

TO THE OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS
OF THE
"LEGION" AND "MINUTE MEN" OF INDIANA.

Having received information that a rebel force, estimated to be six thousand strong, with six pieces of artillery, had crossed the Ohio river into Harrison County, I issued a call on Thursday last, to the patriotic citizens of the State, to leave their various occupations and turn out for its defence, and if possible capture the insolent invaders. The evidence was abundant that the original purpose of the rebels was to seize, plunder and burn the capital, but as their course would be uncertain it was necessary to make preparations to encounter them in every direction. Within forty-eight hours from the time the call was issued, not less than sixty-five thousand men had tendered their services and were on their way to places of rendezvous, while many thousands more were preparing, but were notified to remain at home. Within three days thirty thousand men, fully armed and organized, had taken the field at various points to meet the enemy.

This wonderful uprising will exert a marked effect throughout the country, exhibiting, as it does, in the strongest and most favorable light, the military spirit and patriotism of our people.

At the first landing on our soil the rebel advance was met and fought by the neighboring "Legion," and, although our forces were few in number and were driven back, they gave the rebels a clear foretaste of what they might expect when they penetrated the interior of the State. Within ten hours after they entered our borders their invasion was converted into a rapid and desperate flight. In whatever direction they turned they were confronted by large bodies of armed men. Wherever they approached the river, with the view to crossing, they found large bodies of troops prepared to dispute their passage. In half a dozen cases they were offered battle which they invariably declined. They dodged and ran by night and by day and finally succeeded in making their escape over our eastern border into Ohio. -

They are reported to have murdered several of our citizens in cold blood, to have plundered many of their horses, money and goods, and to have burned and otherwise destroyed much valuable property. The injury done to the Rail Roads was slight, and has been almost entirely repaired. They had but little time to do damage beyond the murder and plunder of surprised and defenceless citizens along the line of their flight.

For the alacrity with which you responded to my call and left your harvest fields, your workshops and offices, and took up arms to protect your State and punish the invaders, allow me, on behalf of the State, to tender my hearty thanks. Your example will not be lost upon the Nation, and you have taught the rebels a lesson which will not be forgotten.

In the light of these events it is impossible not to perceive the importance of a thorough organization of the Legion. The presence of an organized force ready to take the field at a moments notice is a standing security against invasion and depredation, and I am very anxious that so far as it is possible the temporary organizations of the "Minute Men" may be converted into permanent ones under the law; and that exertions will everywhere be made to recruit the ranks of the Legion and perfect its drill and efficiency.

**Given at the Executive Department,
Indianapolis, Indiana this 15th
day of July, 1863.**

OLIVER P.
MORTON,
Governor and
Commander-in-Chief.

*Source: Traces of
Indiana and
Midwestern History,
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