

APPENDIX J

Denver, Colorado, May 9, 1914.

From: Edward Verdeckberg, Colonel, 1st Infantry.

To: The Adjutant General, State of Colorado.

Subject: Report of military operations from April 26, 1914, to May 3, 1914.

1. Assumed command of the Camp at Ludlow, Sunday, April 26, 1914, at 10:00 p. m. At 7:00 p. m., Monday, April 27, 1914, received orders from the District Commander to send one Company of Infantry consisting of 35 men, and one officer and 25 men of Troop D to Walsenburg. The following detail was ordered to prepare themselves in heavy marching order and leave on the first train which left Ludlow at 11:40 p. m., for Walsenburg. Captain F. F. Dowling, 2d Lieut. E. A. Walker, 2d Lieut. B. T. Chase with 19 men of Company H, 1st Infantry, and 6 men from Company D, 1st Infantry. 1st Lieut. W. L. Morrison with 19 men from Troop D and 2 men from Troop C, were detailed to comply with this order. Captain Dowling was instructed by me to take his men to the Court House at Walsenburg and report to me at Ludlow on his arrival. Captain Dowling reported to me from Walsenburg at 12:30 a. m.

2. Captain B. H. Brooks of Troop C, arrived at Walsenburg at 5:35 a. m., from Denver, April 28, 1914, with 17 members of his troop and reported to me at 7:00 a. m. I directed Captain Brooks to get the horses and horse equipment from the Walsen mine down to the Court House and to be ready to move as soon as possible and await further orders. At 11:00 a. m., April 28, 1914, I directed Captain Brooks to proceed with the two troops of Cavalry to the Walsen Mine and make that place his Headquarters, because we would have a better opportunity to take care of the horses. I directed Captain Dowling to make his Headquarters at the Court House and to give assistance wherever necessary. I received orders on the evening of the 28th at 7:00 p. m., from the District Commander to take 125 men and to proceed at once with them to Walsenburg and that there would be a special train ready for me at 5:00 a. m., the following morning. The following organizations were ordered to prepare themselves to carry out that order:

- Company A, 1st Infantry, 2 officers, 9 men.
- Company B, 1st Infantry, 2 officers, 20 men.
- Company C, 1st Infantry, 1 officer, 16 men.
- Company F, 1st Infantry, 1 officer, 16 men.
- Company I, 1st Infantry, 1 officer, 20 men.
- Company M, 1st Infantry, 3 officers, 31 men.

The special train left Ludlow at 6:00 a. m., April 29, 1914, with the following detail:

- Colonel Edward Verdeckberg, 1st Infantry.
- Major Leo W. Kennedy, 1st Infantry.
- Captain Raymond B. Long, 1st Infantry.
- Captain Archie D. Marshall, 1st Infantry.
- Captain W. B. Lightbourn, 1st Sq. Cav.
- 1st Lieut. A. M. Chase, Infantry, (retired).
- 1st Lieut. F. S. Doll, 1st Infantry.

Major Pliny P. Lester and two enlisted men Hospital Corps.
Ten Company Officers.
One hundred twelve enlisted men.
Total: 18 Officers, 114 Enlisted Men—132.

3. We arrived at Walsenburg Court House where we detrained at 7:30 a. m. I reported our arrival to General Chase at Louisville, and informed him that a battle between mine guards and strikers was then going on at the Walsen Mine, that the buildings on the McNally Mine property were on fire and that before we left Ludlow we could hear firing at Forbes, that I was unable to go to their assistance because my orders were to go to Walsenburg, and that I had been unable to get the General by telephone before I left Ludlow to report these facts to him, and that I was now awaiting further orders. My orders were to clear the hills of all strikers at once. I immediately proceeded with my command to the Walsen Mine, where I found a battle in progress. The Companies were assigned to quarters and Captain Marshall in the meantime was obliged to get more commissary supplies in Walsenburg so as to be able to serve breakfast to the officers and men. In the meantime, Company H, 1st Infantry, at the Court House having had their breakfast, I ordered Captain Dowling to report to me with his company at once at the Walsen Mine, where I had established my Headquarters. In the meantime, at 9:00 a. m., I detailed 1st Lieut. Morrison with six troopers of Troop D as a patrol to get information for me on or near the Pueblo road near the hog back where the strikers were intrenched and which was their extreme left of the line. The heaviest fire was at this time directly in front of the Walsen Mine from the hog back where the strikers were intrenched and 1800 yards from a ridge directly in front of the Walsen property where the mine guards were engaged in battle with the strikers. Two hundred yards back of this ridge is where I established Headquarters. Directly in front of me was situated Water Tank Hill. This is where the water supply for the Walsen Mine property is stored and where a powerful searchlight was located. This is the point which the strikers seemed anxious to capture.

