guard, they seemed to have lost all their collectedness & were more difficult to be restored to order than any troops I have ever seen. But this was no doubt owing in a great measure, or altogether to that very retreat and ought rather to be ascribed to a want of conduct ~~among the~~ ^{in many of} the officers than to any cowardice in the men who on every occasion have manifested a willingness to perform their duty so far as they saw it - All the effects which were designed to be produced by this excursion it is believed have been produced. If an attack was meditated against fort Armstrong that has been prevented. If Genl. Floyd is operating on the East side of the Tallapoosa as I suppose him to be a most fortunate diversion has been made in his favour. The number of the enemy have been diminished & the confidence they may have derived from the delay I have been made to experience has been destroyed - Discontent has been kept out of my army while the troops who would have been exposed to it have been beneficially employed. The enemy's country has been explored & a road out to the point where these forces will probably be concentrated when they shall be driven from the country below. But in a report of this kind & to you who will immediately perceive them it is not necessary to state the happy consequences which may be expected to result from this excursion. Unless I am greatly mistaken it will be found to have hastened the creek war more effectively than any mission I could have taken with the troops then under my command.

In reviewing my report of the late Battles on the heights of Kuckfa & Notichepoo I observe in the hurry of the moment that I have omitted naming my staff. In justice to them and every individual member thereof I have to remark

that all did their duty was firmly at their posts assigned them, & rendered me every aid, in distributing my orders at every point required. That Doctor Shelby Hospital surgeon at the time of the attack at Emotichopce was with Col. Carroll in the rear he did his duty the whole staff deserve my thanks - I am much indebted to my two aids for their exertions in restoring order from confusion at Emotichopce and distributing my orders on all occasions. My whole staff in the whole of the affairs merit & deserve my thanks. Had I pointed out each member of my corps by name that deserved my thanks & their countrys approbation I might have done injustice to others of the line, who are equally praiseworthy, that I was not ~~mentioned~~ advised of. Where all did their duty praise & thanks are due to all.

I have the Honour to be
very respectfully your
obdt Servt

Signed Andrew Jackson

Major General

The photostatic copies of the muster rolls and pay rolls of Captain William Russell's Company of Mounted Spies for the period 4 October, 1813 to 4 April, 1814, bought by this chapter, shows the following casualties during this period:

Battle of Talladega:

James Patton, died of wound 11-23-1813

Absalom Russell, died of wound, 11-23-1813.

Battle of Muckfau:

1st Lt. John Bell, wounded Jan. 22, 1814

1st Corp. William Chisum, wounded 1-22-1814

2nd Corp. James Poorw?, wounded 1-22-1814

Private Green A. Trump? died 1-22-1814 of wound at Muckfau

Private Grant Taylor, wounded 1-22-1814

Battle of Tohopeka:

Private Bird Ashbourn, wounded 3-27-1814, at Tohopeka

Private William Smith, died 3-27-1814 of wound at Tohopeka

Place not given:

2nd Lt. Hugh Robertson, "arm broke and rendered useless.

Discharged:

Private William Davis, 2-28-1814

Private George Hunt, 2-28-1814

Private Giles Muckleroy, 2-28-1814

Private James Wilson, 1-4-1814.

Transferred:

Private Jesse Denson, to Major Williamson's Battalion, paid till
1-27-1814.