4. In looking over the situation on my arrival, I found that the mine guards and the newly organized Troop E, in charge of Jesse Russell, Captain of the mine guards, were, and had been, holding this ridge for forty-eight hours without any rest, and that Captain Brooks in command of the Cavalry had placed all of his men on outpost duty. I decided to relieve all of the mine guards on the ridge with some of our own troops for three or four hours and give them a very much needed rest. I therefore made the following disposition of my command. Company H, 1st Infantry, Captain F. F. Dowling in command, 2 officers and 19 men on the ridge to the right of Water Tank Hill, men five yards interval. Company B, 1st Infantry, Captain H. E. Insley, commanding, 2 officers and twenty men to the right of Company H, the same interval maintained, Company F, 1st Infantry, 2nd Lieut. Smith in command, one officer and 16 men to the right of Company B, same interval. This placed the men along the entire ridge to the right of Water Tank Hill. In the meantime, 1st Lieut. Morrison reported by messenger that he was hemmed in by strikers and that he needed assistance and that one of his patrol had been shot in the thigh. At 9:45 a. m., I detailed Company I, 1st Infantry, 1st Lieut. L. L. Scott, commanding, with 20 men to the relief of Lieut. Morrison and Company C, 1st Infantry, Captain C. G. Swope, commanding, and 16 men to the Court House and to report to me from there. In the meantime, Lieut. Morrison reported to Headquarters with his patrol, having escaped from his perilous position. I therefore instructed Lieut. Scott through 2nd Lieut. B. T. Chase, whom I had detailed as my mounted aide, to take position on the extreme right which was the junction of the hog back and the

Pueblo road and report the situation to me. Captain Swope reported to me from the Court House and I instructed him to proceed to the hog back by way of the Pueblo road to the assistance of Lieut. Scott and force the strikers back from the hog back. At 12:30 p. m., I received the following message from Lieut. Scott:

Commanding Officer, 1st Infantry:

Have reached Capitol Hill and advancing on strikers who have been firing on us from hog back since 10:15. Send re-inforcements. I will take up position about 400 yards to right of hog back.

Scott, Lieut.

At 2:25 p. m., I received the following:

Colonel Verdeckberg:

Heavy firing on us 200 yards up hog back. Major Lester killed. I am wounded, not seriously. Myself and 15 men have been separated from Captain Swope—have been obliged to fall back 100 yards to stronger position. Will remain here. Send re-inforcements.

Scott, Lieut.

5. I had previously detailed Captain W. B. Lightbourne to the left of the line which was the Elk's Country Club with a very large lake, to inform me of the situation at that point. He reported that no one was occupying the hog back at that point and deemed it advisable to send a force to that point at once. I detailed Company M, 1st Infantry, Captain Robert B. Baird, commanding, with 2 officers and 31 men to that point, Captain Lightbourne showing them the way. When Captain Baird arrived near that point, he learned that the strikers beat him to it and arrived there first. He nevertheless took up a position and attempted to force the strikers back. At 3:35 p. m., I received the following message from Captain Swope:

Hogback, North of School House,

To: Colonel, 1st Infantry.

From: Capt. C. G. Swope.

Subject: Report:

Had a sharp fight at very close range. Major Lester killed. Lieut. Scott wounded in head. Men badly shaken. Have fallen back to East of Walsenburg, (Pueblo Road) guarding cut. Enemy in rifle pits along the ridge West of wagon road out on Walsenburg-Pueblo road. Need re-inforcements. Ought to have artillery.

Charles G. Swope.

6. At 4:00 p. m., I received a report from Captain Long, who had gone with Captain Lazell of the Medical Department, to aid a man who had been wounded in Captain Baird's company on the left of the line, and who was attempting a flank movement. The report is as follows:

Gate at Elks Reservation,
Walsenburg-La Veta road,
Wednesday, April 29, 1914, 4:00 P. M.

Colonel Verdeckberg:

Baird cannot retire until dark without loss of life. Firing is heavy. On the way here met a man with message from Hawkins regarding truce. Brought him with me to gate near reservoir. He said enemy understood truce, but volunteered to go to hills to make sure. He disappeared from sight before reaching our

troops. At the time he disappeared there was heavy firing (he carried flag of truce). Our men occupy position half way from road to top of hill. They are about 700 yards from Walsenburg-La Veta road. Heavy firing when anyone attempts to cross space. Am at gate at reservoir awaiting orders.

Long, Capt.

7. Received a telephone message from General Chase at 12:55 p. m., that I had better remain near telephone that I would probably receive orders to cease firing, that the Governor, Hawkins and he, General Chase, were now in consultation in reference to the condition, the strikers would have to comply with if the order to cease firing were issued. Major Cohan, the strikers attorney at Walsenburg telephoned me at 1:15 p. m., that the Governor, General Chase and Hawkins were now arranging to have orders issued to me to cease firing and withdraw our troops. I asked him what the strikers were going to do and he said they would cease firing, that there would not be another shot fired in Huerfano County, but they would not lay down their arms. I told him that when I received my instructions from General Chase I was almost certain it would be the surrendering of all arms. He then said he would see what could be done about that, that he would take it up with the strike leader, Don McGregor.

8. At 1:30 p. m., I received a telephone message from Mr. Hawkins in Denver stating that I would probably receive an order from General Chase to cease firing and that he, Hawkins, had a talk with Don McGregor and he would see what could be done in regards to the strikers laying down their arms. In the meantime I had issued instructions that the mine guards were to replace our troops in the immediate front which consisted of Companies A, B, F, and H, so that I would be able to reinforce the right and left flanks. At 1:45 p. m., I received the following instructions from General Chase in Denver:

"That all firing was to cease for one hour, and to meet and arrange with Don McGregor the leader of the strikers, the laying down of all arms in the possession of the strikers, and report."

9. I issued the necessary orders to cease firing and at 2:00 p. m., informed Don McGregor that I had issued orders to cease firing for one hour and that I wanted to be assured that the strikers would lay down their arms and retire, and if they did not do so, I would commence firing at 3:00 p. m. At 2:55 p. m., Don McGregor telephoned me that he had issued orders to cease firing and was trying to get in touch with the leaders and arrange with them to have the men surrender their arms, but it would take some time to reach them as they were scattered all over the hills. He thought satisfactory arrangements could be made and he would like to meet me at the bridge under a flag of truce. The bridge is half way between the hog back and Walsenburg which is in the main road leading over the hog back to Pictou. He said he would have two other men with him and I was to have two officers accompany me. At 3:15 p. m., I telephoned the above conversation to General Chase and asked him if that was satisfactory. He said it was. He also informed me at this time that if the strikers would not agree to surrender their arms that he would send re-inforcements with artillery and that the engagement would be resumed.

10. At 3:00 p. m., I issued orders for the troops to retire from the firing line. The troops in the front line were able to do so. Those on the right flank were not able to retire until 4:30 p. m., and then were not able to reach Major Lester's body on account of the heavy firing whenever they attempted to reach it. The left flank was not able to retire until dusk. At 5:00 p. m., Don McGregor telephoned me that he was unable to stop firing along the whole line, and

that he did not want to meet me until he was absolutely sure that all firing had stopped. I was not able to hear from Don McGregor until 7:00 p. m., and as it was getting dark I suggested that we have our conference at Major Cohan's office at 8:00 p. m., which he agreed to. At 8:00 p. m., I went to Major Cohan's office accompanied by Major Leo W. Kennedy, 1st Lieut. Frederick S. Doll. There were present at this conference Major Cohan, Don McGregor and another man whose name I did not catch who was the leader of the foreign element. He said he was able to talk Mexican and Italian and spoke fairly good English. There were two other men who seemed to be Americans. We took up the matter of surrendering and turning over their arms at once. Don McGregor was the spokesman for their side and he said that he was unable to reach all the leaders, and that he had had a hard time to get his men to obey his orders to cease firing, that he was compelled to send out a squad with instructions to shoot anyone who did not cease firing. That it would be harder under the circumstances to induce the men to give up their arms. He would see what could be done during the night and that he would meet us again at 10:00 a. m., in the morning, that in the meantime he would guarantee that there would be no more shooting and no attempts made to destroy property in Huerfano County until after the conference the next day. I asked him to send one of his men with our detail to get Major Lester's body which he agreed to do. Don McGregor requested permission to get their dead from the McNally property which I agreed to. The conference adjourned at 9:30 p. m., to convene the following day at 10:00 a. m. I telephoned the result of the conference to General Chase at 10:00 p. m., and I was informed that the details arranged at the conference up to the present time were satisfactory, and to advise him of the result of the next conference.

11. Mr. Ball, Assistant Manager of the Walsen, McNally and other Colorado Fuel and Iron Company property, refused permission to the strikers to get their dead that night, but he was willing that they should get them in the daylight. I therefore requested Don McGregor to withdraw his men that night and to get the bodies the following day, which he did.

12. Major Lester's body was brought to Walsenburg by Captain Swope, with a detail of two enlisted men and a leader of the strikers, in a wagon and delivered to Phurphy the undertaker at 11:00 p. m. On examination of the body it was found that he was shot twice after death. That his pockets were turned inside out, the brassard taken from his arm, his wrist watch, money and papers were missing.

13. It was 11:00 a. m., the following morning before the conference was resumed at Major Cohan's office. All were present. Don McGregor stated that he was unable to tell at this time how many men were willing to give up their arms, that the United States troops were coming in that day at 3:00 p. m., anyway and why not leave the matter rest until they arrived. Don McGregor stated that he had the articles taken from Major Lester's body turned over to him, and that he burned the private letters and would turn over the other articles to me.

14. Major Williams, Capt. Dorn and 1st Lieut. Hawsworth arrived at Walsenburg on the Colorado and Southern at 5:35, April 30, 1914.

15. I reported the last conference to General Chase who directed me to turn over all details to Captain Smith, who commanded the Federal troops who would arrive in Walsenburg on that day and take charge, and that our troops to be withdrawn upon their arrival. Captain Smith and one troop of cavalry consisting of 70 men arrived at Walsenburg at 4:15 p. m. I met Captain Smith at the depot when the special carrying the United States troops arrived. I con-

ferred with him and gave him all the details in reference to the situation and conditions in the Walsenburg district. I also requested him to receive Major Lester's effects from Don McGregor as they had not been turned over to me at that time.

16. Casualties April 29, 1914, at Walsenburg, Colorado:

Major Pliny P. Lester, Medical Corps—dead.

1st Lieut. Lee L. Scott, Co. I, 1st Inf.—wounded on top of head.

Private Wilmouth, Tr. D, 1st Sq. Cav., Boulder—wounded in leg.

Private Miller, Co. M, 1st Inf., Longmont—Shot in mouth.

17. On April 30, 1914, the following disposition of the troops stationed at Walsenburg was made by direction of the District Commander, and left Walsenburg on special Denver and Rio Grande train on that date 11:30 p. m.

To Louisville, Colorado:

Company A, 1st Inf., 1 officer, 9 men.

Company B, 1st Inf., 1 officer, 19 men.

Company F, 1st Inf., 1 officer, 15 men.

Company M, 1st Inf., 2 officers, 35 men.

Troop C, 1st Sq. Cav., 1 officer, 22 men.

Troop D, 1st Sq. Cav., 2 officers, 17 men.

To their home Station:

Company C, 1st Inf., Ault, 14 men.

Company H, 1st Inf., Brush and Akron, 2 officers and 18 men.

Company I, 1st Inf., Fort Morgan, 19 men.

Company D, 1st Inf., Greeley, 6 men.

Myself and Staff, one officer and 2 men from each organization, except Company H, 1st Infantry, who had all their baggage at Walsenburg, were ordered to Ludlow to look after their baggage and prepare to break camp. Arrived at Camp Ludlow, Friday, May 1, 1914, 5:45 a. m., and proceeded to break camp.

18. Captain Fuerster, U. S. A., arrived at Ludlow from Trinidad at 3:45 p. m., May 1, 1914, for the purpose of looking over the situation in the Ludlow District. I referred him to Major P. J. Hamrock who informed him of the entire situation. Captain Fuerster left Ludlow at 7:30 p. m., stating that he would arrive with his troops at Ludlow about 11:00 a. m., the following day. Captain Fuerster with his troops did not arrive until 2:30 p. m., May 2, 1914, and I informed him that we were breaking camp and would leave just as soon as we could complete loading our baggage cars. I told him that we had orders to leave camp just as soon as we were loaded and through policing the camp.

19. We left Ludlow at 9:30 p. m., May 2, 1914, in two sections. The first section consisted of seven coaches, two baggage and one freight car. Arrived in Denver, Sunday, May 3, 1914, at 7:00 a. m., where we detrained and marched to the Armory at 26th and Curtis Streets for mess, where I reported to General Chase and was relieved from duty.

(Signed) Edward Verdeckberg,
Col. 1st Inf., N. G. C.,
Commanding.